A REVIEW OF BUSINESS/EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS IN SOUTHWEST IOWA DURING THE LATE 1990s

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M. Merrill Johnson
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By M. Merrill Johnson

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Approved by Committee:

Charles Greenwood

James L. Romig
Dean of the School of Education
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M. Merrill Johnson
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Historically, our nation has cultivated a strong tradition of business and education interaction. The intensity of business-education partnerships varied depending upon the inequities of the marketplace.

The inclusion of academic secondary research from 1991 to 1997 forms a good theoretical framework for understanding partnership formation. Timpane and McNeil (1991) did influential research work that provides the benchmark for determining four distinct levels of partnerships. The significance of this work is reflected in its use in the thesis as the foundation article. Supplementing the academic secondary research were multiple surveys and studies commissioned by education and business.

Helped by this solid secondary research, the thesis was strategically shaped into an exploratory and qualitative research design. While some elements of the more traditional quantitative research design were incorporated, the former approach more accurately portrays this research design. The aggregate study sample encompasses eight communities throughout southwest Iowa, in which perceived local experts recommended had sufficient partnership activity. Within each of the selected communities a minimum of two educators and two business representatives were questioned. Respondents were instructed prior to the interviews that all responses would be disguised and reported in the aggregate to encourage participation. Consequently, field interviews were later administered to gather data.

Three fundamental research questions were pursued. (a.) What was the contemporary state of partnerships in southwest Iowa? The community results varied, but the southwest Iowa partnerships appeared to as good as or better than the national average. The influence of STW legislation was dominant throughout the report, not only in providing direction, as well as funding the partnerships. In addition, the denotation of the term “partnership” may be too strong to consistently characterize the interaction between businesses and educational bodies. Finally, communities needed a minimum threshold of commerce, key institutional leadership, and a commitment of dedicated resources for basic partnership activities to flourish. (b.) Did partnerships produce a measurable outcome? The results seemed to be consistent with the national literature that partnerships, in general, were focused on measuring the number of activities, instead of the change in behavior. (c.) What external forces caused partnerships to form? Local issues, such as labor availability and economic development motivated participants to form partnerships. The promise of money to expand school districts’ budgets or simply the pursuit of securing funds caused the two entities to form relationships.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

The motivation and rationale for this thesis evolved, in part, from the struggle that faces economic development corporations, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, companies, and political entities as they attempt to remedy the challenges of their respective customer bases, and simultaneously manage public expectations. My interest in this subject grew out of experiences in both the private and public sectors in which the norm was to encourage those entities to work together. The research on the collaboration of these entities was more specifically centered on a thesis that explored business/education partnerships. The conventional wisdom implied that these partnerships achieved positive outcomes. Studies such as Cowan (1994), Lewis (1997), and Queeney (1997) indicated there were predictable indicators that identified consistent characteristics of strong community business/education partnerships. However, there did not appear to be a reliable, contemporary study on the status of southwest Iowa partnerships.

Further conventional wisdom suggested that the challenges of these individual sectors of the economy were not mutually exclusive from one another, therefore, the incentive was to create synergistic solutions by combining scarce resources. Thus, the desire for such a strategic partnership was founded in solid logic. However, it was another obstacle to successfully maneuver the tactical implementation of the partnership within a politically charged environment in which the potential partners had evolving agendas. While the organizations, at some point, may have sought a graceful exit
strategy from the partnership, the external pressure for a sustained partnership might be as important as any realized remedy.

A strong argument for the formation of partnerships was that the combination of these talents would have a far greater impact than if they acted alone. While this combination of talents held much promise a critical question could be asked: “Did the partnership work?” In essence, had anything changed? If so, what was the common definition of meaningful change? Where were the benchmarks to measure success? How had the process been held accountable?

Another important level of questioning was, what brought the private and public sectors together? Was the influence of a third external participant needed to encourage the formation of the partnership? Theoretically, the need for seed money was a reasonable necessity to begin a significant project. Therefore, a third external participant could provide the funds and expertise to facilitate the partnership. However, had this infusion of external funds become a crutch that the partnership relied upon for maintaining its existence, instead of striving to be self-sustaining?

As the operating environment evolved, private and public administrators sought new solutions to contemporary and future challenges. Were the new societal problems so large that they could not be conquered by either the private or public sectors acting alone? Consequently, in the new millennium, would the new paradigm of success be defined by the collaboration of partnerships? Both public education and industry were often maligned institutions, frequently criticized for not addressing the needs of its respective customer bases. Thus was the partnership the solution, a political compromise, or another measured public relations response to impacted clients? One of the major goals
of this thesis was, in part, to identify as many plausible explanations for the formation of partnerships.

Finally, what was an appropriate level of interaction between institutional partners that made a difference? According to Osborne and Gaebler, authors of "Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector," questioned what level of interaction should be between business and education. They indicated that "inappropriate levels of business interaction with education was like a parent doing a child's homework. It was involvement, but misguided" (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

Both industry and academia could claim legitimate, mutually exclusive expertise through demonstrated technical competency. However, indirectly, each depended upon the other for the achievement of important projects, in part, because of the other committed resources. But could they exist as co-leaders? Should one lead? When one institution too closely managed the other institution's mission it could cause the performance of the latter to suffer.

