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FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD-FOCUSED STUDY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

Volume I: FINAL REPORT

2003

**Findings from the Field-Focused Study of the
Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program**

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Preface

This Final Report presents the findings from the Field-Focused Study, one of several components in the National Evaluation of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) sponsored the study under a task order and contract administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Program Support Center (Task Order #6, Contract No. 282-98-0027), to COSMOS Corporation. The McKenzie Group, Inc. (TMG), served as a subcontractor to COSMOS. In this function, TMG conducted and completed a review of all CSRD-related studies supported by the U.S. Department of Education (COSMOS/TMG, 2001). TMG staff also comprised about one-third of the site visit teams.

The Field-Focused Study and the entire task order were directed by Robert K. Yin, Ph.D., of COSMOS. Margaret K. Gwaltney, M.B.A., of COSMOS served as the deputy project director, and Dawn Kim served as project coordinator. Many other staff members from COSMOS and TMG collaborated in the study, which involved four rounds of site visits to 18 CSRD schools and the collection and analysis of student achievement data from these schools. Michelle LaPointe, Ph.D., of the Policy and Program Studies Service, U.S. Department of Education, served as the ED project officer for most of the evaluation (Kathryn Doherty, Ph.D., was ED's first project officer).

The report was mainly prepared by Robert Yin and Dawn Kim and is presented in two volumes. Volume I contains the main text. Volume II contains six appendices to Volume I, including short summaries of the 18 schools that were studied. The summaries, as well as data presented in Volume I, are based on 18 in-depth and detailed cases reviewed by each school and available separately from COSMOS (see www. cosmoscorp.com). Throughout, all schools are identified anonymously.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. Comprehensive school reform calls for a "whole-school" and coordinated approach to improve schools. The strategy differs from piecemeal and fragmented efforts that also in the past have seemed only to lead to short-lived changes.

To stimulate whole-school reform across the country, Congress appropriated funds in FY1998 for the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to start the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program. ED allocated the funds on a formula basis to states, who made awards to support 1,840 mostly Title I schools "in need of substantially improving" their performance. Subsequent rounds of annual awards to support additional schools have continued through FY2003.

In applying for and accepting these funds, schools were expected to implement 9 components, one of which is an effective, research-based method or strategy. Together, the 9 components comprise the comprehensive reform aimed at improving student achievement:

CSRD Components

No.	Component
1.	Effective, research-based methods and strategies
2.	Comprehensive design with aligned components
3.	Professional development
4.	Measurable goals and benchmarks
5.	Support within the school
6.	Parental and community involvement
7.	External technical support and assistance
8.	Evaluation strategies
9.	Coordination of resources

The awards are for three years and had to be a minimum of $50,000 per year. Schools can only receive a single CSRD award. Given these conditions, federal funds therefore are intended to serve as "seed money" for whole-school reform. Beyond this period of time, schools are to continue reform with their own resources.

The Field-Focused Study of CSRD. ED commissioned the Field-Focused Study of CSRD as one part of its national evaluation of the CSRD program. The study began by randomly selecting 18 schools from the first two annual rounds of CSRD awards (1998-99 to 2000-01, and 1999-00 to 2001-02). Field data were collected through four site visits to each school, conducted during 2000-02.

The objective of the Field-Focused Study was to provide initial feedback about the implementation of the CSRD program. The topics covered by the study and in this report include:

> 1) The progress in implementing the 9 CSRD components by the
>   18 schools;

> 2) The role of district and state influences in implementing the program;

> 3) The apparent pathways or strategies for implementing comprehensive
>   school reform; and

> 4) The early signs regarding the potential sustainability of the program at
>   the school level.

Conclusions on CSRD Implementation: A Mixed Pattern

The main priority of the Field-Focused Study was to determine the extent and nature of CSRD implementation at the 18 schools. Overall, the schools' implementation of CSRD at the 18 schools was uneven. Based on a 47-point instrument reflecting the 9 components and devised specifically for the Field-Focused Study, nine schools garnered 80 percent of the 47 points and could be labeled as "nearly fully" implementing CSRD. Another six schools garnered 65 percent of the 47 points and could be labeled as "partially" implementing CSRD. The remaining three schools all scored lower and were judged to be "poorly" implementing CSRD.

Implementation of the 9 CSRD Components. Implementation also was uneven across the 9 components (to streamline the discussion, several related components have been paired):

> Component 1 (see Section 2.1 of the main report for more details):
>   The bulk of the schools' CSRD resources and attention has been
>   devoted to the implementation of a *research-based method*. By
>   the time of the final site visit, implementation of such a method
>   was proceeding fully at 9 of the 18 schools, with partial or minimal
>   implementation at the other 9;

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Component 2 (see Section 2.2):
  Less than half of the 18 schools had reforms with a *comprehensive design*, reflected by a comprehensive plan combined with staff awareness that CSRD should extend to a school's entire way of doing business and all its operations—and not simply adding a new function or project or activity;

Components 3 and 7 (see Section 2.3.1):
  Both *professional development* and *external technical support and assistance* had largely been devoted to the implementation of the research-based method, not necessarily comprehensive reform more broadly;

Components 4 and 8 (see Section 2.3.2):
  Both the *measurable goals and benchmarks* and *evaluation strategies* had been devoted to tracking student performance, not necessarily implementation progress;

Components 5 and 6 (see Section 2.3.3):
  High turnover among staff and students had resulted in transient levels of either *support within the school* or *parental and comunity involvement*;

Component 9 (see Section 2.3.4):
  Most schools were in a position to *coordinate or converge resources*, but resources for sustainability were still uncertain.

District and State Influences. The Field-Focused Study also collected data about district and state actions potentially affecting the schools' CSRD implementation. Some of these actions were part of the CSRD administrative procedures, because states implement CSRD by having districts apply competitively on behalf of some or all of their schools. In the process, both states and districts can support or monitor the schools' CSRD efforts. The study found varying degrees of such support (see Section 3.1.1).

More important than these procedures related directly to the administration of CSRD, the study uncovered other important state and district policies, not directly related to administering CSRD, that nevertheless influenced CSRD implementation (see Section 3.1.2). Some conditions, such as extremely limited professional resources, had a negative influence on CSRD. Other conditions, such as the direct alignment of CSRD designs with district improvement plans and state standards, had an extremely positive influence. Other conditions reflected the ongoing dynamics of school systems—e.g., districts reducing financial support for all external research-based methods, a district allowing a CSRD

school to become a charter school, and a district deciding to merge two schools that happened to be CSRD schools.

Strong district or state influence, creating a "vertical" alignment to the school level, led alternatively to either complementarity or conflict with CSRD. As examples on the complementary side, CSRD provided two schools with resources and a compatible reform agenda to respond to their designation as underperforming schools in the state's accountability system. As examples on the conflicting side, the shifting content of state assessments led districts to use resources for alternative curricula and professional development that were contrary to those involved in a CSRD school's original plans or implementation. In general, these external state and district conditions appear to be highly relevant to CSRD implementation.

Conditions Associated with Successful Implementation and the Role of State and District Influences: Three Pathways to Reform

The study identified three different sets of conditions, or "pathways," that appeared to be associated with the successful implementation of CSRD (see Section 3.4). The first pathway is a *component-driven pathway*, whereby a school uses the 9 CSRD components to guide the development and implementation of a comprehensive reform. The second is a *method-driven pathway*, whereby the school adopts and implements a comprehensive research-based method that affects virtually all school operations and whose successful implementation substitutes for the need for any independent articulation of the 9 CSRD components. (However, many research-based methods focus on specific curricula and are not comprehensive.) The third is a *vertical-driven pathway*, whereby a school articulates and pursues the needed comprehensive strategies as a result of state and district requirements involving: the setting of standards, use of appropriate assessment tools, and required alignment of district- and school-based strategic planning and improvement plans to meet state performance standards.

No single pathway was considered the "best" or preferred pathway, and no pathway was necessarily more immune than the others to such disruptive conditions as: high principal turnover rates, limited professional development resources, or planned or unplanned school restructuring.

Sustainability of "Whole-School" Reform: Still Questionable Given Current Fiscal Climate

As a final topic, the study examined the prospects for sustaining school reform beyond the final year of CSRD funding (see Section 3.5).

Neither the original legislation nor ED defined the exact nature of a school's changes to be associated with sustaining a comprehensively reforming school beyond the three-year CSRD award period. As a result, the Field-Focused Study examined two different views of sustainability and judged the 18 schools according to both.

The first view, based mainly on the experiences of the New American Schools initiative, holds that the central changes to be sustained should be the practices associated with the originally-supported research-based method. The second view is that comprehensive reform, though embracing a research-based method, also transcends it. By this second view, successful sustainability would not necessarily be associated with the continued use of any particular method but could involve transitions from one research-based method to another, over time. The transitions would have to reflect a progression toward continued school and student improvement rather than the "churning" of innovative practices.

Using the most lenient benchmark and accepting either of these two views as a criterion for assessing sustainability, 14 of the 18 schools were exhibiting a promising level of sustainability by the time their CSRD awards were ending. Accepting only the second view reduces the number to 11, and accepting the first view reduces it to 10.

The main barrier to sustainability continues to be the limited availability of sufficient resources, especially in light of states' and districts' revenue shortfalls in recent years. To sustain a reforming process, even when existing resources have been coordinated and targeted to reform, still requires discretionary funds to support such essential activities as: adequate professional development (including support for teacher substitutes), especially in situations of high teacher turnover; time for common planning periods or teachers' work on school leadership teams; and support for external technical assistance. Though such needs can be served with modest levels of funds, serving the needs is still a discretionary activity that may have to be ignored if core school operations are underbudgeted.

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1. THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM[1] AND THE FIELD-FOCUSED STUDY

1.1 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD) was designed to stimulate schoolwide change. The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program provided formula grants to states. The states in turn invited districts to compete for subgrants, on behalf of schools, to implement comprehensive school reform. The program's goal was to improve student achievement and enable all children to "meet challenging state content standards and performance goals" through reform strategies (U.S. Congress, 1998).[2]

Participating schools were expected to:

- Implement CSRD's nine components[3] (see Exhibit 1-1), one of which was the implementation of an effective, research-based method or strategy;[4]

- Stimulate schoolwide change covering virtually all aspects of school operations, rather than implement a piecemeal, fragmented approach to reform; and

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[1]The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program is the name of the education reform grant program as it was created in 1998. The program was subsequently renamed the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Program in P.L. 107-110, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* signed by the President in January 2002. Because the Field-Focused Study was commissioned to study the first two cohorts of CSRD schools (1998-1999 and 1999-2000 grantees), this final report will refer to the program as CSRD.

[2]The program was initially established through appropriations language, not authorizing legislation (Appropriations Act for the U.S. Department of Education, P.L. 105-78). In subsequent years, this appropriations language continued to be used to authorize the program, until the enactment of P.L. 107-110.

[3]The CSRD program called for the implementation of nine reform components (referred to throughout this report). The redesigned CSR program under P.L. 107-110 now calls for eleven components. The two new components cover "support to the school's staff" and the use of a research-based method (based on comparison group designs or on other strong evidence of improved student achievement).

[4]The original congressional legislation listed 17 specific methods as examples, although schools were not limited to adopting these methods.

Exhibit 1-1

DESCRIPTION OF NINE COMPONENTS OF REFORM
IN CONGRESSIONAL PROVISIONS FOR CSRD[*]

1. **Effective, research-based methods and strategies:** Employ innovative strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics.

2. **Comprehensive design with aligned components:** Have a comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and management—that aligns the school's curriculum, technology, professional development, etc. into a schoolwide reform plan designed to enable all students [including children from low-income families, children with limited English proficiency, and children with disabilities][**] to meet challenging state content and performance standards and addresses needs identified through a school needs assessment.

3. **Professional development:** Provide high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training.

4. **Measurable goals and benchmarks:** Have measurable goals for student performance [tied to the State's challenging content and student performance standards, as those standards are implemented][**] and benchmarks for meeting those goals.

5. **Support within the school:** Are supported by school faculty, administrators, and staff.

6. **Parental and community involvement:** Provide for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning and implementing school improvement activities.

7. **External technical support and assistance:** Utilize high-quality external technical support and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity (which may be a university) with experience or expertise in school-wide reform and improvement.

8. **Evaluation strategies:** Include a plan for the evaluation of the implementation of school reform and the student results achieved.

9. **Coordination of resources:** Identify how other resources (federal/state/local/private) available to the school will be utilized to coordinate services to support and sustain the school reform effort.

[*]Conferees' original language in House Report No. 105-309, accompanying P.L. 105-78.

[**]Language in brackets was added to the conferees' language for the original "Guidance on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program," issued by the US Department of Education on March 13, 1998; the language is present in the subsequent update dated August 11, 2000.

- Assess the impact from implementing comprehensive school reform in terms of changes in student achievement.

For most of the CSRD funds, the eligible K-12 schools were Title I eligible schools, particularly those schools in need of substantially improving their student achievement levels. A small portion of the funds was available to all schools in need of such improvement. As a result, Title I schools represented the great bulk (over 85 percent) of CSRD schools.

CSRD funding was disbursed to nearly 4,000 schools by FY 2001. CSRD funds first became available in FY1998, when $145 million in federal funds were allocated to state education agencies (SEAs).[5] The SEAs then made competitive three-year subgrants to their districts, eventually supporting 1,840 schools with the first year's funds.[6] The awards (a minimum of $50,000 per year) were intended to stimulate or provide financial incentives for reform, but not support the entirety of reform.[7]

In FY1999, $145 million in funds were again allocated to the states, supporting the continuation of the initial awards and also the startups of a small number of new awards. In FY2000, the program awarded $220 million to the states, anticipating the continuation of the original schools into their third year but also providing the opportunity to make awards to a new set of schools. Similarly, $260 million was provided in FY2001, which permitted the funding of an entirely new set of schools starting in 2001–02, as well as the continuation of those schools begun with the FY2000 increase. The total number of schools funded under the CSRD program reached 3,875 by the 2001–2002 academic year (SEDL, 2002). For 2002-03, the appropriation increased funding for the newly defined

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[5]Funds appropriated under the Title I program are allocated to States based on each State's share of Title I Basic Grants in the previous fiscal year and may be used to support schools eligible to receive funds under Part A of Title I. Funds under FIE are allocated to States based on each State's share of school-aged children, and may be used to support any school, including those not eligible to receive funds under Part A of Title I. Under both the Title I and FIE CSRD programs, ED was able to reserve up to 1 percent of the total amount appropriated for grants to outlying areas and the BIA, and up to 1 percent for national evaluation activities.

[6]A study of 40 responding states (representing $103 million of the original $145 million in federal funds awards in FY1998) revealed that 3,001 school applications had been received from 1,088 school districts and that the average CSRD award had been $68,000 per school per year (New American Schools, 1999).

[7]The states do not necessarily make all of their subawards in the same academic year, and states also are permitted to set aside up to five percent of the funds for state administration, evaluation, and technical assistance. States also have the option to set aside award money for use by districts, and this may or may not be reflected in calculations of the average school award.

CSR program to $310 million, enough to support grant awards to an estimated 2,000 additional schools (see Exhibit 1-2).

CSRD called for research-based methods and strategies. The CSRD program drew its rationale and design from a longstanding and broad research and policy literature.[8] For instance, from a research perspective, two contemporary analysts (Desimone, 2000, p. 36; and Doherty, 2000, p. 3) noted that the theoretical underpinnings for comprehensive school reform were similar to and extended as far back as research on *effective schools* in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Edmonds, 1979; and Cohen, 1982), among other educational strands.

From a policy perspective, the practical underpinnings for CSRD emanated from the events leading to the redesign of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary School Act as amended by the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, which shifted the federal government's compensatory education investments away from supplemental and remedial (pull-out) programs toward standards-based, whole school reform—as reflected by a renewed appreciation for schoolwide programs and local flexibility (Shelley, 1997; Berends and Kirby, 1999; Puma and Drury, 2000; and Borman, 2000). As one result of the policy shift, the number of schoolwide programs within Title I increased from 1,200 in 1991 to 9,000 in 1997-98 and represented 50 percent of all Title I schools (Desimone, 2000).[9]

Coinciding with these research and policy developments, a critical catalytic influence was the ongoing experience of the *New American Schools* (NAS) initiative (e.g., Bodilly, 1998; Berends, Bodilly, and Kirby, 2002). The New American Schools Corporation was formed in 1991 to design innovative, 'break-the-mold' schools. NAS's initial wave supported eight research-based methods,[10] which were then promoted by over 1,500 schools in 11 partner communities (New American Schools, 1999). The initiative came at a time when the supply of research-based methods converged with the demand for continued school reform among low-performing schools (Bodilly, 2001). Early lessons from the initiative included a shift away from an emphasis on method development-design-only to include external technical assistance and support to schools (NAS, 1999), as well as

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[8]The present report, however, is not the occasion for a comprehensive review of this literature.

[9]Throughout these policy transitions, an important undercurrent continued to be that "teachers matter" (Puma and Drury, 2000). Operationally, the assumption has been that changed vision and school-based planning will lead to changed classroom practices. All these practices will then produce the desired change (and improvement) in student performance. That "teachers matter" therefore suggests that policymakers need to focus on classrooms—the "operational core of education systems" (Puma and Drury, 2000, p. 33).

[10]Six of these eight methods were listed among the CSRD legislation's original 17 methods. For a crosswalk between both groups and the top 25 methods or practices adopted by the first cohort of CSRD schools, see COSMOS, May 2000, Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1-2

SUMMARY OF CSRD AWARDS

Federal Fiscal Year Appropriation	Amount Allocated (In Millions)	Cohort: Number of Schools[a]	School Year First Implemented
1998	$145[b]	Cohort 1: 1,840	1998-1999
1999	$145[b]	Cohort 1: 1,840 Cohort 2: 146	1999-2000
2000	$220[c]	Cohort 1: 1,856 Cohort 2: 146 Cohort 3: 796	2000-2001
2001	$260[c]	Cohort 2: 146 Cohort 3: 796 Cohort 4: 1093	2001-2002
2002 **(No Child Left Behind)**	$310[d]	Cohort 3: 796 Cohort 4: 1093 Cohort 5: 2,000 (est.)	2002-2003

[a] Amounts reported by States for each fiscal year do not always add to the amount allocated to States in that fiscal year (do to inconsistencies in State reporting).
[b] Includes $25 million provided under the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE).
[s] Includes $50 million provided under the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE).
[d] These are the appropriated funds (including $75 million in FIE funds) and the estimated number of schools the funds will support.

