
**JURISDICTIONAL OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS:
LESSONS LEARNED DURING IMPLEMENTATION**

In planning for Phase 3, NAS sought to develop partnerships with jurisdictions that appeared to provide operating environments that would effectively support widespread use of design-based assistance. It sought jurisdictions that would commit to transforming 30 percent of their schools using design-based assistance and hoped that this commitment would lead to jurisdictions in which highly effective schools are more nearly the norm. It also hoped that the business generated in these jurisdictions would help the Design Teams move well along the path to self-sufficiency.

Despite a formal search for jurisdictions with such environments, NAS found that few of the jurisdictions provided a truly supportive operating environment. Use of design-based assistance on the scale NAS advocates lay outside the normal district operations. Funding policies, accountability systems, professional development policies, and site-level management authority and capacity were less supportive than hoped. As it moved to try to help the jurisdictions and Design Teams, NAS came to see its initiative as involving district-level interventions, as well as the activities of the Design Teams. It began to support work related to the resources, professional development, and decentralization.

This chapter describes the most important of these challenges:

- 1. Matching schools with appropriate designs.** NAS and the districts were not consistently effective in organizing a process for informing schools' choice of designs. Furthermore, Design Teams

did not provide clear explanations of their designs to schools, districts, or states.

2. **Providing resources for design-based assistance.** None of the jurisdictions had a systematic strategy for investing in the reform of schools, and many individual schools were uncertain about the resources they could draw upon.
3. **Providing school-level authority needed to implement designs.** With the exception of Dade County schools, most principals and teachers did not feel that they had the authority to reallocate resources or make significant changes in operations at the school level needed to implement the designs.
4. **Dealing with perceived mismatch between Design Team curriculum and jurisdiction accountability systems.** Most jurisdictions used fairly traditional standards and assessments for accountability purposes. Most of the designs include curriculum and instruction intended to promote student learning that is not captured by traditional assessments. As a consequence, school-level staff, as well as the district leadership, expressed concerns that the NAS designs, even if well implemented, would not perform well on the existing district assessments.
5. **Coordinating district professional development policies and design-based assistance.** As noted in the previous chapter, design-based assistance is intended to provide professional development for teachers. In the initial year of Phase 3, the school transformation activities were understandably treated largely as an add-on to existing activities. If design-based assistance is to be an integral part of a district's school reform strategy, changes in district professional development policies are likely to be required.

These structural issues were all cited in NAS's scale-up strategy paper. However, the strategy paper was largely silent on another quality of the operating environment that has clearly affected implementation of the designs in many of the jurisdictions: political stability and continuity in leadership. Almost all the NAS jurisdictions faced such problems. Superintendents have retired or are retiring in three jurisdictions; all face regular school board elections or appointments; and several have faced contentious labor negotia-

tions. Several districts have had to deal with serious budget crises occasioned by failures to pass tax levies or cuts in state-level funds. These problems are the norm in American education and, predictably, they often diverted the attention of teachers, principals, and other jurisdiction staff from the NAS initiative.¹

MATCHING TEAMS WITH SCHOOLS

As was the case in Phase 2, the start-up of Phase 3 did not mesh well with the normal rhythms of the school year. Invitations to jurisdictions to consider participation were sent out in November 1994. NAS conducted site visits in promising jurisdictions in January and February of 1995. Final selections were made in March 1995.² By the time the selections were made, jurisdiction and school plans for the 1995–96 school year were nearly complete. Introducing Design Team activities into schools was difficult.

The compressed time periods affected the way in which most of the Design Teams developed relationships with schools. In Phase 2, many of the school sites were chosen because members of the team knew and had worked with an individual in a district or school. Several teams already had established working relations with school systems and built on those. In Phase 3, Design Teams had to deal with schools that did not previously know them and their work. Signifi-

¹Most of the discussion in this chapter is based on interviews in Dade County, Cincinnati, and Memphis. The districts we visited that were part of the National Alliance (Pittsburgh, Kentucky, and Northshore and Everett in Washington state) faced many of the same challenges, but these seemed less evident. In jurisdictions other than Kentucky, the schools were not as far along in the implementation of their designs, a fact that is consistent with the National Alliance strategy to emphasize the building of jurisdiction-level field teams in the first year. This means that some of the issues outlined above may develop in the future. The assessments in Kentucky include performance-oriented components, and Pittsburgh and Washington state are actively moving to develop new assessment systems that will be heavily influenced by their work with the New Standards project. Kentucky provides substantial authority to its schools in accordance with the Kentucky Educational Reform Act (KERA). School-level autonomy was being addressed in other sites but, for the most part, was still in the planning stages in the first year of Phase 3.