A contrast to the change of power through established institutions was another theory that suggested that true change came from the outer fringes of society void of the power base of institutional partners. Some argued that change agents usually gained momentum from disenfranchised people who did not have a stake in maintaining the status quo. This was illustrated by the street protests of the 1960s and 1970s that rejected traditional, institutional power and pursued alternative means that accelerated the acceptance of new norms and new laws in the twenty-first century. The outcome was that previously unacceptable behavior became the new norm due to the efforts of
disenfranchised people. While this theory had appeal, it would not be pursued.

As stated earlier, this basic institutional theory assumed it was desirable for several entities to form a working partnership to solve a problem. The motivation of this thesis, in part, was to determine the contemporary status of patterns for involvement in partnerships. In addition, what were the characteristics of the successful partnership and the barriers that kept others from achieving progress? Finally, the foundation article of this thesis, “Business Impact on Education and Child Development Reform” (Timpane & McNeil, 1991), defined the measurable levels of work-site learning, school-based learning, and linking activities that determined the quality, depth, and effectiveness of the partnership.

It could be argued, that no two other institutions touched our lives short of religion and the Internal Revenue Service, as much as education and industry. This assumption helped to identify the desire to better understand why these two institutions partner. In essence, the output of education (students/workers) fed the input of business, which produced (profit/tax revenue) and which fueled the resources that paid the bills of education. For example, the worker realized the correlation of higher education with greater lifetime earnings. Therefore, the worker was willing to invest more in education, because of the potential for personal pay off. Then, as the worker’s earnings increased, so did his tax contribution to public education. Currently, 60 cents of each Iowa state income tax dollar collected from individual taxpayers went to public education (Local Expert S). This continuos cycle bred interdependence, once each party understood the benefit of more interactions with the other.

Not only did the researcher’s prior work experience provide examples on the
pattern of involvement between education and business; it created access to sources of
information. Preliminary inquiries to some of these experts generated multiple theories
and opinions to the current state of business/education partnerships. In addition, these
initial inquiries to field practitioners generated significant interest, as many of them
requested a copy of the report.

Finally, the report answered in the affirmative five of the six following questions
as to whether a research project should be pursued (Creswell, 1994). The direct intention
of the researcher was to honor these criteria. If a scholarly article were generated, it
would be due to indirect efforts.

1. Is the topic researchable given time, resources, and availability of data?
2. Is there a personal interest in the topic to sustain attention?
3. Will the results from the study be of interest to others?
4. Is the topic likely to be published in a scholarly journal?
5. Does the study (a) fill a void, (b) replicate, (c) extend, or (d) develop new
   ideas in the scholarly literature?
6. Will the project contribute to career goals?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the current state of cooperation between
education and business that utilized the foundation article and field interviews which
created a description of themes. The research design followed the general principles of
qualitative research. National secondary research was incorporated throughout the study,
which provided a good overview; while the major direction came from the primary field
data collection focused on a targeted portion of the southwest part of the state of Iowa.
Consequently, at this stage in the research, the partnership between education and
business needed to be defined.

What was the concept of business/education partnership?
A strict interpretation of the denotation of the term “partnership” may not be applicable to this thesis, and the connotation of partnership evolved as this thesis was developed. Partnership was closely defined in the following ways: (a.) The state of being a partner: participation. (b.) A: legal relation existing between two or more persons contractually associated as joint principals in a business. B: the persons joined together in a partnership. (c.) A relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities (Websters, 1985).

The definition of a full partnership implied fundamentally three concepts. One, that both participants gained more by cooperative action as opposed to independent action. Two, active participation was another key perquisite. Three, both sides contributed in an equitable fashion to ensure the fulfillment of the contract. While it may be argued that the “silent partner” was motivated to participate and the measurement of its gain may not be visible to the casual observer. In addition, minority or secondary partners may gain what they could not achieve alone, but their inputs and outputs were not equal that of a full or regular partner.

While not all partnerships included equal participation by its players, some seemed to fit an earlier profile of silent or secondary partners. In general, the term “partnership” may be too strong to describe the majority of business/education interaction. The preliminary 1996-literature review of 21 different studies failed to develop a consensus on the true definition of a partnership. While this finding was not inappropriate, it did give pause to rethink what was the correct universal term to describe this mutual association. In conclusion, the originator of this thesis needed an
understandable definition of a partnership, and one that allowed the latitude needed to
describe the varying levels of involvement.