Sources: Comprehensive School Reform Program: State Allocations for all Fiscal Years, U.S. Department of Education, June 25, 2002, www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/allyears.html.
CSR Awards Database, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, August 2002 (Note: The number of schools receiving awards was taken from the SEDL database, which was undergoing revisions at the time of this final report; the final number of schools awarded funds may have changed).

an increased appreciation for the role of the district in supporting or facilitating comprehensive school reform (NAS, 1999).

Emerging studies of comprehensive school reform have shown mixed outcomes. Some early studies suggested that the outcomes can be promising, as reflected by syntheses of these studies (Desimone, 2000; and Datnow and Stringfield, 2000). However, other studies have found no significant effects of comprehensive school reform on student achievement (e.g., Berends et al., 2002). The completed research includes a variety of

evaluations of specific research-based methods (e.g., Slavin and Madden, 2000),[11] analyses of student achievement outcomes in entire school systems (e.g., Ross et al., 1999), and policy studies of strategies for educating disadvantaged children (e.g., Stringfield et al., 1997). In addition, the U.S. Department of Education funded 46 studies,[12] whose progress was tracked and documented to encourage coordination among the studies (COSMOS/TMG, 2001), including the several components of the National Evaluation of CSRD. Yet other studies and related activities are being tracked by the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR).

Earlier research also includes individual case studies of CSRD-like comprehensive school reform, such as five case studies commissioned by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education—CPRE (Odden, Archibald, and Tychsen, 1999a and 1999b; Archibald and Odden, 2000; Odden and Archibald, 2000; and Fermanich, Odden, and Archibald, 2000). Another multiple-case study covered nine elementary schools engaged in comprehensive efforts similar to the CSRD program (The Dana Center, 1999). Among other findings, the cross-case analysis suggested that reform was more likely to succeed when efforts focused on boosting the schools' instructional leadership (e.g., the capacity of principals and the channeling of resources, including technical assistance, to enhance instructional leadership), and when these efforts were combined with clear, measurable, and rigorous school accountability provisions.

Overall, the available and ongoing research demonstrates that the CSRD program emerged against a solid backdrop of prior conceptual work and empirical evidence. At the same time, the experiences have raised at least two ongoing issues worth mentioning.[13] First, "CSRD" is not synonymous with "comprehensive school reform." As used in the present report, CSRD has been defined specifically to represent the congressionally legislated program that started in 1998—its major distinction being the identification of nine specific components to be implemented as part of comprehensive reform. In contrast,

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[11]One criticism is that very few of the research-based methods "...have been the subject of high quality evaluations that justify confidence in their effectiveness," and that in addition, "...the few models that do have a substantial amount of research...are models for which evaluations were conducted mainly by the design team, not objective third-party evaluators" (Desimone, 2000, p. 37).

[12]Most of the studies are independent studies, totally unrelated to the National Evaluation of the CSRD Program. Further, many of the studies are on "comprehensive school reform," which may have been put into place quite independent of the CSRD program. In this sense, the bulk of the studies should not be considered evaluations of the CSRD program. For instance, eight of the studies are evaluations of individual research-based methods. Many of the studies are being conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Regional Educational Laboratories and supported by ED's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) or Policy and Program Studies Service.

[13]Unfortunately, neither of these issues has been given sufficient attention in the existing literature (e.g., Datnow and Stringfield, 2000).

"comprehensive school reform" does not carry the specific connotation that there are nine components—although the principles of comprehensive school reform are compatible with and may even be comparable in some instances to CSRD's nine components.

Second, the reform heritage just traced has been heavily dominated by the existence of research-based "models." A resulting confusion is that the desired reform (and especially its comprehensiveness) has been sometimes assumed to be no more than the adoption and implementation of an externally-developed, research-based "model." However, in reality the required reform effort must go beyond the "model," because most of the "models" are not comprehensive. They focus on either a specific subject matter (e.g., reading) or a particular phase of instruction (e.g., homework), or both; but a school needs to implement a reform that embraces the entirety of its operations, covering all grades, all subjects, and all students in the school. To this extent, the breadth of successful reform will go well beyond the adoption and implementation of most of the available research-based "models."

A final clarification of comprehensive school reform also derives from the ongoing NAS experience. Originally, NAS considered "break the mold designs" and "design teams"—and ultimately "externally developed reform design"—to be the desired agents of change. The original concept of "design," as used by NAS, may indeed have been sufficient to capture the breadth of comprehensive reform. "Design" implies an overall plan for the comprehensive reform of an entire school, incorporating all aspects of the curriculum, school operation, and instruction. However, many of the research-based "models" that later emerged were then assumed to be comprehensive, especially because many had the characteristic of being externally developed (e.g., CPRE, 1998). In fact, many of the "models" were limited to specific grades or academic subjects and alone could not support *comprehensive* reform unless they were integrated into a comprehensive design or plan.

As a result, the present report considers a research-based "model" to be a way of dealing with the first of the nine components of the comprehensive school reform demonstration (CSRD) program— implementing research-based methods and strategies. Further, to avoid perpetuating the use of the word "model" as necessarily implying comprehensive reform, this report uses the language of the legislation, or research-based "method" or "strategies," including when referring to such "models" that are externally-developed (such as *Success for All* or *Accelerated Schools*). Thus, externally-developed methods can lead to comprehensive reform, but only if the method requires a school to attend thoroughly the other eight CSRD components. However, if the method does not lead in a comprehensive direction, a CSRD school must undertake additional initiatives to cover the other eight components necessary for the school to meet its CSRD mandate.

1.2 THE FIELD-FOCUSED STUDY

The present report covers the Field-Focused Study. It is one part of the National Evaluation of the CSRD Program, which involved multiple related efforts being conducted separately by different research organizations (Doherty, 2000).[14] The study called for data collection from a stratified, random sample of 18 schools from the first two cohorts of CSRD awardees. The data collection was based on intensive, field-based efforts: two visits per school year, for each of two years. Appendix A contains the detailed design and methodology for the study.

The Field-Focused Study was mainly aimed at describing the links among school reform processes, instruction, and other educational activities. The study involved in-depth examination of these linkages, thereby limiting the number of schools that could be the subject of inquiry. In addition, the schools in the Field-Focused Study also were examined as a source of promising reform strategies (i.e., practices, programs, and technical assistance or support strategies) to share with other schools (see Chapter 2). The topics covered by the study and in this report include:

> 1) The progress in implementing the 9 CSRD components by the 18 schools;
>
> 2) The role of district and state influences in implementing the program;
>
> 3) The apparent pathways or strategies for implementing comprehensive school reform; and
>
> 4) The early signs regarding the potential sustainability of the program at the school level.

Because the Field-Focused Study directly investigated the complexity of events (including contextual conditions) involved with the nine CSRD components as they might occur at an individual school, the study used the case study method as the primary research

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[14]For instance, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) compiled baseline information on all CSRD schools. SEDL's database provided the sampling frame for selecting the sample of schools for the Field-Focused Study, to assure that the selected schools represented the entire universe. A second project was a large-scale sample survey of CSRD schools conducted in 1998-99, 1999-00, and 2000-01 by Westat. The survey was included as part of the broader National Longitudinal Survey of Schools (NLSS), also designed by Westat, that followed a longitudinal sample of Title I schools over that same time period. Principals and up to six teachers were surveyed in the CSRD sample of schools as well as the NLSS sample, and comparable data were collected from both sets of schools. The 1998-99 sample of CSRD schools consisted of 318 schools. In 1999-00, the CSRD sample was augmented by 725 schools. The data on the CSRD and NLSS schools were analyzed by RAND.

method (Yin, 2003).[15] To tighten the analytic process, the application of the method to the Field-Focused Study included four important features not always found in other case study research, as follows.

A theoretical framework guided the study. The first feature was the use of a theoretical framework—i.e., "*logic model*"—whose development began prior to data collection. The evaluation team developed a logic model to depict the working of CSRD at any given school (see Exhibit 1-3). The model portrays the 9 components of CSRD as boxes in the exhibit, with CSRD Component 4 ("Measurable Goals and Benchmarks") being split into two boxes (4a and 4b). The generic model also contains two important concepts not explicitly part of the original 9 CSRD components but that are necessarily involved in attempts to improve student performance: *school organization* (located as part of box 4a) and *instruction and learning* (see the unnumbered box).[16] To preserve space, the model does not show the contextual conditions—e.g., district and state policies affecting the school—although these conditions also have been part of the Field-Focused Study.

The model, as with all logic models, shows all of the boxes, connected by arrows, that hypothesizes how comprehensive school reform might produce change in *student performance* (see Box 4b). The dotted arrows are hypothetically related to the research-based method defined as CSRD Component 1. The solid arrows are hypothetical but nevertheless serve as logical links suggesting how other school actions can lead to effects, which in turn become actions for other effects—all part of a chain of events. Key to interpreting and using the overall model, therefore, is that data and findings are needed about the "arrows,"[17] and not just the "boxes" in the model—that is, "how" and "why"

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[15]Investigators assessing a directly comparable initiative—the scale-up phase of the New American Schools (NAS)—arrived at the same methodological conclusion, even though NAS funding levels were higher than CSRD funding. The investigators argued that the interventions and research questions called for "...a *replicated case-study* approach, with the unit of analysis being the implemented school" (Bodilly, 1998, p. 25). [Emphasis added.]

[16]Any reform undertaking should be proceeded by a needs assessment; and, in fact, some of the externally developed methods called for the conduct of a needs assessment prior to adoption. Without a needs assessment, it is unlikely that a school would be able to properly design a comprehensive reform, or know which method to select (Datnow and Stringfield, 2000). The Field-Focused Study did not address the topic of needs assessments because it was not one of the 9 CSRD components. However, the evaluation team subscribes to the research that needs assessments are a necessary step in reform efforts, and believes this topic should be addressed in future research.

[17]For illustrative purposes, the arrows have been shown in a linear sequence that does not appreciate the full dynamics of events in real life. However, such dynamics were not ignored in the data collection for the Field-Focused Study.

Exhibit 1-3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR A CSRD SCHOOL
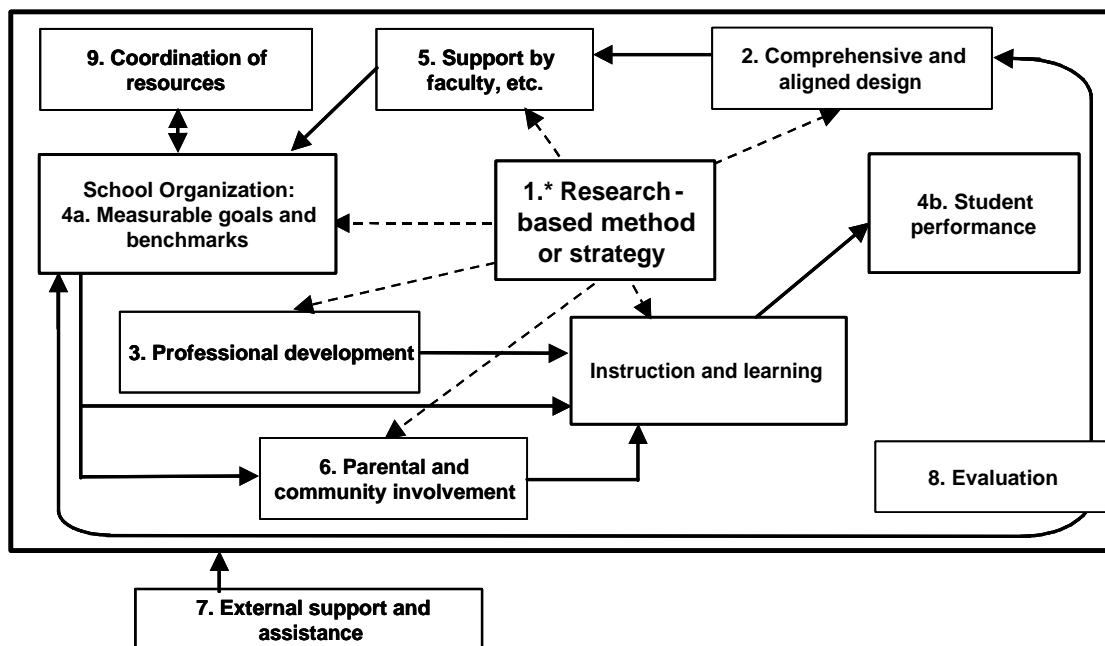
* = The numbered boxes refer to the nine CSRD components.

events in one box affected those in another, not just the identity and presence or absence of the events within each box.

In the Field-Focused Study, data collection teams were asked to customize the generic logic model into a specific but tentative model for their school(s) *prior to* actual data collection. The details of the logic model were likely to vary, depending upon the nature of the research-based method that the school had adopted to satisfy CSRD Component 1, as well as other conditions that might have been revealed during a site-screening phase that led to the selection of the school for inclusion in the Field-Focused Study in the first place. The stipulated logic model then became the occasion for field inquiry—appreciating that "discovery" of unexpected events and relationships also could occur as part of the data collection procedure.

The evaluation team could then customize the generic logic model, depending upon the CSRD Component 1 research-based method or practice that had been adopted (*Success for All* and *America's Choice* in these examples) (see Exhibit 1-4). The labels in the boxes reflect the activities emphasized by each method, and the arrows suggest the connections implicit in each program. Important in these two logic models are therefore the boxes with

Exhibit 1-4

BEGINNING TO CUSTOMIZE THE ORIGINAL FRAMEWORK:
TWO DIFFERENT CSRD MODELS

1-4a: Success for All

9. Local, state, and federal funds need to replace reading program

5. 80% of faculty vote by secret ballot to adopt the model

2. Comprehensive and aligned design

4a. Redistribute time and schedule so each child has 90-minute block for reading instruction

1.* Success for All: Reading

4b. Student performance in reading

3. Ongoing coaching support for teachers

Prescribed instructional materials

6. Family Support Team: Parents engaged in reading for 20 minutes each day; advisory committee

8. Existing state and local assessments evaluate progress

7. SFA provides external advisor who visits school regularly

1-4b: America's Choice

9. Requires coordination of resources not addressed specifically

5. Substantial majority of faculty must support model

2. Comprehensive and aligned design

4a. May require some adaptation, but not a key part of the model

1.* America's Choice: Comprehensive in areas of instruction

4b. Improved student performance is core

3. Extensive attention to professional development

Core model is standards-driven instruction and learning

6. Parental and community involvement

8. Uses new standards reference examinations and state assessment results

7. National center and regional coordinators provide training and support

* = The numbered boxes refer to the nine CSRD components.

no connecting arrows—implying that the adopted method does not, on the surface, cover all of the CSRD components. To achieve comprehensive school reform, a school must therefore find another way of addressing the non-integrated component(s). For example, *Success for All*'s defining feature is that it only covers reading—even though it covers reading comprehensively; thus, the program in and of itself does not connect with CSRD Component 2 ("Comprehensive and Aligned Design"); *America's Choice*'s attention to instruction omits any explicit connection to CSRD Component 6 ("Parental and Community Involvement") and Component 9 ("Coordination of Resources").

Overall, careful use of logic models strongly enhances the precision and logic of case study research, especially in evaluation studies.

Rival explanations were investigated. A second feature was the explicit identification and then collection of data about *rival explanations* (Yin, 2000). In the case of the Field-Focused Study, the rivals were alternative explanations for any of the observed outcomes—e.g., whether conditions *other than* the CSRD funding and mission could account for the observed student performance outcomes (positive, negative, or neutral) or even for a school's reform-oriented implementation actions.[18] The use of rivals is aimed at reducing the uncertainty about potential relationships, even though the reduction will not nearly be as large as that occurring in a "true experiment." Collecting data about possible rival explanations was therefore part of the case studies of the CSRD schools. Such data collection strengthened the case studies by broadening the data to be collected but keeping the entire effort well-targeted.

Chronological timelines traced key events. A third feature was the explicit use of chronological timelines to trace the key events in the schools being studied. The temporal sequence of events was examined for clues regarding the strength of CSRD or rival explanations. The Field-Focused Study therefore attempted to collect data faithfully on the timing of various events.

Classrooms were observed. A fourth and final feature involved data collection aimed at revealing possible differences in implementation patterns across different classrooms within each school. If reform actions were incrementally implemented or affected one curriculum topic but not another, the targeted classrooms should have shown earlier evidence of implementation than the nontargeted classrooms. To put this feature into place, the field teams used a formal classroom observation instrument that was part of the case study protocol, described next.

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[18]A common misinterpretation in using the rivals method is that the rival is perceived to be that "no positive outcome occurred." Key to avoiding this misinterpretation is that the method calls for defining rival *explanations* (or hypotheses), not rival outcomes.

Site visit teams used a case study protocol. The main instrument for the Field-Focused Study was a case study protocol, contained as an attachment to Appendix A, which also gives fuller details on the methods used in the entire study. This protocol was the subject of ED and OMB review, final clearance for which was received in October 2000.[19]

The protocol was designed as an instrument aimed at the investigator, not at any group of respondents. The instrument represented a field team's agenda for collecting evidence from a variety of sources—including but not limited to open-ended interviews. Using the collected evidence, the protocol's topics were then addressed by the team by creating a formal and documented database that included quantitative as well as qualitative data. The focus of the protocol was on tracking and documenting actual behaviors and events through converging evidence. This objective may be contrasted with surveys, where the information is based on self-reports by a survey's respondents.

1.3 SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS BEING STUDIED

Though small in size, the role of the 18 schools in the Field-Focused Study was nevertheless to represent all of the CSRD schools. A two-stage sampling procedure, described fully in Appendix A, also attended to stratifications by research-based method and by school district. The operational goal was to have two schools with the same research-based method (in different districts) and two schools in the same district (but with different methods). The stratification provided the basis for a minimal *replication* design, whereby implementation experiences could more readily be attributed either to the method or to the district conditions or to neither—thereby helping to arrive at a broader set of conclusions than attainable through a set of individualized or idiosyncratic case studies alone.[20]

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[19]The clearance came just in time to schedule and conduct the first round of site visits in the fall and winter of 2000-01, which also included a final training session for the teams held in early November 2001. Thus, the teams had to scramble during these few months to cover all the designated schools.

[20]This methodology proved to be extremely effective as the Field-Focused Study progressed. Site visit teams were able to crosswalk information and data gathered at schools within the same district, and investigate reasons for missing information. For example, staff from one school frequently referenced another districtwide research-based method or strategy they credited with allowing them to continue reform efforts once CSRD funding ended. When no reference to that initiative was made at the second school in that district, the team had enough contextual information to ask probing questions and learn that staff at the second school were struggling with internal support issues, as well as potential reorganization, and had not bought into the new method.

The selected schools were promised anonymity for participating in the evaluation. As a result, Exhibit 1-5 only shows the locations of the schools, by state. However, more detail about the schools' characteristics can be found in Exhibit 7 of Appendix A.

1.4 STUDY ACTIVITIES AND A GENERAL CAVEAT

The Field-Focused Study was a multi-year effort whose main data collection occurred over a two-year period (2000-01 and 2001-02). Findings from the first two rounds of site visits, which took place during each of the two semesters in the academic year 2000-01, were reported in an annual report to ED in December of 2001 (COSMOS, 2001). The current report updates and expands on those findings (Section 2), and draws conclusions about the implementation of CSRD (Section 3). As a general caveat in interpreting the findings, note that the Field-Focused Study was not designed to determine the causal effects of the CSRD program or of the specific research-based methods employed by the 18 schools.

Exhibit 1-5

**LOCATION OF THE FINAL SAMPLE OF CSRD SCHOOLS
FOR INCLUSION IN THE FIELD-FOCUSED STUDY**
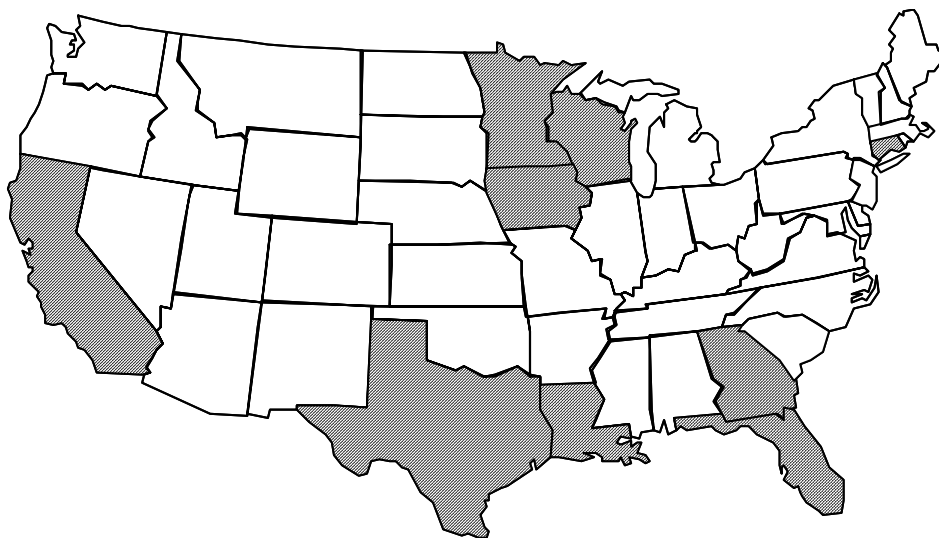
2. CSRD IMPLEMENTATION:
THE 9 CSRD COMPONENTS

The initial two rounds of site visits during 2000-01 provided preliminary information about the status of CSRD implementation at the 18 schools. These findings were updated and expanded upon following the final two rounds of site visits in 2001-02. During the final year of data collection, five schools had officially completed CSRD and were to be operating without CSRD funding[21] (their CSRD activities began in 1998-99), and 13 were in their third and final year of funding (CSRD activities began in 1999-00). The site visits collected data about: the progress being made on the 9 CSRD components; salient district and state conditions; the likelihood that reform would be sustained; and promising reform strategies practices emerging from the sites.[22]

This section discusses observations regarding each of the 9 CSRD components, including the use of the research-based method at each school (CSRD Component 1) and the breadth and comprehensiveness of the schools' reform designs (CSRD Component 2). Throughout this section are references to ***promising reform strategies*** (found in Appendix B) investigated during site visits to the 18 CSRD schools. These strategies are provided as examples of innovative or successful ways in which schools addressed one or more of the 9 CSRD components.

Section 3 of this report then covers related data collection about contextual conditions, such as district and state policies possibly affecting comprehensive reform at the schools. The section summarizes the overall strength of CSRD implementation, also examining the conditions or pathways associated with implementation. The section ends with an analysis of the likely sustainability of comprehensive school reform following the end of CSRD funding.

2.1 IMPLEMENTING RESEARCH-BASED METHODS
(CSRD Component 1)

All of the schools initially adopted either a nationally or locally developed research-based method (see Exhibit 2-1). Among the "national" methods, 3 schools were implementing *Success for All (SFA)* only; 2 each were implementing *High Schools that Work (HSTW)*, *Accelerated Schools*, *Lightspan*, and *Coalition of Essential Schools (CES)*; 1 each was implementing *Success in the Making (SIM)* and *Co-NECT* and the dual method

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[21]Three of the five schools had received no-cost extensions allowing them to carry on some CSRD activities for another semester or year.

[22] Appendix D contains short summaries of these reports.

Exhibit 2-1

RESEARCH-BASED METHODS ADOPTED BY 18 CSRD SCHOOLS AND FIDELITY ASSESSMENTS OBTAINED FROM DEVELOPERS

School Name/*Method**	CSRD Award Status in 2001-02	Developer	Fidelity Assessments Obtained	Fidelity Rating[1]
School A *Accelerated Schools*	Post-Award	Accelerated Schools University of Connecticut	Assessment made by local representative of developer	High
School B *High Schools That Work*	Year 3	Southern Regional Ed. Bd.; Atlanta, GA	On-site reports obtained from the developer	Medium
School C *Co-NECT*	Year 3	BBN Corporation Cambridge, MA	Assessment made by local representative of developer	Medium
School D *Success for All/Roots & Wings*	Year 3	SFA Baltimore, MD	SFA semi-annual implementation review reports	High
School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	Post-Award	CES Oakland, CA	Developer had no contact with school; school not implementing	Low
School F *Coalition of Essential Schools*	Year 3	CES Oakland, CA	Assessment made by local representative of developer	Medium
School G *"Special Literacy Model"**	Year 3	Local university professor	Assessment made by local representative of developer	High
School H *Success for All*	Post-Award	SFA Baltimore, MD	Assessment made by local representative of developer	Low
School I *Lightspan*	Year 3	Lightspan Partnership San Diego, CA	Self-assessment by school staff (no contact with developer)	Low
School J *"Performance Tasks Model"**	Year 3	Local superintendent of schools	Assessment made by local representative of developer	Medium
School K *Success for All*	Year 3	SFA Baltimore, MD	SFA semi-annual implementation review reports	High
School L *"Behavior Mod. Model"**	Year 3	Local consultant and school leadership	Assessment made by local representative of developer	Medium
School M *Lightspan*	Year 3	Lightspan Partnership San Diego, CA	Assessment made by local representative of developer	Low
School N *Success for All*	Post-Award	SFA Baltimore, MD	SFA semi-annual implementation review reports	Medium
School O[2] *Success-in-the-Making*	Year 3	Computer Curriculum Corp.; Sunnyvale, CA	Assessment made by school coordinator; developer made no fidelity judgements	Medium
School P *High Schools that Work*	Year 3	Southern Regional Ed. Bd.; Atlanta, GA	On-site reports obtained from the developer	High
School Q *Accelerated Schools*	Year 3	Accelerated Schools University of Connecticut	Assessment made by local representative of developer	High
School R *"Comp. Reform Model"**	Post-Award	School leadership	Developer makes no fidelity judgments	Low

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

[1]Ratings are based on developer enumeration of presence of method components at each school, as well as judgment about school's understanding of the method's essence. Developers articulated judgments with some degree of detail about each school.

[2]School O originally identified Co-NECT as its reform method in its CSRD application; it decided instead to expand the use of the SIM method.

of *SFA* and *Roots & Wings*; and 4 schools were implementing "locally developed" methods.[23] Appendix C contains descriptions of the methods in the final sample.

2.1.1 Implementation of the research-based method is fully proceeding at 9 of the 18 schools, with partial or minimal implementation at the other 9. Using a five-point scale (*not implementing, planning*, *piloting*, *implementing*, and *fulfilling or sustaining*),[24] 15 of the 18 schools were judged to be implementing the method at some level. However, the teams' judgments distinguished between two subgroups: 9 schools (2 of the 9 had completed their CSRD grant period) that appeared to be in the *implementing* or *fulfilling or sustaining* category, and 6 schools (all in their third year of the CSRD grant) still only partially implementing (i.e., *planning* or *piloting*) their method (see Exhibit 2-2). [As a promising reform strategy, see "Stringent Implementation of the Research-Based Method Believed to Result in Improved Reading Score," in Appendix B.]

Of the 6 schools judged to be only partially implementing (i.e., in the planning or piloting phase) two schools (Schools I and M) adopted *Lightspan* as their research-based method—a method requiring extensive home-parent participation. Both schools had failed to achieve such participation, and by the time of the final site visit, the method was in use at only one grade level at each school. A third school (School B) was a school whose implementation of a method only began to expand in the second year of CSRD funding, but by its final year appeared to be diminishing again. The other three schools (Schools C, L, and O) were implementing portions of the method schoolwide but had not yet adopted all of the components associated with the method.

Implementation appeared to be minimal or had stalled completely at three schools (Schools E, H, and R—all of which had completed their CSRD grant period), as explained in Exhibit 2-3.

2.1.2 All but four schools are implementing the originally proposed method. With the exception of 4 of the 18 schools, all had kept to the method named in their original CSRD application. Schools E and H were no longer implementing the method they proposed for the reasons described above. School R was only using remnants of its locally-

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[23]Because the CSRD legislation called for schools to employ research-based methods and strategies that have been successfully replicated, most schools in the first and second cohort adopted externally developed methods. While locally developed methods could have been entirely developed within the schools, the likelihood (confirmed during the Field-Focused Study) was that local methods were developed externally.

[24]The scale is derived from Bodilly (1998). To arrive at a score, field teams were instructed to triangulate data from three sources: interviews of school staff; direct observations of classroom and school behavior; and consultations with the originator or "developer" of the method (who was available for most of the schools). The five-point scale does not fully reflect the complexity of method implementation: methods can be implemented 1) fully in some classrooms but not at all in others; and 2) partially in some or all classrooms. Further, different components of a method can be implemented or not implemented (and in some classrooms but not others).

Exhibit 2-2

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF RESEARCH-BASED METHODS
(Component 1)

Level of Implementation	School/*Method**	Implementation Status
Appears to be "implementing" or "fulfilling and sustaining" the method (n=9)	School A *Accelerated Schools*	Elements of the method were observed in *all* classrooms; teachers were actively engaged in accountability and decisionmaking at the school, using expertise to affect change.
	School D *Success for All*	Method was in use in *all* classrooms in reading and math; teachers and students were familiar and comfortable with the curriculum.
	School F *Coalition of Essential Schools*	*Nearly all* faculty were involved in collaboration groups, school established three school-to-work academies (with additional academies planned for future years).
	School G *"Special Literacy Model"**	Materials and concepts were in use in *every* classroom and in *all* facets of the schools curriculum.
	School J *"Performance Tasks Model"**	Aspects of the method were in use in *all* classrooms; parts of the method (i.e., portfolios) were more evident.
	School K *Success for All*	Method was in use in *all* classrooms, for *all* students, *every* day, though use in the upper grades was faltering.
	School N *Success for All*	*All* classrooms were using the method during the designated time, with varying levels of expertise.
	School P *High Schools That Work*	Use of method strategies was evident in *nearly all* classrooms; class periods scheduled in HSTW-recommended blocks.
	School Q *Accelerated Schools*	*Most* teachers and administrators supported use of the method, and aspects were observed in *all* classrooms.
Appears to be partially implementing the method (i.e., "planning" or piloting") (n=6)	School B *High Schools That Work*	School began implementation efforts, but *support faltered* during 2000-2001 when staff *voted against structural changes*.
	School C *Co-NECT*	Teachers were organized into small communities; students worked in interdisciplinary project groups; technology use was improved. However, the method was *not used equally by all* staff.
	School I *Lightspan*	No consistent use of the method observed during 2000–01; changes in implementation plan resulted for 2001–02 and the method was used in *all* 1st grade classrooms (and *80 percent* of 1st grade homes).
	School L *"Behavior Modification Model"**	Implementation of behavioral aspects of the method *varied* by teacher; implementation of instructional aspects was *minimal.*
	School M *Lightspan*	Support for the method was limited throughout CSRD period; despite improvements in use in 2000-01, *only one class level* and an afterschool program used the method in 2001-02, and *home implementation stopped*.
	School O *Success-in-the-Making*	Teachers used method *inconsistently,* with preparation for state assessment taking precedence; implementation became *less consistent in 2001-2002* when state-intervention ended.
Is not implementing, or ceased implementing the method (n=3)	School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	By 2001-2002, *implementation had stopped*, as the school focused on organizational and behavioral problems; some aspects of the method remained as part of school philosophy.
	School H *Success for All*	School fully implemented the method throughout CSRD award period; voted to shift to district reading curriculum and *implementation stopped* in 2001-2002.
	School R *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	Aspects of the method were initiated, but *diminished (almost entirely)* after first year of funding; in 2001-2002, some elements were being *revived*, but with no attention to any CSRD design.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

Exhibit 2-3

THREE CSRD SCHOOLS WITH MINIMAL OR STALLED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORIGINALLY-ADOPTED RESEARCH-BASED METHOD

School/*Method**	Reason for "Not Implementing" Score
School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	School E underwent significant organizational changes (splitting from a middle school and becoming a separate charter high school), and the attention and energy of staff shifted between year 2 and year 3 from reform to these structural changes. In addition, following the move to a new location, the school staff were faced with further school management problems— including disciplinary issues with students, as well as the general administration of the school.
School H *Success for All*	During the first two rounds of site visits in 2000-01, the site visit team identified School H as fully implementing the method. The loss of CSRD funding was accompanied by a shift in district support for the method, a greater emphasis in the district and state on student achievement scores, and a faculty vote at School H to stop implementing the method during the 2001-02 school year. While the school staff continue to use some of the method's practices, the school's implementation status nevertheless shifted to the "not implementing" category.
School R *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	School R had started implementing a locally developed, schoolwide reform method in its first CSRD year (1998-1999), following several years of planning by the school's top officials and faculty. However, the principal who had led the reform planning left School R just before the start of the first CSRD year, and the school then had three different principals during the three-year period coinciding with its CSRD award. During this period, although implementation of the method had begun in one grade in 1998-1999, commitment to the method diminished rapidly with the succession of principals, and as of 2000-2001 none of the method's features were in place. The school obtained a one-year, no-cost extension for their CSRD award[1] and in 2001–02, and began to implement remnants of the original reform method, but without any understanding of the relation of those elements to a CSRD reform design. The school therefore was still judged to be "not implementing."

* Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

[1] The school spent only a fraction of its CSRD funds by the end of year 3. The newest principal (serving his first year during 2000-01) was committed to revisiting the CSRD activities and the state subsequently approved the request.

developed method that aligned with district policy and the changing needs of the school. School O changed its method from the one originally proposed in its CSRD application because, following the submission of the CSRD application, the school received a poor performance rating in the state's accountability system. Because of the poor rating, the district encouraged School O to expand its use of an alternative method, which was being implemented at many other district schools. With state approval, School O therefore switched from its originally proposed *Co-NECT* method to *Success-in-the-Making* (*SIM*).[25]

A fifth school (School N) was implementing the originally proposed method, but the field team failed to identify it properly during the screening procedure. School N had been expected to adopt *Roots & Wings*, a method developed by the Success for All Foundation to cover mathematics, science, and social studies, in addition to reading. However, although School N was later found to have only implemented *Success for All* (and hence was only covering reading), the school was using both the "roots" level and the "wings" level of *SFA* (but in reading only). During the screening, the school therefore responded that it was using *Roots & Wings* when in fact no method was being used outside of reading.[26]

2.1.3 Developers gave mixed fidelity ratings to the schools. The field teams were able to obtain information about fidelity from developers for 14 of the 18 schools (including locally developed methods).[27] In 6 of these 14 cases, the developers judged the fidelity of implementation to be high; in 1 of the 2 judged to be low, implementation also was low as judged by the site visit team (the other school was rated as having partial implementation). The teams were unable to obtain fidelity ratings from the method developers for four schools: two schools were implementing a national method, but had no contact with the developer; one school was implementing a locally-developed method and had no external consultant; and one school's developer was not willing to make a judgement about fidelity. In all but the last case, the school's own assessment of their fidelity was "low" (the school with the developer unwilling to make an assessment rated their own fidelity as "medium"). Exhibit 2-1 also contains the ratings made about the fidelity in implementing each method.

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[25]The evaluation team became aware of the switch too late to change the final sample of schools to be studied. As a result, the final sample, originally to include a pair of *Co-NECT* schools, had one *Co-NECT* and one *SIM*.

[26]Contrary to School N's usage, schools adopting only the reading component generally report that they have adopted *Success for All*. As a result, the final sample—intending to have one pair of *Success for All* (only) and one pair of dual *SFA-Roots & Wings* combined methods—then had three *Success for All* (only) schools and one school using a combination of the *Success for All* and *Roots & Wings* methods.

[27]Most often, the information came as a result of a face-to-face meeting with the developer's field representative who was providing external technical assistance to the school. However, in other cases the team either contacted the developer by telephone or reviewed a formal report submitted by the developer to the school.

2.1.4 Experiences between locally developed and national methods have not markedly differed. Of particular interest regarding these methods was the collection of *locally developed* methods, for two reasons. First, at the national level, less is known about them than about the "national" methods. Second, one possibility entertained at the outset of the Field-Focused Study was that a CSRD school might have shared in the development of a locally developed method (e.g., serving as a co-developer), thereby qualitatively altering its expected CSRD implementation experience.

Of the 4 locally developed methods, 3 were similar to national methods in having: a formal developer; prior evidence of effectiveness; and ongoing use at two or more schools. Proportionately, the implementation experiences by the schools with locally developed methods did not differ markedly, as shown previously in Exhibit 2-2, from those of the national methods. Further, with the exception noted below, the schools did not have any role in developing the methods. Thus the main difference between the national and locally developed methods appears to be that the latter were only known and being used within a limited regional area—i.e., either a single school district or multiple regions within a single state.

As one result, the field teams were able to locate the local method developers and to collect data from them similar to the data from the national method developers. For instance, the local developers were providing schools with external technical assistance, similar to the assistance being provided by their counterparts with national methods. The single exception again had to do with School R, whose locally developed method was a truly "home-grown" combination of several practices, none of which itself had any method that had a developer.[28]

Two of the methods (adopted by Schools G and J) had both instructional and curriculum content (see Exhibit 2-4). For instance, School J's method involved the development and maintenance of a bank of substantive student tasks ("authentic" tasks) covering each academic subject and enabling students to develop portfolios of their work. The tasks also promoted reasoning and thinking as part of the learning process. In addition, local teachers were encouraged to use their classroom experiences to devise and nominate new tasks to be reviewed for inclusion in the bank. [As a promising reform strategy, see "Research-Based Method Guiding Scope and Sequence of Lessons in All

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[28]School R's CSRD application had indicated that, of the component practices comprising its whole "model," the adherence to state standards represented the research-based component of the entire "model." The state standards go beyond a mere listing of standards and specify a profile of learning—defining what students should know, understand, and be able to demonstrate to a high level of achievement. Students must then satisfactorily complete a state-prescribed classroom assessment for each standard, to show that they have met the standard. However, schools and teachers are to define how students are taught and the specific assignments they are required to complete. In this sense, a case can be made that the state's standards do provide guidance similar to that of a research-based method.

Exhibit 2-4

FOUR LOCALLY DEVELOPED METHODS

School	Method Pseudonym	Description
School G	*"Special Literacy Model'"*	The method has three goals: 1) to implement effective practices for K-3 literacy learning and teaching; 2) to develop teacher leadership teams within a school and its district; and 3) to develop mentor teachers to support the preservice education at the university. The method is centered around a "special topics" university graduate course. Teachers receive credit for their method-related participation. An initial two-week summer institute, attended by representatives from the school, helps to plan the activities over the ensuing academic year, such as the establishment of teacher teams, parent literacy nights, and parent mathematics nights. The method claims to be highly effective in building good instructional practice, teacher cooperation, and the use of a specific array of instructional materials. The method is based on academic research on early literacy.
School J	*"Performance Tasks Model"*	The method is composed of discrete performance tasks, accessible via a Web site, that teachers may select and use to deliver instruction. Tasks are available for all content areas (though more are available for reading/language arts than for any other area). Tasks are designed to be examples of real-life experiences ("authentic" tasks) enabling students to acquire content knowledge, good work habits, and thinking and communication skills. The method promotes reasoning and thinking as part of the learning process. Examples include organizing a healthy luncheon, guiding classmates on a trip, corresponding with a scientific author, and composing a song. The method also incorporates student self-assessments for judging the quality of a product and overall student performance. Students develop a portfolio of their work, and these, along with students' self-assessments, are used to demonstrate and evaluate process and achievement.
School L	*"Behavior Modification Model"*	The goal of the method is to achieve schoolwide change enabling "greater academic achievement, productivity, and prosocial competency." The method consists of a behavioral protocol, climate-setting strategies, and instructional approaches to improving student achievement. Teachers use techniques such as the good behavior game (used during regular instruction time to reward good behavior and cite inappropriate behavior) to teach students what behaviors to exhibit and what behaviors to inhibit. Other behavior modification techniques also are prescribed by the method, including organizing students in the classroom into teams, giving students "jobs" within the classroom, and student monitoring. In addition, students are taught to walk in "model lines" (or one behind the other, with their hands behind their backs) and to use "model voices" (volume levels appropriate to the situation). Other elements of the method have included having students graph their own performance in spelling and math, so that they learn how to do self-assessments and can see their progress, and engage in peer tutoring.
School R	*"Comprehensive Reform Model"*	The original method included the implementation of state standards, which the school identified as among the first at the state level to embrace educational quality reform and "significantly different from other state and national models in that they were more project- and performance-oriented." Other components of the comprehensive method included a *Freshman Foundation* course, intended to help freshman to get prepared for high school; a flexible *block schedule*; an *interdisciplinary curriculum*, whereby teachers of different subjects would have common planning time, hold daily team meetings, and coordinate their instructional schedule; the integration of *school-to-work (school-to-career) topics*; the integrated use of *technology* into the curriculum, especially taking advantage of individually-assigned laptop computers; and a vision of the school as having a *"global" magnet*, transcending the four separate magnet programs at the school. In the final year of implementation, the method had been revised: 1) implementation of state standards continued, 2) the Freshman Foundation course was replaced with Freshman Teams and the use of "My Action Plans (MAPs)" by individual students to guide progress through high school and toward future goals; and 3) the laptop project ended; and 4) the concept of a "global" magnet was replaced with district required small learning communities.

Subject Areas," in Appendix B.] The methods at the two other schools (Schools L and R) more closely resembled "process" methods, focusing either on behavior and climate-setting strategies (School L) or on the use of technology in the curriculum and Freshman transition initiatives (School R). [As a promising reform strategy, see "Teacher Teams Provide Students with Cross-Curricular Authentic Learning Opportunities," in Appendix B.]

2.1.5 Classroom observations are consistent about ongoing experiences with the methods. Direct observations of classrooms in all of the 18 schools were an integral part of assessing the extent and nature of implementation.[29] In only a few cases was the observed implementation different from that expected as a result of the interviews of the schools' officials. For instance, Schools J and B had individual classrooms where implementation was much lower than expected based on the officials' interviews. In the opposite direction, School F's classrooms showed a high degree of implementation even though the interviews had described implementation as still "in progress."

More difficult to assess through classroom observation was any potential role of the other CSRD components. Brief interviews with the teachers whose classrooms had been observed proved more informative. The teachers reported about: their professional development experiences, their perceptions of staff support for reform; and apparent parent and community support in conjunction with their classroom activities.

2.2 COMPREHENSIVENESS OF DESIGNS FOR SCHOOL REFORM (CSRD Component 2)

The field teams assessed the extent and quality of comprehensiveness by attending to the presence of the eight remaining CSRD components and their apparent linkage. Key among these other 8 components is Component 2 (evidence of a "comprehensive design"), which the teams assumed needed to exist if implementation was later to achieve actual comprehensiveness.

To assess progress on this component, the field teams first tried to obtain any documentation of such designs—e.g., the breadth and scope of any school improvement plan, or even the apparent comprehensiveness and convergence of a school budget that integrated CSRD funding within it.[30] The teams then also tried to determine the school

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[29]Each classroom observation involved the use of a formal classroom observation instrument (included in the case study protocol—an attachment to Appendix A).

[30]Not considered sufficient evidence of a comprehensive design was sheer existence of the school's original CSRD application alone. All of the applications address the nine components because states required their districts and schools to do so. However, addressing these components did not necessarily mean that they had been adequately operationalized (and, in some cases the application had been totally prepared by the district and therefore may not have become a salient part of the school's understanding of CSRD). To be

staff's level of awareness and understanding of reform, independent of whether such documentation existed or not. On both fronts, the teams' inquiry was aimed at determining whether the school understood that CSRD meant reforming the entire school—i.e., potentially expanding to its entire way of doing business and all its operations—and not simply adding a new function or project or activity; and that in carrying out such reform, a school would necessarily have to attend to the alignment or connectivity among all of its operations.

   2.2.1 Less than half of the 18 schools had reforms with a comprehensive design. Eight of the 18 schools (Schools A, B, D, F, G, J, L, and P) satisfied both conditions: a) school reform plans or documentation that were comprehensive, and b) acknowledgments or understandings of comprehensiveness by the school staff who had been interviewed (see Exhibit 2-5). Six other schools (Schools C, H, K, N, O, and Q) had comprehensive plans or documentation, such as school improvement plans, but staff were unaware of or detached from any comprehensive vision associated with such documentation. Where understandings of comprehensiveness fell short, the general reason was that CSRD breadth or implementation strongly resembled a separate project or even "add-on" activity at the school. Among most of the remaining schools, neither comprehensive documentation nor requisite staff understanding was present.

   2.2.2 Comprehensiveness of CSRD can emerge from either working with comprehensive research-based methods or having a comprehensive school improvement plan. Of the 8 schools that had satisfied both conditions, the comprehensive designs for 5 of them (Schools A, B, F, J, and P) were associated with the comprehensiveness of the research-based methods that had been adopted, but not necessarily because the school had developed any separate comprehensive reform vision or plan; for the other 3 schools (Schools D, G, and L), the comprehensiveness was associated with a required school improvement plan that was comprehensive even if the research-based method was not. [As a promising reform strategy, see "School Improvement Planning Process Aligns Reform Initiatives," in Appendix B.]

   Overall, 10 of the 18 schools may not yet have fully embraced the principles of reform and steps needed to achieve *comprehensive* reform. Compared to the proportion of schools implementing research-based methods (CSRD Component 1), the proportion of schools with comprehensive designs (CSRD Component 2) was substantially lower.

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credited with pursuing a comprehensive design, schools had to show that they were actually using their CSRD applications in planning and implementing reform, and further that the staff interviewed could express some awareness and understanding of the comprehensive nature of the activities.

Exhibit 2-5

EVIDENCE OF COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN
(Component 2)

School/*Method**	Evidence of Comprehensive Design
School A *Accelerated Schools*	Interviews, classroom observations and documents all made clear that the staff understood and strongly supported the reform process, including some familiarity with the nine CSRD Components.
School B *High Schools That Work*	The reform strategies were integrated into the school improvement plan. The method and plan appeared to be well understood by staff, students, and parents, though support for some elements was declining.
School C *Co-NECT*	The school had a single plan, required by the district, linking all activities to goals, objectives, benchmarks, and strategies. The plan served as funding application for CSRD and was aligned with state standards. However, staff were reportedly disappointed with the plan, which they believed failed to capture all activities and funding streams. Co-NECT was recognized staff as the only comprehensive reform strategy.
School D *Success for All/Roots & Wings*	The district required the school to develop a comprehensive plan aligned to the district's vision for improving student performance. Much of the district plan paralleled the CSRD reform components. Many of the strategies in the plan were specifically tied to the reform methods. Evidence that the staff supported the plan were visible throughout the school, particularly in display materials posted on walls in classrooms and gathering areas.
School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	By the final year of funding, the staff had no vision for comprehensive school reform, probably due to its pre-occupation with its own survival and restructuring. While many staff shared a common philosophy about reform, the methods or means for accomplishing this vision were a source of conflict.
School F *Coalition of Essential Schools*	The CSRD reform plan encompassed all 9 CSRD components, though the school improvement plan focused solely on goals to increase student performance. The majority of staff clearly understood and supported the reform plan.
School G *"Special Literacy Model"**	The district-required school improvement planning process played a central role in establishing the comprehensiveness of the reform effort. Every faculty member signs the plan to indicate an understanding of his or her role in implementing the plan.
School H *Success for All*	The school improvement plan had a comprehensive set of goals and strategies, generally aligned with the CSRD components, by driven by the state assessment. The comprehensiveness of the reform effort was widely understood, though by 2001-02, the staff felt their reform efforts were in conflict with the districtwide reform agenda and plan.
School I *Lightspan*	The school had two plans, one covering achievement goals, and another summarizing a variety of school initiatives. Neither offered a comprehensive picture or plan for the nine CSRD components. Teachers described the school as having a split focus and a mission that was way to broad.
School J *"Performance Tasks Model"**	The school's improvement plan did not address the CSRD reform components, but did reflect the school's goals and strategies for improving student achievement. The method itself included all reform components, and staff appeared to understand and support both the reform effort and the method.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given "pseudonyms."

(Continued on next page)

Exhibit 2-5 (Continued)

School/*Method**	Evidence of Comprehensive Design
School K *Success for All*	The school improvement plan addressed each component in relation to reading, but little emphasis was placed on other subjects. A steering committee managed implementation and integration of reform components. Staff appeared to understand reform effort.
School L *"Behavior Modification Model"**	The district required the school to develop a comprehensive plan aligned to the district's vision for improving student performance, which paralleled the CSRD reform components. Staff appeared to understand the district reform plan, which was comprehensive (even though the research-based method did not appear to be well-integrated into this plan).
School M *Lightspan*	The school's original improvement plan included Lightspan, but didn't cover the other reform components. A revised plan was finalized in June 2001 and was intended to be aligned with state and district standards, however, a new school administration the following year did not think the plan addressed the school's needs sufficiently. Some staff believed the plan was being ignored and others argued it was not a practical document.
School N *Success for All*	All 9 elements of the reform were present in the school. A new plan was adopted in 2001–2002 that aligned the plan to the state assessment, and set strategies for reaching improvement goals. However, it did not appear to be a working document at the school; programmatic and other decisions were made without reference to the overall design.
School O *Success-in-the-Making*	The school's improvement plan listed its objective as improving student performance on state assessments; the plan contained references to a number of reform components. The breath of the planning process and SIM appeared to provide a unifying plan of action throughout the school.
School P *High Schools That Work*	The reform strategies were integrated into the school improvement plan. Staff and the core leadership team understood and supported the method and the reform plan.
School Q *Accelerated Schools*	The school addressed the nine reform components in their proposal, with varying levels of detail. Some staff, particularly on the leadership committee supported the plan, but high turnover among staff resulted little understanding or support for the comprehensive reform design by a large number of newer staff.
School R *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	The method initially reflected comprehensive whole school reform; but was not used after the first year of CSRD funding. During the school's final CSRD year, the reform effort was revived, but the lack of a clear and comprehensive plan (understood by all staff) was limiting the impact of the changes.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given "pseudonyms."

2.3 PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE 7 OTHER CSRD COMPONENTS

As with the first two components, the site visit protocol called for covering each of the other seven CSRD components individually. However, the findings from the site visits suggested that these seven components could be dealt with in several combinations, in the interest of streamlining the discussion:

- Professional development (Component 3) and external technical support and assistance (Component 7);

- Measurable goals and benchmarks (Component 4) and evaluation strategies (Component 8);

- Support within the school (Component 5) and parent and community involvement (Component 6); and

- Coordination of resources (Component 9) and sustainability.

To be noted is that the last combination joins one of the seven components (Component 9) with another topic of high interest but that has not been regarded as a separate CSRD component—*sustainability*. Inherent to comprehensive school reform is that efforts cannot be short-lived as in a specially funded "project." Thus the Field-Focused Study has devoted explicit attention to the issue of sustainability (Section 3.5 addresses the issue of sustainability in greater detail).

2.3.1 Both professional development (Component 3) and external technical support and assistance (Component 7) have largely been devoted to the implementation of the research-based method, not necessarily comprehensive reform more broadly. The rationale for pairing these two CSRD components is as follows: Most schools were engaged in moderate to intensive professional development in relation to implementing CSRD, but most if not all of this professional development was being provided by an external technical support team (see Exhibit 2-6).[31]

Exhibit 2-6 summarizes the professional development reported in the site visits. The exhibit distinguishes between method-related professional development and other, reform-related professional development. The last column in the exhibit also comments on any unusual barriers to professional development identified through the site visits.

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[31]By design and instruction from the U.S. Department of Education, and consistent with CSRD program guidance, the Field-Focused Study deliberately defined "external" support and assistance to exclude assistance by the district.

Exhibit 2-6

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
(Component 3)

School Name/ *Method**	Types and Frequency of Method-Related Professional Development (PD) Activities	Other Professional Development Activities	Barriers
School A *Accelerated Schools*	Extensive training in AS philosophy and "powerful learning" strategies for all staff; weekly cadres meetings allowed staff to identify issues of concern for entire school and develop hypotheses to address them.	Staff received training in successful reading strategies for LEP students from local university consultants, as well as test preparation and leadership skills.	District-wide budget cuts would limit formal PD activities in 2002-03.
School B *High Schools That Work*	CSRD increased PD activities by 12 times compared to year prior to grant; all activities were focused on HSTW and included peer-to-peer presentations.	Implementation of *Making Schools Work* at the middle schools involved some training for high school teachers, related to facilitating the transition from middle to high school.	Nearly one-third of the teachers quit or retired; support for HSTW was fading, though upcoming merger with county high school may revive the reform effort.
School C *Co-NECT*	Professional development focused on comprehensive planning in relation to the SIP process, as well as use of student achievement data for planning, technology integration, project-based learning, and assessment.	Teachers had a common planning period to facilitate cooperative learning.	Professional development requirements were not tied to teacher re-certification, giving teachers less incentive to participate.
School D *Success for All/Roots & Wings*	Virtually all professional development was linked to the reform method; the principal estimated that 40 hours of professional development activities were offered per teacher, and that about 70 percent of staff participated at this level.	Administrators and staff meet bi-monthly to work on curricular strategies; receive training from district on use of data.	All other schools in the district used district-promoted reading and math curricula, and received district-sponsored professional development; isolating school staff.
School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	Formal professional development related to the method was primarily available to the high school teachers during the first year of the CSRD grant; little occurred in later years.	Beginning in 2001-02,the school closed early two days a month to allow staff to address schoolwide concerns.	PD sessions and staff planning time were being used to address administrative issues, such as discipline.
School F *Coalition of Essential Schools*	Collaborative groups and action teams were the main PD-delivery method, and nearly all staff participated by 2001-02; staff took part in a week-long "CES change process" course and in a local HSTW network.	Training by district consultants has included: using electronic portfolios, using independent thinking, distance learning, and state standards/ testing.	Lack of funding for substitute teachers in 2001-02 may mean groups can no longer meet during the school day.
School G *"Special Literacy Model"**	Nearly all staff participate in method-related PD that is related to comprehensive reform and is results-based.	Twice monthly PD related to math is presented by a math specialist.	

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

Exhibit 2-6 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Types and Frequency of Method-Related Professional Development (PD) Activities	Other Professional Development Activities	Barriers
School H *Success for All*	Until 2001-02, school staff received method-related PD twice per year from developer, and on an ongoing basis from campus instructional coordinator (through modeling, observations, and grade-level planning).	The district provided training-of-trainer PD on content standards, access to resources, and student expectations. When the school stopped implementing SFA in 2001-02, the district also provided training on the reading curriculum.	
School I *Lightspan*	Earlier training in the method was limited, but in 2001-02, training by in-house staff and accessibility to materials better enabled 1st grade teachers to begin implementation.	School provided staff with collaborative time during 2001-02, allowing staff to meet by grade level, examine student achievement scores, develop ideas and share plans.	District restricts early school dismissal and teacher planning days.
School J *"Performance Tasks Model"**	All but three teachers received PD related to the method, including training sessions on active learning, self and peer assessment, cooperative planning, and alignment with state standards.	Teachers had to complete 2 half-day training sessions to meet state's continuing education requirement; district provided PD on understanding and using student achievement data.	
School K *Success for All*	Extensive PD offered around method, including five-day introductory workshop, as well as opportunities for training of tutors and the Family Support Team.	District required teachers to complete 2 half-day training sessions to meet state's continuing education requirement; district provided PD related to understanding and using student achievement data.	
School L *"Behavior Modification Model"**	Staff received training in the method through in-service days at the start of the year, annual retreats, and ongoing modeling and observations by the lead teacher.	Teachers met bi-weekly (once on staff issues; once on curricular topics); district required 18 hours of PD activities, and provided PD on the math and reading curricula.	Lack of implementation of instructional portions of the method indicated inadequate PD on this component.
School M *Lightspan*	Activities were primarily focused on grade 3–5 teachers who used Lightspan; one presentation was made to all teachers in the school. Four Lightspan training events were provided during 2000–01; no training was provided in 2001-02.	The district provided between three and four PD days a year through a catalog of staff development opportunities; there was no coordination to ensure staff selected PD sessions related to the school's reform efforts.	

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

(Continued on next page)

Exhibit 2-6 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Types and Frequency of Method-Related Professional Development (PD) Activities	Other Professional Development Activities	Barriers
School N *Success for All*	Method-related PD received twice per year from developer, and on an ongoing basis from campus instructional coordinator (through modeling, observations, and grade-level planning)	The district provided training-of-trainer PD on content standards, access to resources, and student expectations.	District provided PD related to the district-supported reading curriculum, which School N was not using.
School O *Success-in-the-Making*	Teachers participated in monthly activities related to the method; CSRD funding allowed inclusion of kindergarten and Grade 5 teachers; training included how to incorporate the method into the classroom and how to use data.	District provided PD on curriculum goals, co-teaching methods, using the SFA curricula, instructional strategies in reading and writing, and magnet school curriculum.	
School P *High Schools that Work*	All teachers had a minimum of 6 PD days from HSTW framework; 75% of teachers opted to participate in more activities.	Staff participated in PD related to vocational education, as well as PD related to the transition students from middle to high school through *Making Schools Work* (supported by a 2000 CSRD grant to the district middle schools.	
School Q *Accelerated Schools*	Each staff member received an average of 6 PD days; 90% was reform-related. School used a training-of-trainers approach; topics covered the specific instructional and pedagogical practices consistent with AS.	The school received training on teaching children of poverty. Incentives for faculty participation in PD included tuition/expense reimbursement and continuing education units.	District placed restrictions on early dismissals and teacher work/planning days.
School R *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	CSRD funds were used in the Year-1 for method-related PD, including funds for technology-focused training; funds were devoted to PD activities in 2001-02 for both the development of small learning communities and freshman teams.	The school's focus was on aligning teachers' individual PD plans with school and district plans; the district had a catalog of course offerings available to school staff.	Budget cutbacks have greatly reduced the amount of professional opportunities that the district can make available to schools.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

The first column of Exhibit 2-6 shows that, except in the case of three schools (Schools E, M, and R), the schools all have been participating in extensive professional development, mainly led by the external method's developer. To their credit, the developers have been able to provide a broad and intense variety of assistance, including: 1) participation in national conferences and workshops; 2) convening of local workshops for the school's faculty; 3) organizing of annual retreats for the faculty; 4) convening of all-staff meetings; 5) specific training to individual teachers; and 6) periodic and in some cases frequent on-site support and problem-solving. [As a promising reform strategy, see "Professional Development Activities and Instructional Practice Driven by Student Assessment Measures," in Appendix B.)

The second column of Exhibit 2-6 shows that, although the field teams were to inquire about professional development not related to the research-based method, not a lot of such professional development was occurring. In 15 of the 18 cases, the broader professional development was: 1) being provided by the district, 2) embedded in the job structure, or 3) informal. [As a promising reform strategy, "Staff Utilizes Common Planning Period as Professional Development Opportunity" in Appendix B.] In 2 of those 15 cases, as well as in the remaining 3 schools, staff members participated in professional development related to the schools' adoption of a second research-based method.

Directly corresponding to these observations about professional development, nearly all of the 18 schools: a) had external technical support or assistance, and b) derived such assistance from the developer of the research-based method (see Exhibit 2-7).

The intensity and breadth of the assistance in part depended upon the amount of CSRD funds allocated for such assistance by the school. Although precise budget data were not always available, the site visit team observed that in most cases the bulk of schools' CSRD funds were used to support external assistance from the developer.[32] As a result, schools that adopted research-based methods requiring ongoing annual outlays (compared to outlays for startup years only) were especially likely to need to identify new sources of funds, in order to continue comprehensive school reform activities beyond the period of CSRD funding.

Exhibit 2-7 also shows the diversity of the external assistance and support activities, ranging from participation in national meetings to teacher workshops to individualized (within classroom) on-site support. In reviewing these data, it is important to note that the site visit protocol was not limited to external assistance by the method's developer. Rather, to cover CSRD Component 7, the protocol guided the site visit teams to inquire about *any type* of external assistance. As a result, in many cases the teams did find such assistance

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[32]This does not necessarily mean that the funds went directly to the developer. For instance, funds might have been used to pay for teacher substitutes so that the teachers could participate in the developer's workshops.

Exhibit 2-7

EXTERNAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE
(Component 7)

School Name/ *Method**	Types and Frequency of Method-Related External Support and Assistance	Types and Frequency of Other Reform-Related External Support and Assistance
School A *Accelerated Schools*	School received extensive on-site support from the developer since formal adoption of the method; by Spring 2002, the principal was concerned that her staff had training needs beyond the capacity of the national center.	Consultants provided support in reading and writing instruction and classroom and time management.
School B *High Schools that Work*	Developer conducted two site visits per year, as well as onsite workshops, sponsored visits by schools staff to high achieving schools, hosted an annual conference, and conducted monthly telephone conferences with mentor site leaders.	During the final year of CSRD funding, staff received training in Making Schools Work, an initiative to better prepare students for the transition to high school.
School C *Co-NECT*	Onsite Co-NECT consultant serviced School C and five others, was available on-site almost weekly, taught classes (modeling) and made presentation to all-school assemblies. Teams from other Co-NECT schools conducted annual site visits. Developer-supported "Exchange" website as resource for school staff.	The school was implementing a number of other initiatives (particularly reading programs), for which staff received training.
School D *Success for All/Roots & Wings*	SFA Foundation provided extensive training for both the reading and math curricula in the first year of implementation. Refresher training sessions took place annually, along with visits to assess the level and fidelity of implementation (twice per year).	External assistance provided by a local consultant hired by the district to support the district's CSRD schools. She helped the school identify technical assistance providers and develop classroom planning guides, and was available during monthly phone-calls with the principal.
School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	After the first year of funding, the school had limited contact with the method developer (following 1998-99, the school was not an official CES site and did not pay annual fees to any CES organization.	No other external support identified.
School F *Coalition of Essential Schools*	Week-long training by CES designed to perform a year-long activity for visualizing and implementing plans for change.	Extensive training from Annenberg and NSF on using collaborative inquiry and action research; HSTW network meetings every two months to share ideas.
School G *"Special Literacy Model"**	The developer conducted a summer institute and graduate course work, and was on-site twice per year for in-service sessions. A regional project liaison for the developer was on site twice per month, working with teachers and providing in-class modeling.	The developer also worked with staff to design and develop professional development workshops based on a local needs assessment process.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

Exhibit 2-7 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Types and Frequency of Method-Related External Support and Assistance	Types and Frequency of Other Reform-Related External Support and Assistance
School H *Success for All*	Until 2000-02, the method developer visited twice a year and provided training and TA on SFA implementation. The school did not complete a contract with SFA for 2001-02 when staff voted to shift to the district-endorsed reading curriculum.	A local university provided student teachers who supported reform by tutoring students.
School I *Lightspan*	During the first two years of CSRD funding, the developer conducted one annual site visit to observe classes and provide demonstrations of how Lightspan could be used in the classroom. In 2001-02, the school discontinued its relationship with the developer and relied on an internal staff person to conduct staff training.	Due to state budget cuts, the district sought assistance from its regional service center.
School J *"Performance Tasks Model"**	The school worked with the developer during Year 1 who provided initial training. In years-2 and -3, the school worked with an external consultant for the developer, who provided training focused on the development of new tasks.	School received assistance from reading consultants, and district assessment staff, as well as "critical friend" mentoring support (sponsored by the state for schools rated as in-need-of-improvement).
School K *SFA*	The developer provided training in the method for all staff, as well as for members of family support team. Staff complained that the developer did not respond to concerns about appropriateness SFA for students in intermediate grades, which may impact sustainability of the method at this school.	No additional training from external providers was identified.
School L *"Behavior Modification Model"**	Developer provided consistent and strong assistance since the inception of the program, including helping the school select and customize the reform method, conducting introductory and follow-up training for the method, visiting classrooms, serving as facilitator at staff retreats, and generally assisting as requested. The developer also hosted bi-annual networking dinners for local principals.	No additional training from external providers was identified.
School M *Lightspan*	In 1999–00, the developer provided support at the beginning of the school year. In 2000–01, the school expanded the contract to include monthly visits to assist in implementation. In 2001-02, the new administrators at the school decided not to renew its contract with the external developer. The school relied on internal staff to train new staff members.	No additional training from external providers was identified.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

Exhibit 2-7 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Types and Frequency of Method-Related External Support and Assistance	Types and Frequency of Other Reform-Related External Support and Assistance
School N *SFA*	The developer conducted implementation visits to the schools twice annually. On-site support included training in use of SFA, conducting classroom observations, and customizing training to meet district- and school-specific needs (such as the alignment between state standards, the state assessment, and the method). The school reduced the number of visits in 2001-02, as CSRD funding dwindled.	School also received training in use of other reading initiatives (Accelerated Reader and state-created program).
School O *SIM*	The developer provided support (ranging from 0.5 to 3 days each month) on technology planning and grade level meetings, made presentations on the method during education conferences, and assisted in data collection review and analysis.	No additional training from external providers was identified.
School P *HSTW*	The developer provided two technical review visits per year, site specific development activities (around the method), visits to high achieving schools, monthly teleconferences with site leaders, and assessment and analysis of student achievement data.	During the final year of CSRD funding, staff received training in Making Schools Work, an initiative to better prepare students for the transition to high school.
School Q *Accelerated Schools*	The developer provided training to school leadership and staff on-site, conducted technical assistance and on-site monitoring every six weeks, and developed an evaluation plan. In 2001-02 (the school's final year of CSRD funding), the developer spent less time at the school, and encouraged staff to develop internal capacity to support the method. Staff reported more assistance in Year 3 was needed, particularly for new teachers.	No additional training from external providers was identified.
School R *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	The method was so customized that no single "developer" or external technical assistance team was relevant.	No other external support identified.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

being provided by parties other than the developer (Schools A, B, C, D, F, G, H, J, N, and P). However, within this subset, only rarely did the assistance address comprehensive school reform independent of the method.

The field teams concluded that perhaps the previously observed lower proportion of awareness and design for comprehensive reform—independent of the research-based method that a school has adopted—was in part because few consultants were available to provide this type of assistance,[33] and further, because schools have not understood the need to seek such assistance.

2.3.2 Both measurable goals and benchmarks (Component 4) and evaluation strategies (Component 8) have been devoted to tracking student performance, not necessarily implementation progress. Having measurable goals and benchmarks (Component 4) enables a school to monitor the progress of a school's CSRD initiative. The actualization of any monitoring or evaluation activity, however, requires evaluation strategies (Component 8) and planning. For this reason the two topics are covered together.

For measurable "goals," all but one of the 18 schools (School E, which became a new charter school in 2001-02) identified detailed student performance goals (see Exhibit 2-8).[34] However, rather than considering "benchmarks" as markers of implementation progress or other hypothetical steps (e.g., increased enrollment, hours spent, or time on task) needed to achieve the goals, many of the schools simply defined "benchmarks" by providing yearly breakdowns of the incremental performance gains that would extrapolate to meeting the overall performance goals. [As a promising reform strategy, see "Method-Recommended Curriculum Team Aligning Scope and Sequence to Provide Greater Opportunities for Interdisciplinary Projects," in Appendix B.] The second column of Exhibit 2-8 shows a small group of schools (Schools B, C, G, J, O, and Q) that had defined and were actually monitoring implementation benchmarks, apart from any monitoring being done by the external developer. (As a promising reform strategy, see "External 'Critical Friends' Group Provides Objective Assessment of Progress Towards Goals and Benchmarks," in Appendix B.] For instance, the original language of Component 4 does focus on student performance and is readily reinforced by the attention that has been devoted to student performance in judging school performance.

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[33]For instance, no references during the site visits were made to assistance from the U.S. Department of Education's regional educational laboratories, which might have been in a position to deal with comprehensive school reform and not just the implementation of a specific research-based method.

[34]Exhibit 2-8 merely indicates the existence of these goals and benchmarks, but does not list them. The field teams collected the actual lists, which are contained in the teams' archival databases. The complete lists were too lengthy to include in this report, as most of them address target scores or percentage improvements for each grade level, for different academic subjects, and, in some cases, for different annual periods of time.

Exhibit 2-8

**GOALS AND BENCHMARKS (Component 4) AND
EVALUATION STRATEGIES (Component 8)**

School Name/ *Method**	Benchmarks		Evaluation	
	Student Achievement	**Implementation**	**Plan**	**Activities**
School A *Accelerated Schools*	Starting in 2001-02, school developed benchmarks to meet state proficiency levels by grade and subject	Accelerated Schools Assessment Toolkit allowed school to develop benchmarks; process had not begun	No formal plan; school used AS school evaluation questionnaire; other plans developed by individual cadres	No written findings from cadres, who analyzed student achievement data, and developed plans to address deficiencies
School B *High Schools That Work*	Included extensive coverage of student performance on assessments and toward graduation requirements	Leadership team developed process benchmarks and indicators and reviewed progress annually	State conducting a formal evaluation of CSRD implementation	Formal instrument used to evaluate instruction during classroom observations
School C *Co-NECT*	Benchmarking plans pointed to performance on state mandated tests	Co-NECT benchmarks included shared accountability, project-based learning, comprehensive assessment, team-based school organization, and use of technology	No formal external evaluation; self-assessment for SIP process; and CO-NECT processes to measure implementation	Conduct of parent, teacher, principal, and student surveys; review of achievement scores; conduct of focus groups; reports from external technical assistance providers
School D *Success for All*	School expected to reach benchmarks established by the district targeting student performance (reading readiness, attendance, reading and math proficiency)	Implementation and fidelity reviews conducted by external developer	District contracted with a consultant to conduct evaluation, but turned responsibility over to schools in 2001-02	End-of-year report contained findings mandated by district; SFA made bi-annual visits to the school to monitor implementation; no evidence of formal evaluation report
School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	In 2001-02, the benchmarks and goals were unclear, after the school restructured as a charter school	No implementation benchmarks	No recent contact with external evaluator	Prior activities of an external evaluator were lost during the school's transition; no activities were planned for 2001-02
School F *Coalition of Essential Schools*	State establishes benchmarks for student achievement scores incorporated annually in SIP	School met first set of implementation benchmarks, related to participation in collaborative groups and development of academies, but did not establish new benchmarks pertaining to full reform	District intends to conduct an impact assessment (using survey and student achievement data); no evidence of written plan	School completed surveys; district analysis of data in progress; no written finding available

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

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Exhibit 2-8 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Benchmarks		Evaluation	
	Student Achievement	**Implementation**	**Plan**	**Activities**
School G *"Special Literacy Model"**	Benchmarks follow state guidelines for student performance	School established process benchmarks, relating to faculty participation, parent participation and student absences	No external evaluation; self-assessment as part if year-round SIP processes	Conduct of parent, teacher, principal, and student surveys; review of achievement scores; conduct of focus groups; reports from external technical assistance providers
School H *Success for All*	SIP describes benchmarks for student performance, as well as goals for attendance and school ranking	No implementation benchmarks, other than SFA implementation monitoring	No formal activities or plans	Evaluation of student performance based on state assessment; implementation monitored by SFA; no written findings available
School I *Lightspan*	No clear benchmarks in place; did have goal of increasing scores on state assessment	No clear benchmarks in place; did have goal of increased parent participation	No clear evaluation plan	School frequently reviews student achievement data; developer previously used questionnaires and surveys to measure implementation; nor written evaluation
School J *"Performance Tasks Model"**	Goals/benchmarks set as part of SIP process	School set implementation benchmarks annually (e.g., teacher must prepare one performance task to be accepted by Performance Task model database)	External evaluator focused on standards, performance measures and alternative assessments (no formal plan)	Schools reviewed and discussed student achievement data, compared current data with data from earlier years, other schools and district and state level data
School K *Success for All*	Goals/benchmarks set as part of SIP process and covered limited subjects	No implementation benchmarks	School did not have a clear evaluation plan	Schools reviewed and discussed student achievement data, compared current data with data from earlier years, other schools and district and state level data, and utilized SFA eight-week assessments
School L *"Behavioral Modification Model"**	School expected to reach benchmarks established by the district targeting student performance (reading readiness, attendance, reading and math proficiency)	Implementation benchmarks were stated in the CSRD application, and monitored by the external developer	District contracted with a consultant to conduct evaluation, but turned responsibility over to schools in 2001-02	End-of-year report contained district findings; final evaluation of CSRD delayed

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

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Exhibit 2-8 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Benchmarks		Evaluation	
	Student Achievement	**Implementation**	**Plan**	**Activities**
School M *Lightspan*	District established benchmarks for student performance, covering all grades and subjects	No clear implementation benchmarks	Evaluation activities suggested by Lightspan (no written plan)	Findings indicated that Lightspan students outperformed comparison students in the state assessment (report available after the 2001-02 SIP developed)
School N *Success for All*	SIP set benchmarks for performance, as well as goals around student attendance and school ranking	School had goals for parental involvement and conflict resolution, but no information on how goals would be measured or benchmarks established	No formal activities or plans	Evaluation of student performance based on state assessment; implementation monitored by SFA
School O *Success-in-the-Making*	District-mandated benchmark tested as part of comprehensive reading program receiving greatest priority.	Scale-up benchmarks had been met; method in use in all classrooms	District intends to conduct an impact assessment (using survey and student achievement data); no evidence of written plan	School completed surveys; district analysis of data in progress; no written finding available
School P *HSTW*	Included extensive coverage of student performance on assessments and toward graduation requirements	Listed as addressing organization and curriculum, and instruction	State conducting formal evaluation of CSRD implementation	Formal instrument used to evaluate instruction during classroom observations
School Q *Accelerated Schools*	District established benchmarks based on student scores on state assessment	Benchmarks in form of implementation rubric, including unity of purpose, empowerment, building on strengths, forging a vision, taking stock, setting priorities, establishing governance, embedding inquiry, and creating a collaborative culture	No external evaluator; district provided assistance to schools in analyzing student achievement	School reviewed student achievement data; cadres made recommendations for curricular or instructional reform
School R *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	Three-year benchmarks in SIP for reading, writing, and mathematics	Three-year benchmarks in SIP for use of technology and cooperation	No written evaluation plan (except for plan for technology component, conducted as a state requirement)	No formal reporting of evaluation findings

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At the same time, the original CSRD language for the evaluation strategies (Component 8) does indeed address the implementation of reform, but the existing evaluation activities also have largely focused on assessing student performance (third and fourth columns in Exhibit 2-8.)   [As a promising reform strategy, see "Clear Scope and Sequence and Quarterly Assessments Provide Frequent Measures of Student Growth," in Appendix B.]

2.3.3 High turnover among staff and students has resulted in transient levels of support within the school (Component 5) or parental and community involvement (Component 6). The field teams found it difficult to assess these two CSRD components because schools do not routinely monitor or maintain precise records regarding either type of support or involvement. In some cases, faculties did hold votes during the formative period when a research-based method was first being adopted. However, documentation for any subsequent faculty support was absent thereafter. Similarly, schools might have kept records of parent attendance at one or two key events during the year (e.g., the first open-school night), but they did not formally monitor or document other parental or community involvements.

Despite the lack of records, the field teams made the following observations about the two components. First, high turnover among staff (e.g., Schools B, E, I, M, and R) or students (e.g., Schools C, E, L, and P) has meant that the extent of staff support or parental involvement can be transient: Any judgment regarding support or involvement therefore depends upon the timing of the data collection "snapshot." Unfortunately, several of the schools had staff who were highly supportive of the reform effort but who then left the school (e.g., Schools C, E, M, and R); assessing staff support earlier would have shown strong internal support for the method and the reform effort, but such support likely dissipated greatly by the time of the site visit. At other schools, support among the staff increased over time as individual teachers became more familiar with the reform efforts. In a likewise manner, student turnover meant that the relevant body of parents also changed, and high involvement during the kickoff year of a reform effort may not have been sustained the following year.

Second, strong principal leadership in initiating and supporting reform was a critical ingredient at many of the schools. [As a reform strategy, see "School Leadership Committed to Institutionalizing Reform Efforts," in Appendix B.] However, turnover among principals also swayed support or involvement if, as is usually the case, the new principals had agendas and priorities different from their predecessors (e.g., Schools L, M, and R).

Interestingly, any difficulties in assessing support and involvement also may be considered substantive findings, not just methodological barriers. Whereas time-limited innovations may call for staff support or parental involvement over shorter periods of time, comprehensive reform calls for broad support and involvement. The team found that schools had defined few if any strategies to produce such broad efforts. Other than a few

cases where either staff support for the reform effort (e.g., Schools A and F) or community involvement (e.g., Schools O and K) were strong and persistent, the observed support and involvement only involved isolated milestones (e.g., the original vote by a faculty to adopt a research-based method, the convening of a parents' night, or the use of CSRD funds to hire a parent coordinator) but not sustained trends or patterns. [As promising reform strategy, see "Internal Collaborative Meetings Foster Inter-curricular Teaching and Teacher Buy-in to Schoolwide Issues," and "Parents and Community Members Participate in School Governance and Goal Setting," in Appendix B.]

For other reasons related to the comprehensiveness of the reform effort, support or involvement also can be spotty. For instance, schools whose reforms were limited to single academic subjects would not necessarily have involved staff support or parental involvement outside of these subjects. Similarly, methods being scaled-up incrementally by grade level would not necessarily have called for universal support or involvement during the scale-up process.

2.3.4 Most schools are in a position to coordinate or converge resources (Component 9), but resources for sustainability are still uncertain. The topics of coordination and sustainability (i.e., extending reform efforts beyond the period of CSRD funding) were joined because schools' prospects for sustainability have been heavily driven by the need to identify new sources of funds.[35] Similarly, the resources to be coordinated under Component 9 have largely been considered budgetary resources by the schools.

The significance of Component 9 also is related to the underlying spirit of reform. By definition, comprehensive reform should not be implemented as an "add-on" or incremental activity, but should affect all school operations and hence the entire set of a school's resources—core building budget as well as funds from external sources not legally needing to be dedicated to a specific activity (e.g., Title I, Title II, Eisenhower, and other federal and state funds). Any actual and ongoing comprehensive reform would therefore logically require that the school's resources be applied in a coordinated fashion.

To collect data on these two topics of coordination and resources for sustainability, the field teams did focus on budget data but also collected other information, mainly from the principal, regarding the school's funding intentions and priorities during the coming year(s). At 10 of the 18 schools, the field teams found evidence that both external and local funds were being coordinated in some manner to support the reform effort at the school. In most cases, the majority of that coordination involved Title I funding (see Exhibit 2-9).

An initial observation is that coordination can be greatly facilitated if the planning for all of a school's funds is represented within a single *school improvement plan* that

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[35]Section 3 discusses sustainability more broadly.

Exhibit 2-9

STATUS OF COORDINATION OF RESOURCES
(Component 9)
AND SUSTAINABILITY

School Name/ *Method**	Types of Resource Coordination	Evidence of Sustainability
School A *Accelerated Schools*	School already used Title I, other external funds, and central budget—along with CSRD funds—to support reform. Funds appeared to be used in a coordinated manner in covering various reform activities.	The principal was committed to providing the needed resources for the foreseeable future. ED and the state recognized the school for its reform efforts. The maintenance support needed by the research-based method is assumed to be modest.
School B *High Schools that Work*	Nearly all CSRD funds were directed at professional development (with the addition of some Title II and other funds). The coordinator position was paid from the core budget.	No funding streams appear to be available to continue school's relationship with HSTW following the end of CSRD. The merger of this high school with a county school adds further uncertainty about sustainability of reform efforts, though the site visit team believes the merger will actually further reform efforts.
School C *Co-NECT*	The SIP embraces the use of funds from all sources as part of an integrated allocation plan.	The principal hopes to use Title I funds to continue after CSRD has ended. In addition, if the school can become a "demonstration" school, the developer of the research-based method also would then provide its own support.
School D *Success for All/Roots & Wings*	In 2001, district started requiring schools to have single plan to converge resources, including CSRD funds, with common objectives (previously, each funding source had its own plan). Convergence included external funding sources, but school reports no additional local funds available due to fiscal crisis.	The principal did not think the school would continue to use SFA after CSRD funding ended for two reasons: 1) a district move to site-based budgeting meant that the school would have to identify funds to fill gap left by CSRD (when large state cutbacks were looming), and 2) the SFA reading curriculum was not submitted for state review, and, therefore, the school could not use state textbook funds to purchase SFA reading materials.
School E *Coalition of Essential Schools*	A previous pattern of coordinating funds cannot be applied to the new charter school.	The school has begun to be interested in adopting an entirely new research-based method, which may overlap with CES; most teachers show no interest in formally continuing with the CES method.
School F *Coalition of Essential Schools*	School has been coordinating funds from multiple external and internal sources to support reform effort in a converging manner.	The school is searching for additional funds to replace CSRD funding. However, main reform initiatives, some of which involved changes in school scheduling and operations and not an outlay of funds, are likely continue independent of any funding success.
School G *"Special Literacy Model"**	CSRD funds were used almost entirely for professional development, along with Title I and other local funds.	Principal was confidant that new grant monies, along with Title I, would continue to support future reform activities.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

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Exhibit 2-9 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Types of Resource Coordination	Evidence of Sustainability
School H *Success for All*	Convergence of resources from many different external sources appeared to have taken place because the school and district coordinate school's funds in relation to the school improvement plan.	The school decided to transition to the district curriculum and end support for the external SFA developer beginning in the 2001-02 school year. Nevertheless, teacher indicated that they intended to continue using SFA-related classroom management techniques and questioning strategies.
School I *Lightspan*	School has funds from many external sources and prides itself in its entrepreneurship. However, multiple sources may have been more often associated with fragmentation rather than coordination of efforts.	Although School I's reform efforts could be described as unfocused, teachers and administrators expressed hope in Spring 2002 that things were beginning to improve. The 1st grade teachers were enthusiastically using Lightspan in the absence of external support.
School J *"Performance Tasks Model"**	Some local funds were used in concert with CSRD to support the implementation of the research-based method.	The school believes it can support the reform effort with Title I funds. However, the assignment of a new principal to the school may affect that plan; the associate principal being considered for the position stated he would support a modified use of the method, with only some components remaining.
School K *SFA*	School has used multiple sources, including Title I and state grants, to support reform. Degree of convergence is unclear.	Title I funds are expected to be used to continue SFA support after CSRD funding ends. However, continuation also depends on improved student performance, as well as SFA's response to teacher's concerns.
School L *"Behavior Modification Model"**	In 2001, district started requiring schools to have single plan to converge resources, including CSRD, with common objectives. Process has brought all dollars into a single reform effort. However, school reports no additional local funds available due to fiscal crisis.	Funds to replace CSRD were still being sought, but a new administration and waning staff support appeared to be bigger threats to sustainability. By Spring 2002, teacher implementation of some components of the method were already beginning to lapse.
School M *Lightspan*	A former principal appeared to have converged resources around Lightspan, its coordinator, computer equipment, and the other resources needed for implementation; by 2001-02, no funds were used to support implementation.	The school's investment in purchasing the components of the method (the PlayStations, software, and television monitors), is evidence that some aspect of the method will remain. By the end of the third year, however, the method was used sparingly in one grade level. The school also learned that it would be merged with another "underperforming" elementary school in 2002-03, adding to uncertainty about future use of Lightspan.
School N *SFA*	School and district coordinated Title I funds with CSRD funds as part of the school improvement plan. However, school has had few other discretionary sources.	Withdrawal of district support for the research-based method jeopardized sustainability of reform effort beyond CSRD funding. The principal was skeptical about whether the school would continue to implement CSRD without new funding, and the staff indicated that the school would not be implementing SFA in 2002-03, even if funding were available.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

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Exhibit 2-9 (Continued)

School Name/ *Method**	Types of Resource Coordination	Evidence of Sustainability
School O *SIM*	School successfully coordinated funds from multiple sources (e.g., Title I and Title II, as well as local funding), in supporting reform activities.	Because reform had been in progress prior to CSRD, school anticipated continuing reform after CSRD. External costs associated with research-based method were likely to diminish, and Title I and other funds would continue to be used, but the school also was exploring the availability of new sources of funding.
School P *HSTW*	School converged federal and local funds, primarily for professional development activities related to the reform effort.	School and district staff strongly support continuation of the reform effort. Extent of need for funds to cover external costs associated with the research-based method were unclear. School staff were also unclear how the merger with the city high school would affect reform efforts.
School Q *Accelerated Schools*	School had started using other external funds, in a converging manner to support variety of reform activities prior to CSRD funding, and such convergence has continued along with CSRD funding.	Main threat to sustainability is continued high rate of staff turnover as well as threat of principal turnover. The principal hoped that the formation of a leadership team would make the reform efforts less dependent on any single individual and therefore serve as a mechanism for sustaining reform.
School R *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	School had not used a large portion of its CSRD funds in its final year of funding and obtained an extension on the grant (and, consequently, had not converged or coordinated funds).	Some isolated initiative would be sustained, nut not as part of a overall reform design; greater attention was placed on the district-required "small learning communities."

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converges on common goals and objectives (see the coordination column of Exhibit 2-9). Of the 10 schools exhibiting converging funding sources, 3 had such a condition (Schools C, G, and H). Even in the absence of such site-based management conditions, 7 other schools reported coordination or convergence of resources to the field teams (Schools A, B, F, I, K, O, and P), with 3 of them mentioning integration with the building's budget. Thus a total of 10 of the 18 schools appear to have been in a position to coordinate or converge their resources. Another 5 schools (D, J, L, N, and Q) reported coordination of federal funding sources to support reform, but did not have the necessary access to local funds in order to redirect them (in the case of School D and L, the principals reported that they had the ability to access local funds, but severe budget cuts meant that after obligatory allocations—i.e., teacher salaries—no funds remained). (See "Move to Site-Based Management Allows School to Utilize Slack Resources for Reform Initiatives," in Appendix B.) Reports of lack of coordination came from only 3 schools: School E, which had ceased implementation; School M, which had made the capital expenditures associated with Lightspan and was now implementing the method at no cost; and School R, which had not really implemented CSRD, as previously discussed.

At the same time, the field teams found that the ability to coordinate funds did not necessarily coincide with the extent of a school's discretionary resources. Yet, the latter may be critical for sustainability (see the second column of Exhibit 2-9).

One reason for the need for discretionary resources is that a major CSRD component—e.g., the use of a research-based method—usually requires an outlay of additional funds, for such items as: a) on-site assistance, b) release time for professional development, c) salary support for on-site coordinators, d) the purchase of new types of supplies, and in some cases, e) hardware and software purchases. The availability of the CSRD funds has served well the needs of the startup periods in implementing these methods. Although the extent of outlays for maintaining a method after startup are reported to diminish, nearly all of the schools are unclear about the amount or source of any new funds needed after the CSRD award has ended. Title I funds are mentioned frequently as one source of such funds, but whether they will be sufficient also is unclear.

The likelihood of sustainability also will be affected by non-funding conditions—mainly the possible lack of support for reform on the part of the school staff or the threat of staff or principal turnover. Of the 18 schools, 5 have reported such jeopardy (Schools B, D, L, M, and Q), in addition to School H, which already stopped implementing the research-based method. Section 3.5 examines this issue in greater detail.

2.4 SUMMARY

Across the 9 CSRD components, schools have devoted their greatest implementation efforts to the research-based method (Component 1); professional development (Component 3)—usually linked with the method; and external technical assistance and support (Component 7)—also usually linked with the method. Schools have established clear student performance benchmarks (Component 4). All of the other components have been less well developed.

3. CSRD IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY: THE INTEGRATED FINDINGS

This section first discusses district and state influences on the CSRD schools. The section then provides a summary assessment of CSRD implementation, using the district and state influences, along with other conditions, to identify three potentially different pathways to implementation. Finally, the section discusses the prospects for CSRD sustainability at the 18 schools.

3.1 DISTRICT AND STATE INFLUENCES ON CSRD

Although CSRD focuses on school activities, district and state conditions can be extremely important to the administration of CSRD. The federal CSRD awards are to state education agencies, who in turn make subawards to districts on behalf of specific schools. As a result, any number of CSRD processes and outcomes may be influenced by the district and state policies and practices.

To examine district and state conditions, the field teams conducted interviews, collected documents, and reviewed other data from the 18 schools' district and state agencies. For the districts, site visits were made (in addition, district officials were occasionally interviewed while present at the schools at the time of the school site visit). Information about the state agencies more frequently came from short telephone conversations with state officials, searches of the agencies' Web sites, and copies of state documents and reports provided by the district offices.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the various district and state conditions that appeared relevant to the CSRD activities in the 18 schools. The exhibit pairs the schools, with each pair being a part of the same district and state, reflecting the original sample design. For each pair, the exhibit then enumerates salient conditions that might affect the work of CSRD, dividing the salient conditions into two categories: assistance or support in administering CSRD; and other policies or conditions potentially affecting CSRD implementation though not a direct part of administering CSRD. Each category is discussed in turn.

3.1.1 Administering CSRD: Districts and states provide varying degrees of support. Both states and districts have explicit responsibilities in administering the funds for CSRD. However, beyond these core responsibilities, both districts and states varied widely in providing other forms of CSRD support or assistance. At one extreme (e.g., Schools M and R), the state education officials engaged schools in the CSRD application process; made site visits to monitor the initial progress of the schools; and convened annual meetings of the CSRD schools in the state, to facilitate the exchange of information on

Exhibit 3-1

SCHOOL, DISTRICT, AND STATE CONDITIONS

Schools	State Conditions	District Conditions
School A *Accelerated Schools* and **School E** *Coalition of Essential Schools*	**Non-CSRD related:** ! State sets benchmarks for improvement based on state assessment. Schools that fail to make progress, over time, may be closed. School E has been in lowest category and School A has been "in need of improvement," in the state system.	**Non-CSRD related:** ! The district essentially only provides assistance on an as-needed basis. Professional development funds are distributed to schools; schools decide how to use them. Other assistance only provided when requested by the schools. ! District sets benchmarks for improvement on state assessments. ! District has vacillated on future of the School E, now has decided to continue the school as a charter school.
School B *HSTW* and **School P** *HSTW*	**Non-CSRD related:** ! No state assessment has yet appeared related to reform.	**CSRD related:** ! District has provided staff support and professional development in relation CSRD. **Non-CSRD related:** ! The district's superintendent resigned effective the end of 2000-01. ! Board votes to merge Schools B and P into a single high school, starting in 2003-04.
School C *Co-NECT* and **School G** *"Special Literacy Model"**	**Non-CSRD related:** ! Performance on state assessment is used to set goals. The state also provides a rubric for the development of district plans that is tied to state standards, requiring school plans to link funded activities with goals, benchmarks, and strategies.	**CSRD related:** ! The district provided workshops in plan development to ensure alignment. **Non-CSRD related:** ! The district is suffering the loss of teachers due to low teacher salaries and teacher shortages. Nearby districts and states are offering bonuses to attract teachers. ! The district has had a serious fiscal shortfall.
School D *Success for All Roots & Wings* and **School L** *"Behavior Modification Model"**	**CSRD related:** ! Because of state timing in notifying schools of eligibility and application deadline, applications were written over the summer. At School L, many staff were not present to participate in selection of the CSRD method. **Non-CSRD related:** ! State has put into place new high stakes examinations. ! State revising assessments to make them standards-based.	**CSRD related:** ! District decided which schools should apply; hired consultant to write CSRD proposals for the schools. **Non-CSRD related:** ! District's strategic plan adopted under new superintendent in 1998, calls for a new emphasis on high standards of academic performance and has been a driving force behind school reform efforts.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

Exhibit 3-1 (Continued)

Schools	State Conditions	District Conditions
School F *Coalition of Essential Schools* and **School O** *Success-in-the-Making (SIM)*	**CSRD related:** ! State conducted monitoring visits to each site during the past year, and provided assistance. **Non-CSRD related:** ! New state accountability system holds teachers and schools accountable for student progress. School O received an "F" rating which hurt its magnet program (and which they believed was unfair).	**CSRD related:** ! District office provides extensive support to schools at the start of CSRD implementation and conducts a mid-year checkup. **Non-CSRD related:** ! School O originally intended to implement Co-NECT, but was "encouraged" by the district to expand existing SIM method (after receiving an "F" rating). ! District implementing a reading program that will phase out SFA.
School H *Success for All* and **School N** *Success for All*	**CSRD related:** ! The curriculum match between the CSRD method and the state assessment is not perfect, causing School N to add a reading program specifically on skills addressed by the state assessment. **Non-CSRD related:** ! The state assessment and state accountability system is driving instruction in the schools.	**CSRD related:** ! The previous superintendent strongly supported the use of external methods for reform and provided local funds to pay for them. ! A new superintendent has ceased that practice, and only schools with CSRD funds currently have external methods. Schools H stopped using its external method in 2001-02, and School N may have difficulty finding budget support for external methods after CSRD; other schools have adopted a local reading model aligned with the state assessment. **Non-CSRD related:** ! The district also has started interim and high-stakes assessments, aligned with state standards.
School I *Lightspan* and **School Q** *Accelerated Schools*	**CSRD related:** ! State education staff conduct site visits to CSRD schools, also providing assistance. **Non-CSRD related:** ! Simultaneous with the CSRD award, state budget cuts resulted in a several million dollar cut in district funding, in part resulting in the loss of the district's P.D. department and cuts to program evaluation.	**CSRD-related:** ! The district identified schools that were ready for CSRD and notified only those schools about the availability of CSRD funding. **Non-CSRD related:** ! District has helped schools prepare for state assessment and to use data to improve instruction. ! District has now gone two years with no professional development department.
School J *"Performance Tasks Model"** and **School K** *Success for All*	**Non-CSRD related:** ! State designated School K as "needing improvement," requiring it to select a research-based method using CSRD funds. The state also designated School J as a "priority school," receiving extra funds to support improvement efforts and being assigned a "critical friend." ! The state assessment is standards based.	**CSRD related:** ! CSRD is coordinated by the district's director of federal and state programs, the assistant superintendent for instruction, and the director of research and evaluation. **Non-CSRD related:** ! District hired a new superintendent in 2000-01. Superintendent supports reform but is focused on reorganizing the district's central office.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

Exhibit 3-1 (Continued)

Schools	State Conditions	District Conditions
School M *Lightspan* and **School R** *"Comprehensive Reform Model"**	**CSRD related:** ! State convenes CSRD staffs annually to reinforce and support schools' efforts. ! State makes site visits to CSRD schools, also providing assistance. **Non-CSRD related:** ! School M was in state's lowest category, reducing staff morale, and esteem. ! State's restructuring of school finance, and budget cutbacks, disrupt district and schools.	**CSRD related:** ! CSRD administered by Title I coordinator. ! District helped School R develop its CSRD application. **Non-CSRD related:** ! District assessments are standards-based and aligned with state. ! However, School M received district quality performance award in same year as state placed it in lowest underperforming category.

*Locally developed methods are in quotes and have been given pseudonyms.

CSRD experiences. In a similar manner (e.g., School L), a district completed the applications and selected the research-based method on behalf of the school. At the other extreme (e.g., School E) the state played little or no role beyond making the CSRD awards, and the district also offered little assistance to these schools in administering CSRD (School A). Exhibit 3-1 shows how the other states or districts assumed different postures in the CSRD administrative process.

Among all the variants, an intermediate state and district posture would seem to be the best in serving comprehensive school reform. Such reform requires strong internal staff support within the school, but such reform is aimed at improving student achievement—which is assessed through district or state instruments (or both). In the most active role, if a district selects the candidate schools to be in the CSRD program, writes their proposals, and defines the research-based methods to be adopted, or if the state requires the school to participate in CSRD because of low achievement scores, the school may then have a poor understanding of its CSRD mission and may not become sufficiently empowered to undertake serious reform. In the most passive role, if districts and states leave schools entirely alone to deal with CSRD, the schools may receive insufficient guidance to understand the most desired curriculum and instructional practices relevant to the district or state's student assessment instruments. The hypothesized intermediate role would be where districts and states: a) encourage and then support schools to make their own decisions about method selection and reform design—explicitly defining the alignment between these choices and the content of the district or state assessments, b) engage schools in developing their CSRD applications from their outset, and finally c) provide technical or other assistance to assure the continued alignment between the school's reform initiative and the student outcome measures against which the success of the initiative will be judged.

3.1.2 District and state policies not directly related to administering CSRD nevertheless can influence CSRD implementation. Exhibit 3-1 also enumerates many

district and state policies not directly related to administering CSRD. These policies reflect ongoing district and state priorities independent of the CSRD program, and an important benefit of CSRD was its complementarity with these ongoing priorities.

The original field protocol did not consider most of these conditions external to the administration of CSRD to be relevant topics of data collection. However, the field teams quickly encountered a host of external events that appeared to affect CSRD implementation directly. The conditions found included: 1) extremely limited professional development resources (see Schools I and Q); 2) the direct alignment of schools' CSRD designs with district plans and state standards (Schools C and G); 3) districts reducing financial support for all external methods (Schools H and N); 4) decisions to allow a CSRD school to become a charter school (School E); 5) decisions to merge two CSRD schools (Schools B and P). Many states and districts also were suffering severe revenue shortfalls during this period of time, creating an uncertain if not disruptive environment for school reform.

These non-CSRD-related district and state policies were found to be sufficiently important that Exhibit 3-1 divides the schools into two categories—one in which there appeared to be strong "vertical" influence (from state to district to school) and the other in which such influence appeared to be neutral. Strong influence could lead to either complementarity or conflict with CSRD. On the complementary side, CSRD provided Schools J and K, for instance, with resources and a compatible reform agenda to respond to their designation as underperforming schools in the state's accountability system. On the conflicting side, the shifting content of state assessments could lead districts to use resources for alternative curricula and professional development that were contrary to those involved in the schools' original CSRD plans or implementation (e.g., Schools H, N, and O). Likewise, a report suggesting that schools with block schedules performed more poorly on state assessments led another CSRD school (School B) to reconsider its ongoing implementation of a research-based method requiring the use of such schedules.

In general, these external state and district conditions appear to be highly relevant to CSRD implementation. In fact, any tendency toward a "vertical" alignment among state, district, and school policies and practices may not only impact CSRD implementation but may very well be critical to the long-run sustainability of CSRD, discussed later in this section.

3.2 SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM

Given the preceding discussion of district and state conditions, the analysis now turns to a summary assessment of the extent to which the 18 schools have been implementing CSRD. In this assessment, the more that a school was implementing the nine CSRD components, the greater was judged its *strength of CSRD implementation*.

Implementation Instrument and Measurement. Assessing the strength of implementation of a complex school intervention, such as comprehensive school reform, has neither a standard methodology nor a standardized instrument. As a result, the Field-Focused Study developed and used its own assessment instrument, shown in Appendix E. This assessment instrument is but the start of a tool with which to measure reform and requires much further work to formalize. Nevertheless, the instrument should provide a solid framework upon which others can improve.

The instrument covers the 9 components, but deliberately weights the components differently. The weights for the different components reflected the Field-Focused Study team's view of the importance of the 9 components, based on observations during the early rounds of site visits. The research-based method (9 points) and the comprehensiveness of design (11 points) have the highest proportion of the total points; professional development emerged as the third most impactful component; and the other components followed. This weighting system should be refined during future evaluations.

The instrument asked the site visit teams to use their case reports and provide "objective" information for somewhat less than half of the items and to make "subjective" ratings for the remainder of the items.[36] The teams had sought accurate and precise data on objective items, but such data were not always available or retrievable, and in many cases the "objective" response was based on the team's best estimate. The scores for each school were tallied, and the results are shown in Exhibit 3-2.

The 47-point instrument's strength is that is operationalizes CSRD's nine components. With no standardized instrument available to measure CSRD, the instrument allowed the evaluation team to break global concepts of reform into smaller operational components. If a school successfully implemented all aspects of all 9 components, therefore, it could achieve a maximum score of 47 points (thus the instrument has been referred to as the "47-point instrument"). The greatest threat to measuring reform in this manner is that it risks losing site of the "whole picture." As a result, the final tallies were checked against a global judgment by the teams.

A weakness of the instrument is that the Field-Focused Study did not have sufficient time or resources to establish the validity or reliability of the instrument to a level that

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[36] For objective information, examples in the instrument included (see Appendix E): 2.1) the existence of a written design or plan for school reform; 2.2) the contents of the plan; 3.2) the range of professional development days required or taken by the average teacher per year; and 4.1) the number of academic subjects covered by measurable goals and benchmarks. For subjective information, examples of items included (also see Appendix E): 1.1) the implementation score for the research-based component; 3.1) whether professional development had a strong content focus; 5.3) interviewees voicing strong support or enthusiasm for reform; and 6.2) the level of parental involvement.

Exhibit 3-2

**SCORES FOR CSRD IMPLEMENTATION STRENGTH AT 18 SCHOOLS,
USING 47-POINT INSTRUMENT***

CSRD Component	CSRD School																	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1. Research-Based Method (9 points)																		
Bodilly Score	5	3	3	5	1	4	5	1	3	4	4	2	3	5	3	4	4	1
% Classrooms Using	1	.75	.75	1	0	.75	1	0	1	.9	.9	.8	.1	1	1	.9	.8	0
Fidelity Rating	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	1
2. Comprehensive Design (11 points)																		
Written Design or Plan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Contents of Plan	7	6	5	7	4	7	6	6	4	7	5	7	2	4	6	6	5	2
Breadth of Plan	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	1
3. Professional Development (7 points)																		
Strong Content Focus	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Range of PD Days	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2
Collective Participation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Classroom-Based PD	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Alignment of PD	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
4. Measurable Goals and Benchmarks (4 points)																		
Number of Academic Subjects Covered	2	3	2	2	0	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	2	3
Number of Grades Covered	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	.8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5. Support within the School (4 points)																		
Formal Vote on Method	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
Support Exceeded 75 percent	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
Support Voiced for Support	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
No Dissent Voiced	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0

* See Appendix E for a copy of the instrument

Exhibit 3-2 (Continued)

CSRD Component	CSRD School																	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
6. Parent and Community Involvement (4 points)																		
New Forms of Parent Involvement	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Level of Involvement	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	2	0
At Least One Community Org.	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7. External Technical Support and Assistance (4 points)																		
Level of Developer Support	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	1
Other External Support	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
8. Evaluation Strategies (2 points)																		
Written Evaluation Plan	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Evidence of Written Findings	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
9. Coordination of Resources (2 points)																		
Coordination of External Funds	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Coordination of External and Local Funds	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Total (maximum = 47)	44	37.75	33.75	42	15	39.75	41	32	30.8	38.9	37.9	30.8	25.1	34	38	40.9	35.8	16
Rank	1	9	12	2	18	5	3	13	14	6	8	14	16	11	7	4	10	17

would satisfy psychometric standards. The needed tool would be a "policy" tool, because of the instability of the policy environment—e.g., the 9 CSRD components became 11 components a few years later under P.L. 110-103. Psychometric tools require a longer "shelf-life," because the time and effort to establish their validity and reliability (and their generalizability) assumes that a set of substantive priorities will remain stable over a much longer period of time. As a result, "policy" tools seldom have sufficient evidence to establish their validity or reliability to a degree that will satisfy psychometric standards.

The team did corroborate its use of the instrument, however, through an independent review of the cases by an analyst "blind" to the rating generated by the instrument (see Appendix F).[37] Exhibit 3-3 compares the analyst's rankings of the 18 schools with the rankings from the scores on the 47-point instrument. The results show a strong correlation between the two sets of rankings, with the rankings differing to a modest degree for a few schools (Schools O, Q, and L), but with the overall pattern achieving statistical significance (correlation coefficient = .734, n = 18, p < .001).

Implementation: A solid majority of the schools implemented CSRD. Given support by the corroboratory procedure, the scores in Exhibit 3-2 were accepted as assessing the strength of CSRD implementation at the 18 schools. Nine schools (Schools A, B, D, F, G, J, K, O, and P) garnered 80 percent of the 47 points, with scores higher than 37.6 points. These schools were labeled as "nearly fully" implementing CSRD. Another six schools (Schools C, H, I, L, N, and Q) garnered 65 percent of the 47 points, with scores between 30.6 and 37.6. These schools were labeled "partially" implementing CSRD. The remaining three schools were judged to be "poorly" implementing CSRD.[38]

Other observers may differ with regard to the cutoff points chosen for these labels, or even the use of the labels themselves. However, the Field-Focused Study interpreted the overall set of scores as indicating that a solid majority of the 18 schools were implementing CSRD. As a result, student achievement scores at these schools could be expected to be affected, assuming some relationship between comprehensive school reform and student performance.

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[37] An analyst independently read all of the case reports and ranked the 18 schools according to their level of implementation. In arriving at these judgments, the analyst deliberately avoided tallying the nine components, instead assuming a holistic perspective. The analyst was "blind" to the ratings that had been made by using the 47-point instrument. The analyst's findings, together with the rationale for the holistic judgments, is found in Appendix F.

[38] The 9-6-3 breakdown happens to be the same as that found for implementing the research-based method (see Sect. 2.1.1). However, the specific schools in each grouping were not synonymous and the measure for CSRD implementation is not synonymous with the implementation of the research-based method.

Exhibit 3-3

**COMPARISON OF RANKINGS FOR 18 SCHOOLS,
BASED ON TWO INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENTS OF
STRENGTH OF CSRD IMPLEMENTATION**
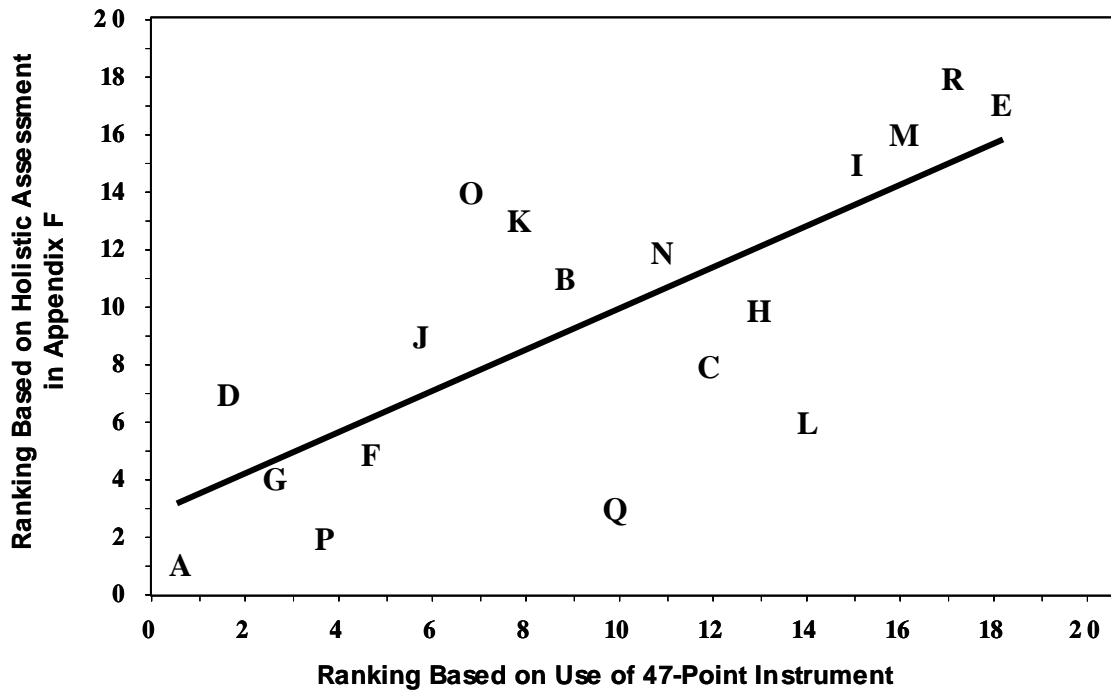
Correlation Coefficient	N	p
.734	18	.0005

3.3 THREE EXAMPLES OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM UNDER THE CSRD PROGRAM

So far, the analysis has examined the 9 CSRD components, pertinent district and state conditions, and the overall extent of implementation based on progress on the 9 components. The analysis has purposely been fragmented, to assure readers that the 9 components and external conditions have been systematically examined. However, how all of these components and conditions might work together and become integrated within a specific school may not be readily apparent.

To gain a more coherent picture, three schools were selected because they seem to be making good progress in implementing CSRD but appear to show a slightly different pattern of events in doing so. Appendix D contains brief summaries for each of the 18 schools, and the descriptions for the three schools have been extracted from these reports.[39]

First Example. The first school (School F) began implementing *Coalition of Essential Schools* prior to its CSRD award (Component 1). Under CSRD, the school has expanded its use of the method and also now uses it in combination with other reform methods, including *High Schools That Work*. Together, the methods cover the school's entire range of curriculum and instructional practices. The school has developed and shared a comprehensive vision for reform (Component 2), including a written plan that is well understood and supported by the entire staff (Component 5). The school is making progress on all CSRD components. For instance, large numbers of the faculty participate in learning groups and related professional development activities (Component 3), the school has successfully engaged parents and community members to serve on key committees (Component 6), and the school coordinates multiple external and internal resources in a converging manner (Component 9). However, the school's clear goals and benchmarks (Component 4) are not matched by a clear evaluation plan or activity (Component 8).

An apparent key to the first school's progress has been the strong leadership of the principal and the low turnover of the teaching staff. The district also uses a performance and appraisal process that emphasizes professional development and is therefore compatible with the needs of comprehensive reform.

Second Example. The second school (School P) only started its reform activities with its CSRD award and is implementing *High Schools That Work* as its main reform method (Component 1). The method's comprehensive coverage provides a framework for all school improvement activities at the school (Component 2), and the staff and a core

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[39]In turn, the brief summaries are based on 18 in-depth and detailed cases reviewed by each school and available separately from COSMOS (see www.cosmoscorp.com).

leadership team fully support the research-based method and the reform plan (Component 5). The school also is making progress on all CSRD components including the coordination of resources (Component 9). For instance, the state is conducting an external evaluation covering all 9 components, and the school itself uses a formal instrument to observe and evaluate classroom instruction (Component 8). The school-to-work aspect of the research-based method attracts a good deal of business and community support (Component 6).

In support of reform at this second school, the district provides substantial staff support for CSRD activities and has compensated for any CSRD funding shortfalls in professional development. With strong external support from the developer of HSTW (Component 7), School P is now engaged in implementing a complementary research-based method that aligns its work with that of middle school feeders.

Third Example. The third school (School G) also began its reform activities with the first year of CSRD funding, adopting a locally developed *Special Literacy Model* (Component 1). Although the method mainly pertains to grades K-3 and reading, the school's reform activities also have embraced the other grades (4-6) and academic subjects, as driven by a comprehensive and converging school improvement plan (Component 2). The district requires the plan to be aligned with its own strategic goals and plan. Both must reflect, according to a state mandate, the state's standards and assessment tools (the state also mandates that every school have an aligned plan). School G has therefore made progress on all CSRD components. For instance, the school's staff strongly support the reform (Component 5), and the school closely monitors its progress on relevant goals and benchmarks (Component 4) that is key to the year-round school improvement planning process. School G's small size, collaborative management style, and history of reform have all contributed strongly to the CSRD efforts.

3.4 THREE PATHWAYS FOR IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM

The essence of CSRD is its focus on improving student performance through comprehensive school reform. The three schools just described are among several that appear to be making solid progress along these lines but also may provide insight into the conditions under which schools are successful in *implementing*[40] schoolwide reform.

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[40] The Field-Focused Study deliberately sought to identify implementation conditions substantively related to comprehensive school reform. The study did not attempt to examine more general implementation conditions, such as principal leadership, sufficiency of resources, and absence of turnover or other disruptive

Simply put, the three schools may represent three different sets of conditions—each characterized as a different pathway to comprehensive school reform.

The first pathway, represented by School F, is implicit in the formal design of the CSRD program and is thus a *component-driven* pathway: A school envisions and implements comprehensiveness in terms of the 9 CSRD components, with many of the components compatible with the principles espoused by a "process"-oriented research-based method (*Coalition of Essential Schools*). The second pathway, represented by School P, is totally compatible with the formal design of the CSRD program but may be characterized as a *method-driven* pathway: A school implements a broad and comprehensive research-based method that affects virtually all school operations, including curriculum and instruction, and whose successful implementation substitutes for the need for any independent articulation of the 9 CSRD components.[41] The third, represented by School G and also fully compatible with the formal design of the CSRD program, is a *vertical-driven* pathway: State or district strategic planning drives schools toward the nine components, including the research-based methods or strategies (Component 1), without specifically enumerating them.

Whether the latter two pathways should be given as much weight as the first pathway, which best suits the language of the legislation, is unclear. Furthermore, no pathway is necessarily more immune than the others to such disruptive conditions as: high principal turnover rates, limited professional development resources, or planned or unplanned school restructuring. And, as previously described under state and district conditions, compared to the first two pathways, the third pathway does not necessarily make reform any more immune from shifts in state or district priorities, either.

The potential insight presented by identifying these three pathways may be magnified, not by comparing the three pathways, but by hypothesizing the conditions when all three may be absent. A few of the 18 schools did not attend explicitly to the nine CSRD components, did not adopt a comprehensive method, and were not driven to strategic and performance-related planning by state or district policies. These schools therefore pursued none of the three pathways, and implementation of reform lagged or was even absent.

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effects. These general conditions remain important, but highlighting them would not have contributed to understanding CSRD, which was taken as the main objective of the current study.

[41]The distinction between the importance of method vs. program has continued to evolve over the CSRD program period. This study was designed to address the first two cohorts of CSRD schools, when such a distinction was not as evident.

3.5 SUSTAINING COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM

The experiences of the 18 schools in the Field-Focused Study also provide some clues regarding the sustainability of reform beyond the period of CSRD funding. To be recalled is that the CSRD program consists of three-year awards, of modest size, and are intended to serve (only) as a catalytic force in stimulating comprehensive reform at a school. Using these awards to implement short-lived changes—i.e., as in supporting a special "project"—does not fulfill the basic CSRD mission. Rather, schools must demonstrate a more sustained set of changes. However, neither the original legislation nor ED define the exact nature of the changes to be associated with sustaining a comprehensively reforming school.

One implicit view, based mainly on the experiences of the New American Schools initiative, holds that the central changes to be sustained should be the practices associated with the research-based method supported by CSRD (Component 1). An alternative view is that comprehensive reform, though embracing a research-based method, also transcends it. Successful sustainability would therefore not be associated with the use of any particular method or combination of methods. A successfully reforming school may implement one or a combination of methods for a period of time and then later transition to other methods—but the transitions should reflect a progression toward continued school and student improvement rather than the "churning" of innovative practices. These two views led to two different interpretations of sustainability.

To succeed according to the first view, a school must identify a continuing source of funds for a specific method, because the use of the method usually requires some annual expenditure, whether: a) to support the work of the external developer, or b) to provide professional development opportunities for training new staff and refreshing existing staff about the method. Although external developers reduce these annual costs as a school gains experience with their method over time, none of the 18 schools had unequivocally identified such ongoing sources of support for these activities. Title I funds were the most common candidate, but most schools could not be confident about making discretionary commitments in a context dominated by district or state budget cutbacks. At the same time, 10 of the 18 schools (Schools A, C, F, G, I, J, K, O, P, and Q) did indicate their intention to seek such support from external developers for the coming school year (2002-03).[42] Most of these schools, however, were not likely to support the method (or the

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[42]One of these schools (School K) may only have been using the CSRD-supported method because of a state requirement to adopt the method—because the school had been rated as a school "in need of improvement." Whether the school will continue using the method if the school sufficiently improves and the state requirements are lifted remains to be seen. Alternatively, if the school fails to improve sufficiently, other sanctions may be applied and the continued use of the method also would be unclear.

needed professional development) at the same level as under CSRD, so the quality of the continued method may be diluted.[43]

To succeed according to the second view, a school substituting for its original CSRD-supported method should evidence a clear rationale related to school or student performance. Such was the case with four schools (Schools B, D, H, and N). For example, the faculty at one school (School B) that was otherwise doing well in implementing the CSRD-supported method decided not to proceed to the next phase, which required adoption of a block schedule—because of reports that schools with block schedules had done less well on state assessments than had schools without block schedules. A second school (School H) had already started using a district-developed curriculum aligned with the state assessment,[44] instead of the original CSRD method. At the other two schools (Schools D and N), the districts had developed their own curricula that were believed to be more aligned with state assessments than the CSRD-supported method. Either school was free to continue using the original method, but the districts' resources were devoted to supporting their own curricula and related professional development, and a strong possibility is that the two schools will transition to the district curricula.

Pursuing the second view a step further raises the question of whether any of the original 10 schools continuing the CSRD-supported method might have been doing so in the face of an emerging and contrary rationale. Three of the 10 schools (Schools I, J, and P) may be vulnerable to this jeopardy. Two (Schools I and J) were continuing despite the lack of centrality of their method to their districts' priorities; continuation may depend on the identity of a new principal, yet to be appointed at either school. The third (School P) was due to be merged with another school in 2003-2004, raising uncertainties because the other school's principal already has been announced as the principal of the merged entity.[45]

Exhibit 3-4 places the 18 schools into a sustainability framework that accommodates both views. The most lenient condition occurs by accepting both views. Under this condition, 14 of the 18 Field-Focused Study schools were exhibiting some level of
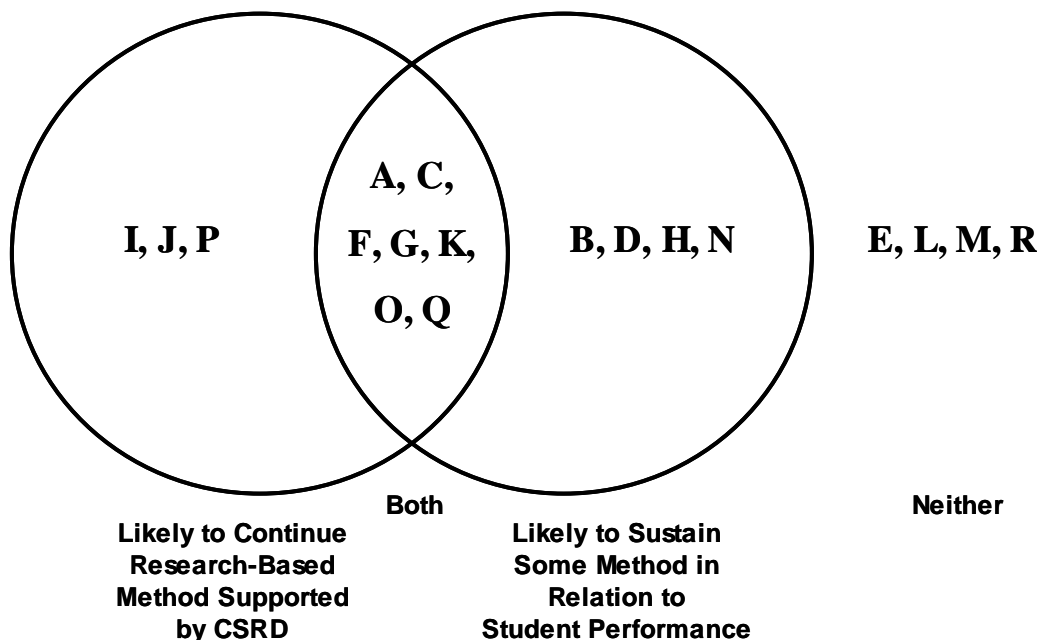
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[43]Of the 10 schools, two schools (Schools I and O) were in CSRD Cohort 1 (whose award period was 1998-99 to 2000-01), so they already had shown an ability to continue the use of the method in their first "post-CSRD" year. Of the other three schools in Cohort 1, two (Schools E and R) had been rated as being the lowest in implementing CSRD in the first place (making the issue of sustainability moot). The status of the one remaining school in the cohort (School N) is discussed elsewhere in the text.

[44]Whether district-developed curricula can be considered a "research-based" method was beyond the scope of the Field-Focused Study. The districts' main claim is the alignment between the substance of the curricula and that of the state assessments.

[45]The other school happens also to be one of the 18 in the Field-Focused Study (School B).

Exhibit 3-4

SUSTAINABILITY OF CSRD AT THE 18 SCHOOLS

I, J, P   A, C, F, G, K, O, Q   B, D, H, N   E, L, M, R

Both   Neither

Likely to Continue Research-Based Method Supported by CSRD

Likely to Sustain Some Method in Relation to Student Performance

sustainability by the time their CSRD awards were ending. Accepting only the second view reduces the number to 11, and accepting only the first view reduces it to 10.

The main barriers to sustainability continue to be the availability of slack resources, especially in light of states' and districts' revenue shortfalls in recent years. To sustain a reforming process, even when existing resources have been sufficiently coordinated and targeted to reform, still requires discretionary funds to support such essential activities as: adequate professional development (including support for teacher substitutes), especially in situations of high teacher turnover; time for common planning periods or teachers' work on school leadership teams; and support for external technical assistance. Though such needs can be served with modest levels of funds, serving the needs is still a discretionary activity that may have to be ignored if the core school operations are underbudgeted.

4. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FIELD-FOCUSED STUDY

The Field-Focused Study arrived at the following conclusions in relation to the main research questions posed at the outset of the evaluation.

Overall Implementation of CSRD. Using a 47-point instrument, the Field-Focused Study determined that 9 of the 18 schools were nearly fully implementing CSRD and its 9 components, another 6 were partially implementing CSRD, and the remaining 3 were judged to be poorly implementing CSRD. On the whole, *CSRD implementation was therefore uneven.*

Three Conditions (or "Pathways") for Successful Implementation, Including District and State Influences. The study identified three different sets of conditions, or "pathways," that appeared to be associated with the successful implementation of CSRD. The first pathway is a *component-driven pathway*, whereby a school uses the 9 CSRD components to guide the development and implementation of a comprehensive reform. The second is a *method-driven pathway*, whereby the school adopts and implements a comprehensive research-based method that affects virtually all school operations and whose successful implementation substitutes for the need for any independent articulation of the 9 CSRD components. The third is a *vertical-driven pathway*, whereby a school articulates and pursues the needed comprehensive strategies as a result of state and district requirements involving the setting of standards, use of appropriate assessment tools, and required and aligned district- and school-based strategic planning and improvement plans to meet performance standards.

No single pathway was considered the "best" or preferred pathway, and no pathway was necessarily more immune than the others to such disruptive conditions as: high principal turnover rates, limited professional development resources, or planned or unplanned school restructuring.

Sustainability of Comprehensive School Reform. Neither the original legislation nor ED define the exact nature of a school's changes to be associated with sustaining a comprehensively reforming school beyond the three-year CSRD award period. As a result, the Field-Focused Study examined two different views of sustainability and judged the 18 schools according to both.

The first implicit view, based mainly on the experiences of the New American Schools initiative, holds that the central changes to be sustained should be the practices associated with the originally-supported research-based method. An alternative view is that comprehensive reform, though embracing a research-based method, also transcends it. By this second view, successful sustainability would not necessarily be associated with the

continued use of any particular method but could involve transitions from one research-based method to another, over time. The transitions would have to reflect a progression toward continued school and student improvement rather than the "churning" of innovative practices.

Using the most lenient benchmark and accepting either of these two views as a criterion for assessing sustainability, 14 of the 18 schools were exhibiting a promising level of sustainability by the time their CSRD awards were ending. Accepting the "comprehensive reform" view alone reduces the number to 11; accepting the "research-based method" view alone reduces the number to 10.

The main barriers to sustainability continued to be the availability of slack resources, especially in light of states' and districts' revenue shortfalls in recent years. To sustain a reforming process, even when existing resources have been sufficiently coordinated and targeted to reform, still requires discretionary funds to support such essential activities as: adequate professional development (including support for teacher substitutes), especially in situations of high teacher turnover; time for common planning periods or teachers' work on school leadership teams; and support for external technical assistance. Though such needs can be served with modest levels of funds, serving the needs is still a discretionary activity that may have to be ignored if the core school operations are underbudgeted. Thus, the sustainability of comprehensive school reform is still questionable, given the current fiscal climate.

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