²As noted earlier, ten sites were chosen, four of which were associated with the National Alliance for Restructuring Education (NARE). In those four cases, much of the initial negotiation with the districts was carried out by NARE. In Cincinnati, Dade County, Memphis, Philadelphia, and Maryland, NAS staff worked directly with the jurisdictions.

cantly, while all the Design Teams emphasized the importance of school staff and parents wanting to work with the team, the fast pace of the early stages of Phase 3 meant there was relatively little time for schools and teams to become familiar with one another.

Table 3.1 outlines the processes initially used to match schools and designs in the four jurisdictions RAND surveyed.³ As the table suggests, the process of bringing schools and Design Teams together varied for each jurisdiction. Three had some sort of meeting or “fair” at which Design Teams described programs to interested teachers, principals, and parents. Two districts encouraged specific schools to consider one or more models; others relied on administrative processes or informal competitions. Dade County developed a cadre of staff who learned about the designs to help the schools decide whether a particular design was appropriate. On the basis of the Design Teams’ positive experiences with these coordinators, NAS has encouraged other jurisdictions to consider such practices.

The unprecedented scale of the effort, together with the speed at which it took place, posed considerable challenges for all parties. None of the partners were satisfied with initial efforts to match schools with designs and modified their procedures accordingly. Because of the importance of the matching process, RAND conducted interviews with nearly 50 principals in Dade County, Memphis, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati in spring 1996. These interviews, as well as discussions with district personnel, highlighted several problems:

1. Many schools that joined the effort at the beginning of Phase 3 had a poor understanding of the designs prior to making a decision on a design. In most cases, the principal and perhaps members of a site council investigated a design and either persuaded other members of the staff to go forward or made the decision on their own. In a few instances, the jurisdiction made the deci-

³Table 3.1 covers the activities that took place in the late spring and summer of 1995. Most of the Year 1, Phase 3 school sites that were not affiliated with the National Alliance were engaged by these efforts. Since summer 1995, additional fairs or workshops to introduce designs to schools have been held in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, the Seattle area, several places in Maryland, Philadelphia, and several other areas.

Table 3.1
Approaches to Matching Teams and Schools

Tasks and Functions	Cincinnati	Dade County	Memphis	Pittsburgh
Creating initial awareness	Consumer guide sent to selected schools. Design Teams visited selected schools.	Design Team presentations at New Initiatives fair. Consumer guide distributed to all schools.	Superintendent presentation to all principals. Design literature sent to all schools. High-profile NAS-specific fair for teams from all interested schools.	Presentation of National Alliance (NA) design at summer retreat that included all district principals.
Selection of Design Teams entering district	Central office emphasized certain designs and decided one design was inappropriate for district.	District allowed selection of any design as part of the school improvement process. Technology-intensive design matched with RFP for model middle schools.	Goal was to have several implementations of each of six designs.	Initially, schools only considered one design (NA) with understanding that schools could select other NAS designs after a year of preparation.
Roles of central office staff	Central office staff targeted which schools considered specific designs.	District coordinators associated with each design identified candidate schools and helped them to negotiate to fit design with district policies.	Managed a selection process leading to 28 schools using NAS designs.	Managed selection process leading to selection of 10 schools to begin implementing NA design.

Table 3.1 (continued)

Tasks and Functions	Cincinnati	Dade County	Memphis	Pittsburgh
Allocation of resources	Title 1 at school. Other by central office staff. Schools required to apply for state grant.	Title 1 and reallocation of school-level resources by principal. Patchwork of school and district grants.	Title 1 at school. District administered funds including special appropriation by board of education.	School to reallocate existing funds under proposed decentralization of budget control.
Required participation of school staff in decision to use design.	Agreement by school site council. State grant required 80% vote.	Vote of 80% of staff required by union agreement.	Vote of 80% of leadership team and 60% of faculty.	School submitted application.

NOTE: Based on RAND interviews in December 1995 and January 1996

sion that a school would implement a design or, in the eyes of the principal, was perceived to have done so. This was often the case, even though districts and Design Teams usually required formal votes.

2. Many schools reported that the materials and presentations from the Design Teams did not provide a good picture of the consequences of choosing a specific Design Team. Developing such understanding required extended discussions with the Design Team and, in some cases, visits to demonstration schools implementing the design.
3. Decisions to adopt designs were made with little appreciation of the financial resources and staff time required for implementation. This was true both for schools and district staff and appears to be due, in part, to an initial inability of the Design Teams to state clearly their resource and service requirements.⁴
4. Confusion over the cost of design-based assistance was compounded by lack of clarity concerning resources to be made available to the school by the jurisdiction. In several jurisdictions, schools reported they were promised funding they did not receive.
5. In schools with unhappy prior experiences with “start and stop” reform, principals reported that the lack of clear promises concerning resources deterred selection of a design. In one jurisdiction, some principals reported that their schools were unwilling to become involved with NAS unless the district committed the necessary resources. School staff were unwilling to proceed with a major effort and then “have the rug pulled out from under them.”
6. Principals with significant experience in site-based management appeared better prepared to consider design-based assistance. This difference was highlighted in our interviews with principals in Dade County. Dade has had a significant level of site-based management since the late 1980s. Principals there were more conscious of their ability to reallocate school-level resources to support implementation of a design. They also seemed more adept at actively seeking additional resources.

⁴The several significant reasons for the difficulties Design Teams had expressing their costs are described in Chapter Four.

7. Perhaps a third of the principals and probably a larger proportion of the teachers did not comprehend what was implied by “whole-school reform.” Many schools seemed to treat the designs as another program added to existing ones. NAS has termed this approach to reform “programmitis” and argues that a design should become *the sole* program of a New American School.⁵

The importance of effective processes for matching Design Teams to schools was summarized in a RAND briefing to NAS management. We found that schools visited in spring 1996 reported stronger commitment to implementing a design and to the design-based assistance transformation process when

- The school chose the design.
- The school had a clear understanding of the sources of the resources for design implementation.
- The school was forced to make some hard resource choices about its existing programs so the design was not treated simply as an add-on activity.
- The NAS effort was viewed as a major and permanent initiative in the district.

New American Schools and Jurisdiction Responses to Problems with Matching Schools and Design Teams

Many of these problems can be attributed to the hurried start-up and the participants’ lack of prior experience. Design Teams, with NAS assistance, worked to improve the quality of their presentations and refine the manner in which they interacted with schools choosing designs. NAS consultants helped teams develop clearer pricing options. The jurisdictions chose personnel to become more knowledgeable about designs so that they could counsel schools considering implementing the design. NAS provided consulting assistance to several districts to develop their capacity to help schools reallocate

⁵While this statement specifically applies to principals and teachers, the phenomenon is more general. Many we talked with in the central office also tended to view reform as made up of a number of individual programmatic initiatives.

their resources to support the design implementation. The district staff themselves, having developed a clearer understanding of the designs and of design-based assistance, began to target more clearly their matching activities to schools they thought could benefit from design-based assistance (while still preserving a school's right to select a specific design).

NAS also provided financial assistance to help maintain demonstration sites. Principals, teachers, and administrators repeatedly emphasized the importance of the Design Teams' demonstration sites in conveying the implications and potential benefits of implementing the designs. The concrete representations of the designs coupled with the opportunity to talk with teachers, administrators, and students conveyed information that could not be gleaned from Design Team materials, presentations, or videos.⁶

Demonstration sites played two distinctive roles. They helped school and district staff understand a design before making a decision to adopt or reject that design.⁷ While this was expensive because of the need for many district personnel to travel some distance to the sites, NAS felt it was important to help get the initiative off the ground.

Demonstration sites also served another important purpose. They provided schools that had already begun to implement a design with a more concrete appreciation of the design, the nature of the implementation tasks, and a chance to obtain advice from experienced teachers and principals.

Both these needs for demonstration sites may be more easily met as the designs are more widely implemented, particularly within jurisdictions committed to design-based assistance as a reform strategy. The benefits have been illustrated by the Roots and Wings design,

⁶NAS has developed a sourcebook providing descriptions and listings of demonstration sites for each of the Design Teams. See NAS (1996).

⁷In a few instances, the demographic settings of the demonstrations were so dissimilar to those of urban districts that they have lacked credibility. This appears initially to have been the case with ELOB, whose primary sites were in Dubuque, Iowa, and with Modern Red Schoolhouse, whose best sites were in smaller communities in Indiana. Other sites, such as the Accelerated Learning Laboratory school Co-NECT uses in Worcester, Massachusetts, were seen as nontypical because of selective student assignment to a magnet and/or alternative school or the perception that unrealistic levels of resources were available.

which begins implementation with the Success for All reading program, which has been available for ten or more years. In several of the districts RAND has visited, schools already implementing this design component for several years served as demonstration sites for potential adopters. It was clear that faculties in those schools relied upon one another for help and support. Teachers who were uncertain about how to organize a Success for All classroom would spend time in classrooms of effective teachers in other schools. Often, a district-level coordinator who specialized in the Successful for All design facilitated these visits. Design Team and jurisdiction personnel indicated that such activities have already begun with other designs.

Many of the problems discussed here can be attributed to the difficulties associated with starting any new initiative. As the discussion suggests, Design Teams, jurisdictions, and NAS have worked to improve their materials, presentations, and strategies for introducing designs and Design Teams to schools. However, our fieldwork throughout 1996 and 1997, as well as reports from jurisdictions, suggest that schools' decisions to choose and implement a design remain problematic. The difficulty seems to reflect a number of factors:

1. Serious consideration of a design-based transformation effort requires a significant investment of staff time, time that is difficult to find during a school year. Many schools (and jurisdictions new to the effort) do not fully appreciate the need for this time.
2. School faculties are often poorly organized to make the decision to adopt and implement a whole-school design. Many principals lack the skills to engage their faculties in making a decision to implement a design.
3. Schools vary widely in their readiness to implement a design, and the Design Teams are limited in the degree to which they can tailor their assistance to the varied needs of individual schools.
4. Many schools lack the incentive to make the commitment required to implement a design.
5. The complexity of many of the whole-school designs makes it difficult to communicate the implications of adopting a design to a school.

The challenge is particularly significant in jurisdictions that newly initiate a reform effort making heavy use of design-based assistance, since they do not have existing local sites using designs and expertise.

AGGREGATING INVESTMENT RESOURCES

NAS's strategy for whole-school reform requires resources for initial investment in implementing a design.⁸ Such investment is needed for initial training and planning, added personnel that some designs require, and materials and equipment. Few schools possess adequate slack resources for such an investment. As a consequence, NAS sought assurances that funds would be available in a jurisdiction to support initial implementation of designs when it chose its jurisdictional partners in 1995.

Jurisdictions do not generally set aside a fixed proportion of funds to invest in school-level reform. Instead they tend to rely upon outside or add-on funding. For example, about two-thirds of the first-year NAS schools in Cincinnati, Memphis, and Dade are Title 1 schools.⁹ While this may represent some conscious targeting by the districts, it also reflects the fact that Title 1 provides add-on resources that can be used for training and materials, as well as for additional personnel. In this first year, these districts (as well as those affiliated with the National Alliance) used outside grants from foundations, business partnerships, states, and NAS itself to pay the fees of the Design Teams. To the extent that there is a strategy for investment in reform, it is to be opportunistic in attracting outside funding.

RAND has found no instances of institutionalized district strategies to invest their own resources in school reform. Some states do have elements of such a strategy. For example, Ohio has a venture capital program that has been important in Cincinnati. Washington State also has a program that provides grants for professional develop-

⁸School-level investment in reform and the sources and uses of funds for that investment are discussed in Odden (1997b).

⁹Title 1 is a component of what is now known as the Improving America's Schools act of 1964. It provides funds to schools serving large numbers of economically disadvantaged students.

ment to schools. Most of the states in which NAS is working have programs for supporting the introduction of technology in schools. However, local school systems do not seem to think strategically about investment in reform. The lack of clearly identified funds for implementing designs was a concern for many of the schools RAND visited in 1995–96.

The absence of systematic local investment in reform is not surprising for at least two reasons. Since the days of science and math reforms following Sputnik or the Ford Foundation’s lighthouse school program, the most common source of funding for reform has been external to schools and jurisdictions. This reflects the fact that most of the interest in school reform has historically come from people outside the schools and school districts. Federal and state categorical programs have provided funding for magnet schools, vocational education reforms, reading programs, teacher centers, technology, and a myriad of other activities intended to change schooling. In their proposals to NAS, most of the jurisdictions cited such programs as potential sources of funding for NAS designs—even though in most instances the funds may have been significantly constrained by their categorical purposes.

Such categorical programs were initiated for a wide spectrum of reasons, including the perception that districts were not able or willing to pursue the goals of the categorical programs on their own. Such programs are now a common element of school finance. As a result, many jurisdictions’ reform efforts are governed as much by the ebbs and flows of outside funding sources as by their own strategies for improvement.¹⁰ In our view, responding to these outside pressures has become a behavioral norm for school districts across the nation, particularly those under heavy financial stress. (See Hannaway and Sproull, 1978–79; Hill and Kimbrough, 1983.)

There is a second, equally important reason for the absence of an investment mentality in school systems. Expenditures for schooling are often the largest single category of public spending at the local

¹⁰While such outside funding appears to be the most common source of funds for NAS activities, the superintendents in Memphis and San Antonio (a new NAS jurisdiction in fall 1996) sought and received special funding for NAS scale-up. Whether this will become the basis for a continued investment fund is unclear.

level. The governance of this spending is highly political and public. In such a political environment, aggregating funds and selectively disbursing them to a subset of schools is difficult; the strong tendency is to spread discretionary funds fairly equitably. If schools are to adopt an investment strategy, they will have to find ways to make it politically acceptable to their communities.

SCHOOL-LEVEL AUTHORITY

While initial funding assistance may be required to start the implementation of a NAS design, continued funding for that design is expected to be within a school's means. However, to implement the designs, including obtaining the assistance necessary to continue school improvement, schools must be able to redeploy their resources. NAS argues that schools need control over curriculum and instructional strategies used in a school, consistent with public standards for school performance, as well as power to hire, organize, train, and release staff. This need implies substantial control over budgeting and spending within the school.¹¹

Our site visits suggest that most of the NAS jurisdictions are moving in these directions. In the previous chapter, we noted that Dade County has provided substantial authority to school-building leadership. Kentucky has provided substantial authority to schools, and the principals and teachers seemed to be making some use of it. In the other districts, moves are under way, but they are less fully developed. Washington Alliance districts have moved to decentralize authority to their schools significantly. Pittsburgh, with assistance from the National Alliance, is moving to allocate authority over a significant portion of their budget to schools in the NAS program as a pilot project for the entire district. Cincinnati has completed a strategic plan that calls for significant levels of site-based management and allocation of budget authority. Finally, Memphis has put in place a site-based management policy.

¹¹Such control is less important if most of the resources for reform are from sources outside the schools. To a degree, then, the reform changes are then simply added to the operations of the school. Since significant restructuring of school operations is not required, it is not surprising that reforms supported in this way frequently seem to fade when the external funding ceases.

However, as research suggests, the difference between declaring policies and actually implementing them can be substantial. (Hill and Bonan, 1991; see also Bimber, 1994, and Hannaway and Carnoy, 1993.) In particular, authority at the school level is often limited by state and district policies governing personnel and curriculum, provisions of labor agreements with teachers and other district staff, and the unwillingness of central office staff to relinquish control (often coupled with district reluctance to reduce the size and authority of that staff).

While legal and policy authority are important and may even have been provided, many school personnel do not know how to use it. Some Design Teams (e.g., Modern Red Schoolhouse, Co-NECT, and ATLAS) provide specific training on site-level management to school staffs implementing their designs. NAS has also considered developing a curriculum unit that would prepare schools to assume this authority.¹²

In summary, our site visits suggest that, in most districts, much remains to be done to decentralize authority and responsibility for allocating school-level resources, shaping instructional programs, and developing schools' capability to use that authority. However, in most districts, significant initiatives are under way.¹³

LACK OF ALIGNMENT OF DESIGNS WITH JURISDICTION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Across the nation, states and districts are in the midst of major efforts to develop high standards together with supporting curricular frameworks and assessment systems. However, few have been put in

¹²Roots and Wings provides a distinctive example. It tends to operate only in Title 1 schools where substantial additional funding is available and where the principals and district Title 1 coordinators have substantial discretion over funding allocations. The Roots and Wings staff have developed a number of models for reallocating those resources to cover the costs of implementing their program. This is possible because the funding supplements normal school funds and is largely governed by federal regulations supportive of such flexibility.

¹³Allen Odden, with support from NAS, has provided advice on decentralization to several jurisdictions. See Odden (1997a).

place, and considerable controversy still surrounds the assessments.¹⁴

Consequently, many of the Design Teams are working in jurisdictions where the outcomes of their implementation will be judged, in part, by existing accountability systems. A major feature of such systems is scores on tests mandated by the state or the district and comprising mainly multiple-choice questions emphasizing basic skills or specific content.

Both school and jurisdiction personnel were concerned that the designs would not rapidly improve test scores on these tests. In our interviews, both in Phase 2 and Phase 3, most schools and teachers “stepped out” of the designs to do some preparation for tests. This was the case in Phase 2 schools, even though the majority of the principals interviewed had had positive growths in scores in the past.¹⁵

In Phase 3, principals and teachers in several of the jurisdictions pointedly—even angrily—complained that they were being strongly encouraged to use new designs (often because their schools had poor performance on existing tests). However, they were concerned that these designs were not keyed to improving scores quickly on the more traditional tests that continue to be emphasized in the jurisdiction’s accountability system. Moreover, in several districts, performance on mandated tests was a component of systems for evaluating performance of school-level personnel.

To deal with the test-alignment problem, several of the Design Teams proposed administering a separate assessment that had both components from current jurisdiction assessments and items from more modern performance assessments. The results would be reported to the public as a supplement to the existing testing program. In a NAS working group, made up of both jurisdiction and

¹⁴Several of the NAS Design Teams have devoted effort to this issue. NARE is associated with New Standards, a major effort to develop standards and assessments. National Alliance districts are either beginning to use this assessment system or developing and using systems that are broadly consistent (e.g., Kentucky assessments). Modern Red Schoolhouse has also developed its own assessments for determining whether students are prepared to move from one broad schooling level to another.

¹⁵These interviews are described in Mitchell (1996).

Design Team personnel, the jurisdiction personnel strongly rejected such an assessment as too expensive and confusing and politically infeasible. Moreover, some felt it was unclear that such an assessment would relieve the teachers' and parents' anxieties concerning the possibility of poor performance on the mainstream jurisdiction assessments.

As this is written, alignment of designs with accountability systems continues to be a vexing problem. The jurisdiction leaders feel that the schools using the designs must improve on traditional measures in addition to fostering student skills not measured by their tests. The Design Teams are concerned that their schools will be slow to do well on such assessments but, more importantly, many worry that if schools insist on continuing to prepare for the regular assessments, it will seriously set back implementation efforts. There is pressure in some districts for Design Teams that lack explicit reading programs to incorporate such programs in their designs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The professional development of teachers is obviously central to the improvement of student performance. However, there is broad agreement that current practices promoting professional development leave much to be desired. For example, the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future quotes one expert who says:

A good deal of what passes for "professional development" in schools is a joke—one that we'd laugh at if we weren't trying to keep from crying. It's everything that a learning environment shouldn't be: radically under-resourced, brief, not sustained, designed for "one-size-fits-all," imposed rather than owned, lacking intellectual coherence, treated as a special add-on rather than as part of a natural process, and trapped in the constraints of the bureaucratic system we have come to call "school." In short, it's pedagogically naïve, a demeaning exercise that often leaves its participants more cynical and not more knowledgeable, skilled, or committed than before. (Miles, 1995.)

Miles goes on to note that not all professional development is like that, however, so there "may be hope." In that vein, the design-

based assistance NAS supports is intended to deal with each of the problems listed in the quotation. Professional development of teachers is the center point of all of the NAS designs. Design Teams promote it in a variety of ways, through direct training, by sponsoring design network conferences, by providing coaching and opportunities to observe experts, by guiding planning activities, or by requiring teachers to develop curriculum units. A tenet of all the designs is that professional development should be continuing rather than restricted to discrete episodes.

However, the Design Teams have been thrust into jurisdictions with a wide range of existing professional development practices that seem quite fragmented. There are some attempts to change. Cincinnati and Memphis are both in the midst of building professional development centers. Kentucky has several regional centers providing professional development opportunities, and the beginnings of such centers exist in the Seattle area. In all the local jurisdictions, central offices still run in-services and mandate staff-development activities that are often not central to the requirements of the schools.

Perhaps the policy that provides the greatest impetus to professional development of school-level personnel is the reward structure that is built into a district's salary schedule. The jurisdictions we visited currently have traditional pay schedules in which pay is based on credit hours of education and length of service, leaving decisions concerning what courses should be taken and what experience should be gained largely to individual teachers and school-level professional staff. With the exception of Kentucky, which provides cash awards to schools performing well, none of the jurisdictions currently provide rewards based on performance.

While the hurried start-up in Phase 3 made coordination of design-based assistance and other professional development activities difficult, there were several examples of district-sponsored professional development activities that may have supported the implementation of designs. Districts have provided training in site-based management and budget planning; instructional approaches, such as cooperative learning; and the development of skills related to the use of technology.

District funds for professional development were used to pay for some of the costs of implementing designs. RAND's preliminary analysis of sources of resources for school transformation found that districts have made extensive use of professional development funds to release time for teachers and, in a few instances, to provide stipends for time spent in summer retreats or other staff development activities.

The site visits also suggested that district personnel could contribute significantly to the utilization of design-based assistance. Dade County assigned district staff to become experts on a design, assist schools to decide whether a design was appropriate for them, and coordinate the relations between the Design Team and the district. The Design Teams found this helpful and have recommended that the practice be extended to other jurisdictions. In Memphis, the Teaching and Learning Center is responsible for the NAS effort, and its staff coordinates the efforts of Design Teams and schools. Both these examples provide beginning models for the integration of design-based assistance with district professional development.

While meshing design-based assistance with other professional development efforts has begun, many important issues remain. For example,

1. Several of the jurisdictions want to substitute district staff for Design Team trainers, in large part because they are viewed as less expensive. These districts would like to have the Design Teams help them build their internal capacity to extend the designs. Since they depend on fees for training services, Design Teams have little incentive to make such a move.
2. Little attention has been given to the roles of the Design Team after the initial school transformation has taken place. Should the teams play a continuing role in providing quality control? Should they provide on-call assistance and troubleshooting? Will their primary function be to maintain and nurture a network of practitioners sharing an interest in their design? Neither the teams, schools, nor jurisdictions have fully developed answers to these questions.
3. Many of the designs share a number of common instructional themes, such as the use of project-based learning, multiage

grouping, and looping (teachers spending several years rather than a single year with a class). Can the recruiting practices of a district and its association with its primary sources of teachers be used to ensure that new teachers arrive in the classroom equipped with some of the pedagogical skills needed by the designs?

These issues share a common thread. The goal of the NAS initiative is to create schools whose faculties perform as teams focusing on continually improving their students' performance. The initiative envisions schools themselves having the responsibility to organize their professional development activities so that they contribute to the performance of the school. It also envisions a system in which incentives, including those associated with the determination of salary, reinforce this overall goal.

The long-term success of design-based assistance as an instrument of reform and improvement depends upon making it an integral part of all the policies shaping the professional development of a jurisdiction's staff. Recognizing this, NAS is collaborating with several jurisdictions to analyze professional development needs and design more-effective policies.¹⁶

¹⁶The ideas shaping this work are described in Haslam (1997). Haslam's paper begins with his review of lessons he takes from NAS's initial year of scale-up.