The literature was rich in studies with various motivations for partnerships, which
revealed a span of plausible explanations for the interaction, and would be examined
later. The foundation article Timpane and McNeil (1991) was further validated as a
crucial benchmark to this research effort since it attempted to categorize these
relationships based upon benchmarks and linking activities. Therefore, concepts such as
interaction, assistance, activities, relationships, liaisons, associations, and involvement
may be more descriptive of many of the supposed full partnerships. However, for the
purpose of this study, the term "partnership" would be the universal term. Additional
common concepts would be defined in the definition of terms' section.

The Foundation Article

"Business Impact on Education and Child Development Reform: A Study
prepared for the Committee for Economic Development" by Timpane and McNeil (1991)
will be referred to hereafter as the foundation article. It appears to be a solid theoretical
study based upon findings that provided two fundamental elements. One topic addresses
the concern of child development. The second topic and the primary directive of the
thesis are the four distinct levels for business/education involvement.

Level I: Helping Hand

It could be concluded from the study that the helping hand level was the most
popular. Education tended to initiate the relationship with Principals assuming a
leadership role for this interaction. The focus was on individual activities and not an
integration of related activities. For example, popular programs included "Adopt-A-
School" and Junior Achievement.

Business: donated tangible goods and services characterized by equipment, services, mini-grants, tutors, and speakers. This created photo opportunities for business to be portrayed as engaged in a partnership. Not to suggest that these contributions were not meaningful or unwelcome, rather they suggested limited measurable impact.

Education: perceived it differently with desired tangible outcomes. While educators wanted business assistance in easing budget constraints, they did not want business to be involved in the implementation or developing of policies. Educators had a vision with real needs and business provided the resources.

Level II: Programmatic Initiatives

The next level in the patterns of involvement worked for more tangible outcomes. While it was not as common as the former, the research illustrated several pertinent working examples. A key finding was that this level of interaction tended to produce substantial educational outcomes. Indicators of this interaction in K-12 were Career Prep, mentoring, and work site learning programs.

Business: focused change and improvement on one particular school building or one specific targeted program.

Education: utilized business resources to change existing practices rather than to enhance existing school practices.

Level III: Compacts and Collaborative Efforts

At this level, the partnership was seen as a single, community-wide umbrella for a wide range of school-business and school-community activities, and as a pressure group
for district-wide reform. This pursuit of reform by some may be seen as hostile invasion of one’s territory by the other entity; however in general it was seen as supportive. Compacts and collaborative efforts were primarily coordinated mechanisms that provided community and business support for internally driven school improvement efforts. The relationship was primarily supportive; it fostered school improvements with support of programmatic initiatives and helping hand relationships within the district.

For example, the Boston Compact was referred to as a model to emulate. It was referenced due to its adherence to measurable goals, planning component, established baseline data, and secure financial resources.

Business: involvement was perceived as a group of businesses that worked with one school district.

Education: was the recipient of special local education funds that went beyond school improvement goals. For example, these funds empowered teachers to better fight illiteracy through additional training. Together education and business often provided a coordinated lobbying effort for causes such as funding.

**Level IV Policy Change**

Level IV was the pinnacle of partnerships, where business leaders and organizations have been active participants in developing a vast array of new policies especially at the state level. In essence, the successful level IV partnership’s mission had a bigger vision that encompassed elements of the larger community.

The definition of policy change would vary depending upon the level of government. One common theme was the pursuit of “economic development.” However, the economic development movement must become more than a call for tax
breaks to be considered effective. An example was the, Job Training Partnership Act, which pursued change in the federal employment policy that created a model for public and private human resource policy making.

Business: worked to set an agenda to realize change through revolutionizing curriculum and holding schools more accountable.

Education: was seen as restructuring the way it conducted its business.

The fundamental challenge determined whether the change positively impacted the child’s learning. The second challenge was that generally business participation had not yet been fully adequate to the task because there has not been widespread impact on educational outcomes. This was an outstanding revelation when considering how much energy and history had been expended on these endeavors.

This raised questions. How were these outcomes measured? What motivated the participants to be involved? Better measurement of the current state of business/education involvement, was important when examining the historical mission statements of the entities?

Academic: Traditionally, public education focused on producing a “public good.” While this outcome may be beneficial to industry, it was supposed to be a vehicle for the enhancement of all citizens. The direct output of education was the pupils' expanded understanding of the taught subject. Measured learning took place when there was a change in one’s behavior and people were better prepared for the challenges of society by the successful completion of the prepared curriculum. Ultimately, education contributed to the citizen’s better appreciation of the world and thus, helped to stabilize the community through better comprehension of the issues. Some educators could argue that
school should not exclusively be a trainer of workers for industry, or the savior of all societal ills.

Business: Traditionally, the purpose of commerce was to produce a “private good” for a personal profit. While significant numbers may benefit from the purchase and consumption of the individual firm’s market offering, this widget was not meant to be universally accessible to all citizens. Collectively the firms, through competition, provided better mousetraps, which resulted in better choices for the consumer. Thus, the competition created rising productivity, which meant greater prosperity for more people. Consequently, with an expanded economic pie, there would be greater individual well being, as well as more resources for government to address societal challenges that the marketplace could not address. Some business people did not feel it was the proper place for business to be involved in public education, other than providing financial support.

While in theory these different mission statements were mutually exclusive, historically there was evidence that evolving issues drove interdependence. Conventional wisdom implied that as the American economy moved from a rural-based population with a farming work force to an urban-based population with a manufacturing work force and now to a global-based population with a computing work force, business needed the cooperation of education to keep commerce expanding. As America entered each new phase, the stress of change caused business and education to seek each other’s help to ease the transition. Consequently, the turbulence of the economy caused the potential occupants of the work force to polish new skills not only capitalizing on these new opportunities, but to retain their employability. While structural unemployment was a contemporary term, it had been a challenge of every generation to retain employability
as the needs of the workplace evolve.

Prior to the nineteenth century, accessible national public education was nonexistent defined in today’s terms. As the need rose for social obedience and standards in pre-employment skills, society sought to increase the role of public education as the savior to these social challenges. It had been argued that the reason schools originally closed in the summer was to accommodate the family farm. In addition high school, for the non-college bound youth, was created to lessen youthful civil disobedience. In New York City in the 1860s, it was common to find businessmen serving on local public school boards (Cowan, 1994). The national debate in the 1870s was advocating “manual training” for students, which recommended that instruction in wood and metal working skills be made part of the high school curriculum. A further refinement of the movement for “vocational education” was the first authorized federal aid with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (Lewis, 1997).

What evolved was a dual track system for preparation of one group of people to work and another group to think. In addition, corporate America shifted its involvement away from K-12 grades and more in support of higher learning institutions. However, after two world wars and a great depression, the another shift began in the 1950s toward an educational system of greater perceived fairness in the distributing of resources and access. This movement picked up momentum with the turbulence of the 1960s and early 1970s, and it was much like a physics lesson in cause and effect. Because this push for social change caused many corporations to reduce its support of education, particularly with universities and to a lesser extent high schools.

The tax revolts of the 1970s and early 1980s caused another shift from a nonstop
increase in funds for education to an attempt to limit or reduce the financial contribution of the taxpayer. The 1980s saw a growing popularity of business pushing education to be more accountable focusing on schools as a place to work and address children at risk (Timpane & McNeil, 1991).

During the 1970s, local and state governments were under siege for funding, a new federal proposal “Career Education,” that was promoted as a way to forge linkage between what happened in the schools and the workplace. Twenty years later, the contemporary hybrid reform movement was reshaped in the form of the “School-to-Work” initiative, that was meant to address the realistic needs of the twenty-first century work force in which only a projected 25% of the workforce required a bachelors degree (Community College of Rhode Island, Warwick, 1994). “School-to-Work” was a highly integrated approach built upon the linkage concept and for the first time, since the introduction of student loans, addressed the sometimes forgotten middle 50% of the student population (Local Expert H). In addition, these reform movements recognized that only 25% of traditional college track students actually completed their degree goal. Therefore, 75% of these young people spent five to ten years of unstable career searching (Virginia State Department of Education, Richmond, 1994).

Research Questions

A. What was the current status of business/education partnerships in Area XIII (Appendix A) and Southwest Iowa?

Beyond the contemporary criticism of this school reform was the need to objectively measure what happened in southwest Iowa education. Some of the criticism of education was based on the unrealistic expectation, that education was supposed to remedy the ills
of contemporary society. Public education, in general, was under constant attack from society, media, and the general public, and had an incentive to counter this negative image. Therefore, to receive a clear overview of the current state, it would be important to go beyond the public relations message of educators that highlighted the exceptional and ignore legitimate shortcomings of the system. Business/education partnerships garnered attention and provide a wonderful cover for real problems. The research technique must uncover the larger story using an exploratory approach that was not attempting to prove anything, but to identify what took place. Care must be taken to present balanced findings that generated a snap shot, which was representative of the whole school district/community.

B. Did Business/Education partnerships produce a measurable outcome?

American education in the nineteenth century, the twentieth century, as well as in the new millennium was one of constant change; and yet it remained true to its original role of being the umbrella organization that responded to societal ills. Some argued that this explosion of programs since the 1960s had been a response to meet the needs of previously under-served populations. This activity helped to move closer to the goal of including "all students."

The counter argument was that this explosion caused territorial turf wars on overlapping jurisdiction.

It appeared that much effort was made to establish the structure of any new program. While the competitive mission statements were worthwhile on their merits of improved student performance, it was difficult to determine where one’s mission ended and the new one began. Review of various programs pointed to evidence that there was
overlap between the various jurisdictions. While the goal of improved student outcomes was a worthy one, what was the measurement of success? Agreement on consensus on what the outcome of education should be was a dubious directive. To begin with the variables that influenced the input “student” and the output “graduate” made measurement in the change in behavior incredibly allusive.

So what was to be realized by the coalition of education and business? There were many possible and reasonable outcomes for this interaction that addressed the motivation of both entities. It should not be forgotten that ultimately, this action was intended to be a positive change for the betterment of the public good. The data attempted to investigate what occurred and how it was monitored. One of the perceived desired outcomes was the quantity as well as the quality of new workers.

C. What external forces caused Education/Business partnerships to happen?

The third topic of exploration, what factors encouraged these two parties to interact? It was the opinion of the researcher that education was often the aggressor in pursuing business. For example, education often solicited business representation on advisory committees and sought business to be a part of publicity events.

What was the force, or incentive that caused education to pursue business?

Basically was education in pursuit of the new money source? The secured new money lighten the dependency on existing funding streams, and allowed the school district to pay for new ventures without jeopardizing current projects. Now that the previously tight budgets were expanded, education was more willing to comply with government rules to continue the receipt of the new money. Therefore, a new plausible theory suggested that government had become the independent variable that impacted the
dependent variable, education, and now, business became a secondary dependent variable that reacted to education.

However, after examination of the operating environment, it could be argued that the larger business community was typically not silent on concerns or environmental issues that impacted its agenda. Another plausible theory could be that government provided incentives for education to contact business to work on true business issues? There were many such examples of governmental intervention in the marketplace to resolve worker readiness issues that supported this perspective. Consequently, instead of government, the independent variable, and business, the dependent variable; it was business that was the true independent variable. While not all sectors of the business economy wanted the interaction, the key movers and shakers sought influence on the legislators and the media that could pressure government to act.

A third plausible theory was that the change agent, the higher level of government, independent variable, sought to influence the lower level of government, dependent variable, with incentives that would change the behavior of local policy setting. Therefore, an abbreviated number of examined federal programs revealed how these programs influenced not the direction, but the intensity of local decision making.

In conclusion, these were three possible theories addressing why business/education partnerships form. While this thesis would not prove these theories, it attempted to gather data that provided a greater insight into the motivation of these external forces. Obviously, there were inevitably more explanations that could be reviewed.
Definition of Terms

Some of the terms are defined in the School-to-Work Glossary of Terms (1996) and Hershey (1997).

ABI (Association of Business and Industry) this is an abbreviation for a business organization. It plays a similar role to the chamber of commerce as an advocate for the business community. It can be incorporated at the local, state, and national levels.

All students: “both male and female students from a broad range of backgrounds and circumstances, including disadvantaged students, students with diverse racial and ethnic or cultural backgrounds, with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, migrant children, school dropouts, and academically talented students.

Block scheduling: reconfiguring the school day. Block scheduling is the scheduling of two or more continuous class periods or days.

Career majors: Career-focused programs of study, or “career majors,” are expected to engage students in course sequences designed as purposeful steps toward post-secondary employment or further education and ultimately, toward a broad career goal.

Compact: contracts among community leaders to work to initiate and sustain local education reform.

Connecting/linking activities: were programs or human resources that linked school- and work-based educational programs in the manner described in the STW legislation.

Consortium: in reference to STW, a consortium is a group of two or more agencies that enter into a cooperative agreement to share information or provide services that benefit students.

Curriculum integration: Academic education and vocational education are to be integrated, combining the best practices of both.

Dual enrollment: a program of study allowing high school students to simultaneously earn credits toward a high school diploma and a post-secondary degree or certificate.
Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC): An international electronic database that focuses on scholarly works, professional journals, and government educational research reports.

Field interviewees: School, business, and community officials, who are or are not willing to take part in the questioning of the status of their respective local partnership.

Foundation article: (Timpane & McNeil, 1991) this article identifies the four distinct levels of business/education partnerships.

Local experts: defined as the Southwestern Iowa post-secondary staff who helped with the ranking of the school districts, provided access to resources, and helped give additional support material to the research project.

Portfolio: a collection of work that documents a student’s educational performance over time.

Port of entry: this phrase relates to the individual in the site visits, who played the role of gatekeeper. This individual either could or could not open the way for additional local interviews with other participants.

SCANS (Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills): was convened in February 1990 to examine the demands of the workplace and to determine whether the current and future workforce was capable of meeting those demands.

Skill standards: Challenging specifications of the skills students need to master to enter particular careers are to be incorporated into academic and technical instruction, and high academic standards are to be applied to all students.

Structural unemployment: changes in the economy required a new type of worker. Consequently, existing workers must learn new skills to retain quality employment.

Work Keys: establishes a common language for schools and businesses. It provides a means of measuring these skills for both people and jobs.
Procedures of the Study

This research effort was guided by the philosophy of the qualitative and exploratory model. The foundation article with four levels of partnerships helped guide the collection of data, as well as forming the basis for evaluation. Local experts assisted with the criteria in the selection of the sample from the population, and provided insight into the total activity in the respective communities. The study sample was surveyed with field research methods. While the majority of the questions were open-ended to elicit response, the questioning was structured to ensure some level of consistency in the collection of data between the sample respondents.

Limitations

This research was a broad overview of selected partnerships in southwest Iowa. Key interviewees were selected to represent the views of the designated community partnership. While these interviewees were volunteer participants, there was little guarantee that their comments were reflective of all pertinent opinions. Inherently, exploratory research identified plausible hypotheses that were worthy of future investigation; not to prove that one partnership was the best.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The basic outline of the chapters follows this format:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter portrays a broad overview of the purpose, motivation and goals of the thesis. Pertinent terms and a brief historical perspective of business/education partnerships form the groundwork for the context of the thesis. Utilization of the
foundation article helps to create a measurement tool that identifies various criteria to rank the communities. Finally, three basic research questions are proposed and are examined in later chapters. A conscious effort was made to protect the identity of those surveyed in hopes of facilitating the research process.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

An exhaustive search of the ERIC database from 1985 to 1998 identified relevant secondary studies. In addition, pertinent local, state, and national primary research were examined. Finally, selected governmental legislative initiatives were studied.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides a description of the research methodology. It identifies the research design, and the sampling approach. The process for data collection, display and analysis are presented.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

This chapter displays the findings of the field interviews. In 2000, an abbreviated follow up study with local experts helped to bridge the time gap between when the field research was conducted and when the thesis was completed. This helped to address the challenge of mortality validity. A chart using the foundation article and related research as a guide helped to measure the depth of the community partnerships.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter portrays a contemporary view of selected southwest Iowa partnerships. Results of this thesis can be used to identify characteristics of working partnerships. It helped to answer the three basic research questions. In addition, this thesis may be the catalyst for future research on partnerships. However, no one should
interpret these findings as anything more than a guideline to examining partnerships.

Significance of the Study

This thesis fulfilled many of the criteria on page 5 that Creswell (1994) suggests are important to the pursuit of research. While STW was a major component of the contemporary business/education partnership, this thesis attempts to report the total activities of eight communities in southwest Iowa. There did not appear to be a similar research project underway and the interest in the results by many of the interviewees helped to validate this allocation of energy.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature Review

The studies selected for the original literature review from 1986 to 1995 came almost exclusively via the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) system located in the University of Nebraska at Omaha Library.

A wide range of potential descriptors were identified that might give insight into this school/business study. Initially, very broad descriptors were pursued individually. Some of those examples included “employment,” “underemployment,” “vocational education,” and “technical training.” All four descriptors generated hundreds of possible sources. Although primary research examples were discovered, they did not address the business/education question and were not pursued further.

Additional descriptors found in the preliminary readings and discussions with practitioners include: “Adopt-a-School,” “Cooperative Education,” “School-to-Work,” and “business/education partnership.” These generated more positive leads. For example, “Adopt-a-School” was particularly useful in the time period of 1980 to 1991. “Business/education partnerships” had 60 articles from 1980 to 1995, but none prior to 1979. “School-to-Work,” a very contemporary term primarily had listings since 1992. The descriptor “transitions,” which was popular in the 1960s and 1970s, appeared to have more emphasis on special education issues, rather than business/education.

In an attempt to streamline the process, several descriptors were cross-referenced, resulting in some interesting outcomes. For example, the time period of 1992 to 1995,

Efforts were made to keep the search narrow, manageable, and consistent with the primary hypothesis, it focused on descriptors dealing with specific activities of a business/education partnership. These included "job shadowing," "internships," and "mentoring." Upon review of those abstracts, it did not appear that these empirical research studies dealt with the business/education issue.

It was acknowledged that exclusively using the ERIC database potentially biased the perspective of the studies. It also may have limited the number of useable reports. Although there were limitations on these findings, they did address business/education relations. In addition, among the 21 articles that met the criteria, there was an abundance of articles on the topic of business/education that did not meet the specifications of this literature review. They fell into three general categories: opinion articles, foundation reports, and how-to manuals. While these articles failed to meet the guidelines of primary research, they suggested a large interest in this subject.

Of the articles used, six were literature reviews. Interestingly, many of the usable research reports were initiated by state public institutions and focused on local communities or were statewide studies on the interrelations of business and education.
The characteristics of different study samples included: K-12 principals, school administrators, government officials, CEOs of Fortune 500 corporations, and employers. Most applicable employment segments of the education and private sector were included, with the noticeable exclusion of teachers. This group could potentially provide an interesting perspective. In addition, labor made only a cameo role in the 1991 Illinois State Council on Vocation Education study.

Geographic dispersion included program reviews in East Los Angeles, New York, Oregon, Indiana, Washington, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Illinois. Six comprehensive studies included national geographic dispersion of views and opinions. However, it did appear that the Midwest was under-represented.

The Wilkie (1993) study defied easy classification, therefore was not placed in any one category. This research project studied the effectiveness of private sector (IBM) personnel instructing educators on moving their strategic planning process from a political model to a structural model. At first observation, this may not appear to be important or related to the research questions. However, as further investigation suggested, it did address education reform at a higher level of business involvement than at the lower level of providing guest speakers and facility tours. As a side note, the IBM program was discontinued.

The cursory overview of the readings would not permit the proving or disproving of the research questions. Rather, the writer of this report attempted to recount what was found and draw preliminary insight that might stimulate and direct future studies.
The first formal research question was what was a business/education relationship? Business involvement in education was documented back to the 1860s in the state of New York when business leaders served on local school boards as part of their civic duty. Defining what a partnership was, let alone a business/education relationship, was a difficult task. One could speculate that regardless of the label, if some positive interaction did exist, it was an evolving process fitting, in part, the needs of its time.

A couple of quotes from the readings gave interpretation and definition to what could be explained as a partnership. “Partnerships are voluntary long-term relationships between the private sector and a school or school district. That partnership can be whatever schools want them to be” (Hodge, 1988).

Another paradigm defined it as, “A formal or informal agreement or understanding between education, business and others for the purpose of helping students make a smooth transition to the workplace or to further study” (Alberta Chamber of Resources, 1992).

The first quote was a very open-ended statement suggesting that simply having business and education talking to each other would be a positive relationship. In the LaGuardia Community College (1993) study on Queens Work Force Development, the business respondents would have been more than happy with that relationship. Many of their problems were seen as too large to tackle by one entity, and teamwork was seen as a critical component in correcting the situation. This example in which no formal or
informal business/education relations exist contrasted with the findings of the Swift, McElhinney, and Pershing (1998) study and, the Boucher and DeGroodt (1994) study, that nationally one-in-five children were in some form of a business/education partnership.

The second quote implied that there must be a reason for the relationship, and a means to evaluate the outcome. Correcting or enhancing an imbalance in their mutual environments would be fertile ground for the start of a working arrangement. Some areas that might be common ground included scarcity of resources, lobbying government for changes in regulations, competitive issues, or worker preparedness. For example, worker preparedness could be a starting point for such a joint venture. Eight of the 21 studies mentioned the subject of better preparation of the work force. Actually improving worker preparedness as a result of business/education partnerships received conflicting marks by some of the research. To some extent, this subject related to the fourth research question and would be discussed later.

There was an inherent conflict between the terms “business/education relationship” and “business/education partnership” that appeared to be more than systematic. If mere interaction between the two entities was a major accomplishment and would lead to greater successes, then this outcome seemed to be more appropriately defined as a relationship. Critics might present the view that talk was cheap and specific actions and outcomes were really needed. If that was the accepted definition of a business/education relationship, then it was lacking in real impact.
Partnerships, in general, appeared to be too strong a term for most of the studies reviewed, particularly if meaningful change was a criterion for partnership. Fourteen of the 21 studies included the concept of partnerships. However, the Cowan (1994), the Dick (1993) and the Boucher and DeGroodt (1994) studies demonstrated a positive change in the transition from student to worker indicating that specific focused programs may justify the term partnership.

The second formal research question addressed what made partnerships work and what support functions were necessary to maintain the inertia of the joint venture. Most of the findings indicated that the business/education programs were relatively short on tenure, so the measurement of success was somewhat inclusive, as well as having few formal measures of success. Nine of the studies referred to the lack of clear evaluation of the partnership as a major concern. But the longer a business had been in a partnership or had previously been involved in a partnership, the more likely the business would be to hold a positive view of the arrangement (Alberta Chamber of Resources, 1992).

Another question arose: what is the motivation or who was the catalyst for these supposed partnerships? The readings suggested that academia was a driving force behind the forging of most business/education partnerships. Did that indicate that educators were visionaries seeking assistance, or were they strapped for cash and in pursuit of funding? Did government grant money dictate interaction with the private sector as a prerequisite for financial support of these programs, or was there another independent variable modifying behavior?
The readings suggested that any of the three could be true. If the desire was to expand the exposure for students with business, then teaming with commerce made sense, whether it was a job fair, a tour of their facilities, or developing an internship program. There was ample evidence to suggest there were many of these activities. The Timpane and McNeil (1991) and Hodge (1988) studies identified the aggressive nature of principals. Principals, key local players, were aggressively seeking resources from business to fund projects. By the nature of these projects, they were often short-term and tended to have impact for the school, and to a lesser extent for business. However, contrary to many of the other supposed partnerships, they did have a timeline and had some impact.

A surprising finding was the presence of state and federal governments in providing seed money for projects. The McMurdo and Gerel (1991) and Morgan (1994) and the Swift, McElhinney, and Pershing (1989) studies acknowledged the role of the government in these programs for funding and setting criteria. In addition, they indicated a marked improvement in the quality of the output, which was better prepared workers. Although some may argue that the criteria may be rigid, it gave business people structure.

The research suggested that large companies tend to be more involved in business/education partnerships, and perceive good public relations as an important benefit. One contradictory article to this conventional wisdom was Morgan (1994). It found that large companies were downsizing and were interested in moving their displaced workers elsewhere, rather than improving the transition of school-to-work for
entry-level employees. It also suggested that small business was more interested in being involved than large companies.

Additional items appeared in the literature that improved or maintained the relationships included: the need for commitment from the top, communication, trust, giving praise, awareness, planning, retention, coordination, and recruiting.

It was worth noting that with all the problems business leaders supposedly had with the quality of entry-level employees, they were not more aggressive in pursuing educators to form a team to find a solution. The readings indicated that representatives from commerce were reluctant to join any project that appeared to be just another meeting. Sometimes the program was presented in such a way that the business representative was little more than a rubber stamp for an existing program. The readings implied that, instead, business leaders desire an environment that encouraged their involvement, gave ownership, provided an understandable mission statement, and had an evaluation system. Additional research needed to be done to determine whether the majority of the business leaders were really hesitant to be involved in this type of alliance.

The third formal research question asked: what were the best relationships?

One could confuse the most popular programs (easiest to implement, but lacked significant change) with the real issue of improving the performance of the student/worker. Some of the research indicated that there were at least four levels to business/education interaction.
The most popular was at the lowest level of commitment by the participants. The first level may have fancy names associated with it such as Adopt-A-School, but closer examination showed these consisted of the traditional activities of business being a funding source, providing guest speakers, and putting on job fairs. They were characterized as short-term commitments and turn-key operations that require limited resources.

The second level dealt with program initiatives. Mentoring, internships, job shadowing, and other tactics moved the student into work-based learning to supplement traditional school-based learning. It also began to address the question of worker preparedness.

The third level was compact and collaboration, defined as change in the curriculum, but the school officials were still in charge. Often business lobbied state government to make changes on regulations, or tried to help pass a local bond issue. This level was much more substantive; however, it required long-term commitment and emotional buy-in to the issue. Consequently, it was seen less frequently than the previous two levels.

The fourth level was normally at the state level of government. The governor or the legislators asked business to be a partner to change the status quo of education. This partnership of business/government may be seen as adversarial by education. An example of the fourth level was represented in the Timpte and McNeil (1991) study.
This study suggested that education reform was an economic development issue and necessitated involvement at the highest level.

The final formal research question was: did business/education partnerships have a measurable, positive impact on the success of students/workers? Several of the studies reflect on how little had changed. Many of the business/education partnerships were barely relationships. In essence, they were mostly public relations. The names changed but the tactics and the outcomes remained the same.

Contrast that with Swift, McElhinney, and Pershing (1989), (Dick, 1993), and the Hofstrand (1991) which were targeted, funded, and committed to having a positive impact on the student/worker. In addition, the McMurdo and Gerel (1994), and the Boucher and DeGroodt (1994) studies demonstrated the need to teach the bigger issue of life skills. Most of the successful programs were driven directly by vocational education.

If vocational education programs were more successful than academically driven programs, what can be done to increase student participation? The Virginia State Department of Education, Richmond (1994) attributed part of the problem to lack of enrollment. This was caused, in part, by the mind-set of avoiding working with your hands. A greater question might be, what needed to be done to increase the presence of school-to-work in the traditional school-based learning environment?

Most of the partnerships took place at the high school and post-high school levels. There were examples of business/education programs at the middle and elementary schools. An additional question that needed to be addressed was whether more emphasis on the lower grades had an impact, or was it misplaced effort?
There were seven prominent studies that highlight the original literature review of 21 studies spanning 1986 to 1995. The most influential study of the seven studies was the "foundation article," Timpane and McNeil (1991), which generated the four levels of potential business/education partnerships. The remaining six studies provide excellent support material for the foundation article. The Council of Chief State School Officer (1991) provided a national study of the activities of the states, and illustrated the depth of the business/education partnership. Most partnerships were characterized as industry giving money, and having little universal standard of evaluating the outcome of this collaboration. A positive finding was that 25% of the programs had some level of work-site learning. Another strong study by Shakeshaft and Trachtman (1986) gave an enlightening view of the lightweight interaction between business and education. It also discussed the abundance of Adopt-A-School programs that required minimal commitment by industry, reinforcing the primary findings of the previous article. The research of Dick (1993) suggested that non-college bound students could be positively impacted by business/education partnerships. Nasworthy and Rood (1990) revealed the real lack of the meaningful measurement of change when the two entities collaborate. This article, like the previous article also discussed the mismatch between needed skills and unprepared workers in the marketplace. Cowan (1994) study indicated that environmental pressures, such as labor shortage could influence the function and motivation for forming a partnership reinforcing the findings of the

Narsworthy and Rood (1990) study. It also identified the role of government in
assisting this process. The latter finding helped in the development of one of the hypotheses.

An overall review of the studies seemed to indicate that there was a lack of true evaluation of the outcomes of most of the interaction between business and education, except for the specific government-initiated programs. Therefore, from the limited reviews, it could be inferred that the appropriate term for most interactions between the two institutions should be classified as relationships, not partnerships.

There was a need for clear definition, commitment, trust, and resources, as well as evaluation, to make these joint ventures between business and education work.

Business and education relationships could be worthwhile. They could benefit both academia and commerce, but also may require some assistance from government. Finally, one of the important findings was the value of appropriate government involvement. