

# National discussion on teacher ownership/partnership

## Background

Attached you'll find the notes of a discussion about the idea of making available for public school teachers the 'partnership' model . . . the 'ownership' option . . . that has long been available to professionals in other comparable occupations.

The discussion was held at Hamline University in Saint Paul MN September 25-26, 2001. It was made possible with the assistance of the Wallace/Readers Digest Funds, which is active in the effort to improve district, school and teacher leadership in public education.

The meeting included a trip to Henderson MN to visit one of the high schools created by a teacher cooperative (partnership)formed in 1994; and later a conversation with teachers in three of the schools operated by the EdVisions cooperative.

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You may be interested in this discussion . . . this idea.

A number of the most important questions about improvement seem stuck on the assumption of employment. It seems hard to find workable answers within the conventional, traditional notion that teachers must be employees.

The meeting was an effort to think through how these questions might change, and whether better answers might appear, if the notion of employment were removed and the questions were re-thought on the assumption that teachers were partners in a professional organization which they collectively owned and ran.

For example:

- o How would the discussion about school leadership change?
- o How might the problem of improving teaching practice change?
- o What would it mean for moving teachers into professional roles?
- o What might it imply for the takeup of technology in schools?
- o How would the discussion about teacher-supply and -quality change?

The two-day discussion included policy people and teachers, union leaders and foundation executives and people in operating roles in the K-12 system.

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The meeting grew out of a project headed by Edward J. Dirkswager. Participants are now reviewing a book, Teachers as Owners, written & produced by the project to explain the idea.

## WHAT IF TEACHERS COULD WORK AS PROFESSIONALS?

The meeting began with an mid-day trip Tuesday to the school at Henderson MN run by the teacher cooperative (partnership) EdVisions. Back at the Hamline conference center we talked with a group of teachers from three of the schools run by the cooperative. Wednesday we moved to the general questions about the partnership, ownership, model for teachers.

Here, condensed, is the way the discussion went.

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### **Tuesday Morning: At the Minnesota New Country School in Henderson**

**Doug Thomas:** EdVisions is now handling nine schools; three elementary and six secondary. We've added six schools last fall and this fall. We're planning to have three or four more next fall. The cooperative has about 120 teacher-members and about 12 at-large members. I'm one of the at-large members.

This building is owned by a small development corporation. The financing came from the local bank, from the City of Henderson and from the US Department of Agriculture rural-development program.

We'll talk lots more about the co-op when we get to Hamline. Let's talk mainly here about the school.

[Note: A profile of New Country School and its program appears as Chapter Six in Teachers as Owners, the book distributed at the Hamline meeting.]

**Dee Thomas:** The school you'll see here is a grade 7 to 12 secondary. The students come from 11 different districts. Some travel up to 50 miles to get here.

The school has no classes. Learning is entirely project-based. We want to produce students who can manage tasks in the way they'll have to in life.

The day begins with kids in their advisee groups. Each group has 18 students maximum. After that there is a period for math; the closest we come to a 'class' or course. Parents asked at the retreat last summer for a program of accelerated math.

Then the students go to work on their projects. A student needs 10 project-credits a year; each credit representing 100 hours of documented learning time. Each project has to be 'sold' to me, as lead teacher; and to the student's own parents, and to three adults here at the school. A senior project must involve a community person. It's amazing how many directions you can go when you're working with projects.

As a high school principal in my former life my problem was to get kids to come to school. Here my problem is to get the kids to go home.

**Ian Keith:** How do you develop the salaries and benefits for the personnel? **Dee:** We use about 60% of the budget for staff costs; well below the proportion in a conventional district. Basically when the people at each site meet the questions are: What do I contribute to the school? How long would it take to replace me if I left? What do I personally need to improve? The students have an input to this. There are perhaps 15 measures; ranging from length of service to involvement in the

community. In the end a decision gets made about compensation. Most of us have extra duty, for which there's extra pay. We have eight licensed staff here (in one case two persons sharing one position) and six aides. We're generalists first, specialists second.

**Liz Bruch:** How do you orient people to such a different learning system? **Dee:** This year there are 33 new students; many of them from Northfield where we'll open a school next fall. (The district board approved that proposal last night.) We ran a summer orientation - "boot camp" - to get them acquainted with project-based learning.

**Irving Buchen:** What's the holding power of the school? **Dee:** We lose some students. This model is not for everyone. We don't lose many.

[We then all spent time moving around in the school, watching the kids at work, talking to the students and to the advisers individually. At 2 p.m. we got on the buses for the trip back to Saint Paul.]

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### **Tuesday Afternoon: The discussion at Hamline**

**Stacy Becker:** Thank you all for coming. We know it was not easy, for the out-of-town people especially. Some wanted to be here, but just could not. Henry Levin, at Teachers College/Columbia, is not here but wanted us to know his interest in "the democratic nature and productivity of cooperatives where workers both own and manage their enterprise".

This discussions was organized by the people at Hamline, with the help of the Wallace/Readers Digest Funds, which have a major interest in leadership and improvement. Our purpose is to start a discussion about the idea of teacher ownership and professional practice. We'll explore this idea here today and tomorrow, and talk about how to broaden it into a national discussion. We've drafted a book about the idea. Each of you will get a copy when you leave.

**Ted Kolderie:** New and unfamiliar ideas are always at risk. It may help if, first, we keep in mind the difference between the general idea of teacher ownership and the particular model of it that we saw at Henderson earlier today. It's the difference between "a flying machine" and one particular kind of airplane. This will avoid the "Can it -? Will it-? Does it-?" questions that would come up if we were talking about some defined model.

It may be good to be clear, too, that the kind of school produced by this one teacher partnership is not necessarily what would be produced by others. We'll want to talk about the relationship between ownership and the kind of learning program teacher-owners will produce.

Third: It will help if we think of the idea of ownership not as an end in itself but as instrumental . . . as a way to cause to happen things that need to happen if public education is to improve.

**Ed Dirkswager:** Let me try to convey the essentials of this idea.

Teachers own and control the partnership. They control the budget, shape the organization, decide who's admitted to practice, choose the learning program, set the compensation, evaluate performance.

It will contract with some 'client' to provide educational services. A district could be a client. So might a charter school. A business firm might be a client. So might parents. Even one of the education-management organizations.

Their entity may take any of several legal forms: partnership, cooperative, corporation, nonprofit.

EdVisions is one particular example: a cooperative, with clients in the charter sector. Each partnership in teaching, as in other fields, is likely to be different in some way. If you've seen one partnership, you've seen one partnership.

Discussion of the general idea began in Minnesota about 1980. Last year I was asked to get together people from different professional areas to expand the concept beyond the experience of EdVisions; to explore alternative designs and adapt the model to public education.

This project has drafted a book, Teachers as Owners: Teacher Professional Partnerships, It addresses key questions: What is it? Who are the clients? What are the key ingredients of success? What are the options for design and operation? What are the implications for teachers, parents, students, districts, charter schools? for unions? for teacher education? for policy and policy-makers? There's a profile on EdVisions. We'll distribute it at the end of the meeting. It's a draft; to be revised when we get your comments.

**Tom Toch:** Did you consider handing out the book now, letting us look at it and comment tomorrow? **Becker:** Yes. But decided not to let the discussion have to react to the authors' ideas.

#### Discussion with teachers in the cooperative

**Stacy Becker:** We have a panel of teachers from EdVisions schools. Bonnie Jean Flom was in Nerstrand elementary. Dee Thomas you remember from New Country at Henderson. Dean Lind is also an adviser there. Juan Figueroa and David Greenberg are from El Colegio in Minneapolis.

Why did you do this?

**Flom: Survival.** We converted to charter and went with EdVisions because we were going to be closed. I learned the advantages later. **Thomas:** I wanted the feeling of ownership. **Lind:** I wanted to be in charge. Security is not an issue for me. Teaching is a whole lot more secure than farming. I like being responsible for the success of the activity. **Greenberg:** We wanted students to take ownership of their work and we wanted to show them teachers could take ownership of theirs.

**Becker:** What's the biggest difference between working in the cooperative and working in the district?

**Lind:** Getting out of the antagonistic relation between administrators and teachers. Structure really does make a huge difference in performance. **Q (Tom Toch):** Is 'profit' a priority for people in the cooperative? **Lind:** No one wants to work for nothing. **Greenberg:** My opportunities are wider here than in the district setting.

**Becker:** How do you make the tradeoff between compensation and program?

**Flom:** As a conversion we started with the district scale and kept "commensurate with" it. We 'balance' because teachers now see the whole picture, the whole budget.

**Lind:** New Country got to the tough decisions only last year. Our newer schools, like RiverBend at Mankato, got to them earlier. **Greenberg:** We started with the salary-offered; formed the co-op later. We then did a review at the end of the year.

**Q (John Parr):** How large will the cooperative get? **Thomas:** We're feeling now we're getting too large, at about 120 members. **Ron Newell:** It's important, though, that key decisions – as re: pay – are decisions at each site; a much smaller group.

**Parr:** How big could you be at a single site: 120 teachers? **Greenberg:** That would imply 2,000 students. EdVisions is about small schools.

**Toch:** How do we distinguish the effect of site-management from the effort of teacher-ownership? A larger-scale organization might generate (in co-op terms) 'savings' for members. **Doug Thomas:** EdVisions is now considering whether to form the teachers at the sites into separate cooperatives, with EdVisions itself becoming a 'service cooperative' for those school-level cooperatives. At the moment each site sends two representatives to the EdVisions board, and if we get up to 14 schools even that begins to be a sizeable group. This year there will likely be the first 'dividend' paid from EdVisions back to members.

**Bruno Manno:** What equity do members have? **Lind:** There're two levels of membership: a basic \$25/year dues and \$100 if a teacher becomes a stockholder.

**Jeremy Resnick:** I can imagine a 1,000-student high school with this model and not everybody having to be a participating partner. If you're too small isn't there a risk of losing a key member? **Newell:** Money isn't primary. EdVisions doesn't actually own anything. Not the building; not the computers. Its only 'capital' is its intellectual property. **Doug Thomas:** The National Cooperative Bank wanted us to "capitalize the cooperative". This puzzled us, but I guess they felt that members would feel more allegiance if they had an economic stake. **Dirkswager:** If members even invested money for cash-flow it might cause them to have a different attitude.

**Joe Graba:** Recognize, this is Minnesota where the charter law requires teachers be a majority of the board of the school.

**Steve Ramsey:** Is this at all like an EMO (Education Management Organization)?

**Greenberg:** An EMO contracts to manage the school. You still have an employer/employee arrangement. **Ramsey:** Is there *anything* of the boss/worker relationship in your organization? **Lind:** I think we want to be in full control of everything we do.

**Eric Hirsch:** Might you expand into teacher training? **Newell:** That's certainly in my mind. With learning project-based our needs are clearly different. Mankato State and Hamline are becoming involved with us.

**Becker:** What was your preparation for this? **Greenberg:** My teacher-training was not much help. My life experiences were better. You have to know how to choose good colleagues; your co-owners.

**Bob Wedl:** What turnover have you had, among teachers? Why? How do you deal it when you find someone who needs improvement? **Dee Thomas:** Not major; two this past year, one voluntary and one not. **Jane Krenz:** Are some of your teachers on leave from districts? **Dee Thomas:** Currently, none, at New Country.

**Becker:** Does the cooperative make a difference? What's good and not-good about it? **Greenberg:** I have to ask whether I want all the work that goes with ownership. **Flom:** It really clicked for me when I saw the paychecks come from EdVisions and not from the district. All of us getting around the table together was a new experience.

**Charles Kyte:** Do you see tensions, as between senior and junior people? **Lind:** Struggles and disagreements are normal everywhere. **Liz Bruch:** Do you see yourselves differently now? **Dee Thomas:** I see myself doing this to be a professional. We get opportunities you never get as an employee. **Flom:** You make things happen, not have them happen to you.

**Jim Bartholomew:** Have you thought of applying the partnership idea to a subject area; to a department of a school? **Dee Thomas:** To special education, maybe. EdVisions members have done some consulting; with five traditional districts, for example, on project-based learning.

**Toch:** What's the 'down' side? Are there liability issues? **Doug Thomas:** We'd worried for a while about decisions on personnel generating a liability for unemployment compensation that would fall on other sites, but this has been worked out with the state. For general liability each site carries \$2 million of insurance. The co-op also is insured. Partly this question did help move us toward breaking down the cooperative. When we do that we'll have to deal with the reserve built up; 20% of budget. **Lind:** That reserve is in (New Country) school, though, not in EdVisions. In effect EdVisions has not been charging the school enough.

**Irving Buchen:** What could be done in a traditional school; how far could a district get to what you have? **Greenberg:** Maybe have the teachers select the principal. **Dee Thomas:** Maybe have teachers decide the learning program and their own professional development.

**Becker:** How real is the fear of failure?

**Dee Thomas:** The pressure to meet the needs of students and parents is there all the time. We always have to be on our toes. **Greenberg:** This comes from being a charter school more than from being a cooperative. The co-op adds an important element, though.

**Manno:** Let me come back to this question of the relation between the ownership and the project-based learning. Is this learning design somehow facilitated by ownership, or could you have gone to some other model? **Dee Thomas:** Ownership gave us the freedom to put in the learning model we wanted to have.

**Barb Kelley:** Does the cooperative watch all the schools, for signs of failure? **Lind:** We surely do not want a school to fail. We may have to exercise more oversight.

**Graba:** Back to this means-and-ends: How does ownership affect students and parents? **Lind:** It lets them hold us accountable, as we make the decisions. If there is criticism we get it first-hand. **Dee Thomas:** If parents want us to change, this model lets us change tomorrow. We don't have to go through endless committees.

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### **Wednesday Morning: The idea of teacher ownership, and its implications**

**Stacy Becker:** We're talking both about an idea and – as yesterday – about a particular application of it. One of the challenges today will be to set aside that particular school and its learning model, and to look at the idea of ownership, and its effects, separately.

Some of you have asked to be clearer, first, about how the ownership and control is set up in the case of EdVisions and other ways it might be set up. Ted has some graphics.

**Ted Kolderie:** Slide #1 shows New Country and EdVisions as they started. The local district sponsors (charters) the school. The school is a standard nonprofit corporation. It just has no employees. Its board manages contracts: for facilities, for transportation, for lunch, and – with EdVisions - for the learning program.

Slide #2 shows EdVisions' growth, to serve the other schools. Slide #3 shows how it might look if, as Doug suggested, the site teams become the co-ops and EdVisions becomes a 'service cooperative'. Other co-ops form cooperatives for services; as for auditing.

The other slides show other possible models. (Staying in the charter sector) a school could – shown in #4 – hire an administrator, who could employ people for 'operations' and contract with a teacher partnership for the learning program. Or - #5 – the school might have a master contract with the partnership and the partnership might then hire an administrator and others to handle the non-learning operations . . . rather than share these among the teachers, as EdVisions does.

EdVisions is involved only with whole, discrete schools; only in the charter sector. Teacher partnerships might also appear in the district sector, and might be either smaller or larger than a school; might contract to run, say, the science department of Stillwater High, or the Montessori program in Minneapolis' elementary schools.

There's another variation that's emerged, which I don't know how to do in a graphic. John Parr should just talk about it.

**John Parr:** I'm from Milwaukee. For 25 years I ran the AFSCME union local for local government employees. I now consult with unions mostly on health-care questions. But my daughter is a 17-year teacher, looking for change. A year ago we visited Henderson. On the way back I sketched out an arrangement to do this in Wisconsin. There in order for teachers to stay in the state retirement program the school would have to be an 'instrumentality' charter. This means teachers would continue as employees of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and under the district master contract. I proposed that the cooperative, the Chapter 185 organization that would hold the charter, be formed just for the teachers' *professional* life. The school is sponsored by MPS. It opened this fall, with 200 kids; grades 4-8. In time the YMCA

will put up a new building which its program and the school will share. It's a new experience for these teachers. The lead teacher is a 30-year veteran.

**Becker:** What security do they have?

**Parr:** It's a work in progress; a real challenge. We hope the school will succeed. The teachers are district employees. MPS has 6,000 teachers, so there are other places the teachers can work if the school doesn't succeed. **Rose Hermodson:** The teachers have re-employment rights? **Parr:** The teachers *are* employed by the district; simply assigned to the I.D.E.A.L charter school. We have an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the union about all this. **John Ayers:** Was that difficult for the union? **Parr:** Not really. It was already moving this direction. **Wedl:** How is a teacher released? **Parr:** Obviously there's no experience with that. **Wedl:** Well, what would the process be? **Parr:** The school would use the peer-review process in the MPS contract.

**Kolderie:** What authority do the teachers have there? **Parr:** They set the budget. They get to select the teachers. They can decide how many teachers to have. They choose the learning program. **Ullrich:** How do the students get there? **Parr:** They choose to be there. **Harold Larson:** Is the agreement with the district board? **Parr:** Yes. In Wisconsin the school isn't a legal entity. So the cooperative holds this charter. It's accountable to the board. **Dirkswager:** Does this include pay-for-performance? **Parr:** The coop uses the MPS salary schedule which doesn't now have that provision. **Jon Schnur:** Does every teacher hired become a member of the co-op? **Parr:** The teachers aren't hired by the co-op; they're employees of the district. But, yes, all do become members. They set up a leadership structure, etc.

**Stacy Becker:** Let's talk about the broader implications of this whole ownership idea. Some of the questions are clear. Can ownership reasonably be expected to help with the solution of major problems facing public education? Does it have potential to change the way teachers practice? Might it speed the takeup of new technology? Is it a part of the solution to the problem of school leadership? Might it help increase the supply of quality teachers? Does it relate at all to the financing of education? What would it mean for teacher education? What does it imply for unions – including the unions' desire to get their members into the control of 'professional issues'?

What other questions do you see, about its implications?

**Ian Keith:** How might it affect student achievement? **Ed Kirby:** Would families tend to prefer a school run by a teacher partnership? **Parr:** Are there risks professionally, if not economically? **Jeremy Resnick:** Would it cause successful programs to expand? **Bob Wedl:** Might it make the private sector more accountable? Companies have buried schools for years in garbage: Would this make book publishers more accountable? **Rose Hermodson:** How does it fit with the current push for standards? What in the state or national system would need to be changed, to facilitate this? **Bob Lacey:** Would it create a more humane learning environment? **Dave Ferrero:** What would attract large numbers of teachers to this model? **Laura Bordelon:** What difference does the opportunity for 'profit' make? **Louise Sundin:** How would a partnership be exposed to the new ideas about learning methods? **Eric Hirsch:** Would it change what 'a teacher' is? **John Mauriel:** How would it affect patterns of expenditure?

**Stacy Becker:** OK, let's try to work through these questions.



**Hirsch:** There's a major discussion now about how teachers should get in to the profession. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the National Commission on Teacher Accreditation believe control should be in the hands of the professionals. Others believe strongly in 'open' entry to teaching, where the district or the school or the parents are the judge. Or in having the state control. **Wedl:** But in Minnesota 'the state' is the Board of Teaching, controlled by teachers. **Kolderie:** Why wouldn't 'ownership' simply fit into whatever decision emerges? **Tom Marr:** In medicine professionals control by peer review. This hides lots of problems. Reviewers looking at mistakes in practice tend to feel, "There but for the grace of God . . ."

**Keith:** (To MNCS people) How do you deal with questions of quality? **Dee Thomas:** Any small group has the friendship/quality dilemma all the time. When I go for review there is some discussion with me present. At some point I leave; but I have "an ally" who stays, who tells me later what was said – blocking out the names. We try to sit down early when we see problems coming. **Newell:** Remember that our project-based learning has changed what 'teaching' is; so peer review has to work on a different standard. As we have changed the expectations for teachers, we have changed what peer review is about.

**Barb Kelley:** It *is* hard to isolate the variables; to know for sure what's not possible without ownership of the practice. My sense is that ownership forces you into full reform; forces teachers to face the tradeoff between compensation and program; forces them all to move quickly; gives everyone a common vested interest in the decision about our approach to teaching and learning. By contrast, in traditional settings some of these things are untouched by teachers, or are touched only partially, or not so quickly.

**Parr:** My daughter would never stand for peer review except in the context of the group having defined a common purpose. **Kirby:** Barb's point is perfect. Elsewhere even in the charter sector the responsibility lies really with the board of the school.

**Keith:** Lots of businesses fail. Do we want to risk this with schools? Most nations rely on centralized government arrangements. **Mauriel:** We clearly are, in this, talking about a larger role for the market. **Jennifer Henry:** I wonder if teacher ownership does force change in the larger system.

**Resnick:** I'm thinking about what Barb said. Ownership does force the people who are in daily contact with kids to take on these issues of professional quality, compensation, etc. It doesn't go to "the board" in this arrangement. So there's a greater urgency to act, in this arrangement.

**Dee Thomas:** EdVisions adds a layer of accountability to what's in the charter arrangement itself. **Dirkswager:** There has to be a culture that demands good learning. Ownership, as Barb suggests, will intensify the pressure to do all this right. And if you have quality you will have lower costs and people will come to you. **Hirsch:** But in this public system there can't be failures: You have to be 100% right. **Kolderie:** No institution works without failures. The institution today contains lots of failure. You simply try to keep the rate as low as possible, and to be continually improving. Remember, too: Lots of big things grew from small beginnings.

**Stacy Becker:** We're coming toward the end. Let me ask now for some general observations, first from those who have to catch an early plane.

**Steve Ramsey:** I was an educator; also an administrator of University Hospital in Columbus. In medicine the physician carries the responsibility for life or death decisions. Risk forces you to be good; to be professional.

**Jeremy Resnick:** It's exciting for me to see the Henderson teachers deal with the key issues. I'm coming to see this probably is because of the co-op. I'm still wondering, though, if it's essential for everyone to be a full participating member.

**Bruno Manno:** What is government's role? What limits should there be on a school's freedom of action; on the teacher-owners' freedom of action? I also think about our current 'accountability' discussion. States may be moving in the wrong direction with this rationalistic model. Finally: Is this too much about the teacher? What is the role of incentives for organizations? Just questions to think about.

How does this idea move into the national discussion?

**Stacy Becker:** We'd like your help now in thinking about how this idea can move broadly into the national discussion. We're going to break into small groups for the next 45 minutes; then reconvene. Please, in your groups, try to think also about what other pieces of the K-12 system will need to adjust, to make the ownership idea possible.

[Several ideas recurred, in the discussions in the different groups. The question of how to get the word around about the idea seemed hard to separate from the question of how to get the idea tried.]

- o It is a kind of chicken-and-egg problem. It's hard to get people interested in the general idea unless you can show them some working examples; but it's hard to get people interested in creating a working example unless you can get them interested in the general idea.
- o There is a need for more models, and different models.
- o The 'ownership' being talked about here lies at the end of a spectrum; with, at one end, a 'feeling' of being in charge . . . a 'sense of ownership' . . . and, at the other, the fact of truly being the legal and economic owner.
- o Journalism is an important way to get the idea known. The emerging electronic newsletters may be a good vehicle for dissemination. Foundations may or may not be helpful: Some are risk-takers but others look for 'sure things'. Legislators tend always to be looking for new ideas, to bring home from a national meeting.
- o Try to make contact with the people who are working to solve the key problems in public education. If you can show the ownership idea may be helpful, they will be interested and helpful.
- o The broad public opinion will be important; the public's perception of teachers, and its sense of the ownership idea as affecting the profession.
- o Show that teacher ownership can affect student learning. Show that the working examples can be sustained and replicated.

**Stacy Becker:** What other comments and observations, before we finish?

**Barb Kelley:** The teachers becoming national-board certified fall into two groups. Some want more; want larger roles. These would be interested in ownership. Others just want to be better teachers, where they are. Ownership, as a result, will not become universal; just as not all want to be board-certified. It will be a leveraging factor, stimulating other change. There is a range of 'control'; economic ownership being the ultimate. People will have to consider what are the costs and benefits of going to that final stage.

**Tom Toch:** The power of this idea, I'm sensing, seems to lie less in the 'profit' dimension than in the authority it offers to teachers. The element of risk it contains is a powerful driver; the need to attract students has a powerful effect. So it would seem that if teacher ownership comes into the district sector it should be accompanied by choice, to make it effective. The shared liability it involves may be a motivator; may be a deterrent to some. Its real power will be realized only when it does come into the district sector. Once outside the charter sector it'll be easier to see the effect of ownership itself. Whether this happens will depend on the how both district administrators and the teacher unions respond. Finally, I'm not sure ownership can improve student learning. Ownership can change some things which then can improve learning. But ownership doesn't do that directly.

**Mindy Greiling:** I've long been convinced of the importance of options. One size does not fit all. I've supported options for students. There should be choices for teachers too.

**Alice Seagren:** Clearly New Country has given teachers control and they have provided effective teaching. I do have a question if it's possible for this to impact the whole district structure. The public and the parents do demand qualified teachers; we do have to think of new ways of doing things. We should look at the cooperative idea as a choice for teachers.

**Louise Sundin:** We see the contract not as a restraint, as I gather some do, but as a reform document. It gives permission for change and for risk-taking; gives teachers a way to trust change. As we look at the shortages now of both teachers and administrators we realize we have to respond to the younger people coming in to education. They insist on a strong professional culture; they do have a more entrepreneurial spirit and are less trustful of traditional public institutions. We probably do have to provide some opportunities for these attitudes to be satisfied, so I am trying to be open to this idea. I am thinking about questions of size. Sometimes size helps, as by depersonalizing peer review. Also, it is hard for a very small group to 'keep up'. Our number one issue for teachers in the shortage of time: Add to the current pressure the responsibility for managing the school could make things worse. We're struggling even now to get teachers to take leadership roles. (My feeling, by the way, is that if principals want to be instructional leaders they should get national board certification. If they don't want to do that, they should be business managers only.) Anything that improves the perception of teachers is good, but the best way is to pay professional scale. **Bob Lacey:** The idea will need to be discussed with lots of individual teachers.

**Laura Bordelon:** It's an option that expands opportunities . . . creates broader roles . . . for teachers. Not everybody wants to move into administration. **Jim Bartholomew:** We need to give greater autonomy as we move to greater accountability.

**Eric Hirsch:** I think this has a good deal of potential for teacher-retention. About recruitment, I'm not sure. States have tried to recruit new teachers, but with limited success. Urban and rural schools especially have had to rely on certification waivers.

**Dave Ferrero:** It'd be good to develop relations with the groups trying now to recruit teachers from non-traditional sources, such as Teach for America: The kind of people they contact might be especially interested. Keep a distinction between the ownership idea and the kind of learning program produced: A group of teacher-owners could probably open a KIPP school, for example.

**Rose Hermodson:** There're two threads here. One has to do with creating an environment in which teachers cooperate on the education of kids. The other has to do with generating new models of learning. We need to decide what we want most to accomplish.

**Jon Schnur:** Maybe there should be some R&D work, expanding out of EdVisions. I want to thank you for doing this meeting. It is rare to bring together EdVisions with policy people; to bring together people who do not agree on most everything.

**Walter Enloe:** Our profession has not really grown up yet. Teachers do not have the stature they need. **Deirdre Kramer:** This conversation has given us material to take to our faculty. It will be disruptive, I hope; in the best sense. We need to be 'disrupted'.

**Doug Thomas:** It has been helpful for EdVisions too. We know how to run these schools. We have some idea of the destination for this idea. We will keep working to get there. We'd be the first to agree ownership is not for everyone. But we have got to get opportunity for teachers. I quit the profession because I found it way too restrictive. We are naively optimistic; will keep just plowing ahead. **Ron Newell:** We have to remember why we did this. We all felt there was a better way for kids to learn. We felt teaching was becoming less professional; less collegial. **Dee Thomas:** We have to remember, it is about the kids.

**Stacy Becker:** Thank you all very much. We are adjourned. Do be sure to get your copy of the book from Kim Farris.

## **The Participants**

**John Ayers** heads Leadership for Quality Education, the business community's liaison to the reform effort in Chicago and now also a charter-schools resource center.

**John Bacal** heads SchoolStart, a Twin Cities-based organization that helps develop new schools. He has been education aide to Saint Paul Mayor Norm Coleman.

**Jim Bartholomew** handles education for the Minnesota Business Partnership.

**Stacy Becker** is a consultant in Saint Paul. She was budget director for San Francisco before returning to Minnesota to be budget director and public works director for the city of Saint Paul.

**Bill Blazar** directs governmental affairs for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

**Laura Bordelon** handles education affairs for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

**Bob Brown** is a professor of education at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis.

**Elizabeth Bruch** is with Cappella University, an on-line university based in Minneapolis.

**Irving Buchen** is a consultant on organizational development based in Fort Myers FL.

**Lori Crouch** is on the staff of the Education Writers Association.

**Edward Dirkswager** was most recently a consultant to physician groups about change. He had previously headed one of Minnesota's largest medical/hospital group, served as budget director and commissioner of human services for the state of Minnesota, and as deputy mayor of Minneapolis.

**Walter Enloe** is a professor in the School of Education at Hamline University in Saint Paul.

**Kim Farris** is an associate with the education-policy group at Hamline and handled arrangements for the meeting.

**David Ferrero** is an education program officer for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has invested in the replication of the New Country/EdVisions model.

**Joe Graba** was a science teacher who got into politics; chaired the Education Finance committee in the Minnesota House of Representatives. He was deputy commissioner of education and ran the Minnesota vocational-technical college system. He was dean of the Graduate School of Education at Hamline University.

**Eric Hirsch** works with education policy questions for the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver.

**Mindy Greiling** is the 'lead' for the Democratic-Farmer-Labor caucus in the House K-12 Finance Committee in Minnesota. She served as an elected member of the board of education in Roseville, a Twin Cities suburb.

**Jennifer Henry** is a graduate student in the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and a member of the first group being trained by New Leaders for New Schools.

**Rose Hermodson** is director of governmental affairs for the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning. She was previously lobbyist for the Minnesota Federation of Teachers.

**Ian Keith** is a teacher and president of the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers.

**Barbara Kelley**, an elementary teacher in Bangor ME, is chair of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

**Ted Kolderie** is senior associate with the Center for Policy Studies in Saint Paul.

**Ed Kirby** represents the Walton Family Foundation and its interests in new schools. He is based in Boston. He was earlier the chartering officer for Massachusetts.

**Deirdre Kramer** is dean of the Graduate School of Education at Hamline University.

**Charles Kyte** is the executive director of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators; earlier, superintendent in Northfield MN.

**Bob Lace** is vice president of the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers.

**Tom Marr** is a pediatrician, now a senior executive with HealthPartners in the Twin Cities area.

**Bruno Manno** is the program officer for education at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. He was assistant secretary for policy in the U.S. Department of Education.

**John Mauriel** is a professor in the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. For 25 years he directed the school executives leadership program for the Bush Foundation.

**Michael Offerman** is president of Cappella University, based in Minneapolis.

**John Parr** spent 25 years as the head of the AFSCME local that covers employees of local government in Milwaukee. He now consults mainly with labor unions on health-insurance issues.

**Steve Ramsey** heads the association of chartered schools in Ohio. He was previously the chartering officer for the district in Cincinnati.

**Jeremy Resnick** was a math teacher who started a charter school in Pittsburgh. He is now back on policy questions; thinking for the Community Loan Fund about how to expand quality schools in the city.

**Jon Schnur** heads New Leaders for New Schools, based in New York. Earlier he worked with Secretary Riley and with Vice President Gore on education policy.

**Alice Seagren** chairs the House K-12 Finance Committee in the Minnesota Legislature. She served previously as a member of the board of education in Bloomington, a Twin Cities suburb.

**Louise Sundin** is the president of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers.

**Dee Thomas** is lead teacher at Minnesota New Country School. She was earlier a teacher and high school principal in a district in central Minnesota.

**Doug Thomas** heads the Gates/EdVisions project. He began as a teacher; served as an elected member of the board of the LeSueur-Henderson district at the time New Country School was created.

**Tom Toch** helped start Education Week; then was an editor of US News & World Report, following education. He is now at the Brookings Institution in Washington, finishing a book on Edison Schools and following the new-schools efforts of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Jeannie Ullrich** works for Edison Schools and its teacher-training program.

**Robert Wedl** is in charge of strategic planning for Minneapolis Public Schools; was earlier assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner and commissioner of Minnesota's Department of Children and Learning during the administrations of Gov. Rudy Perpich and Gov. Arne Carlson.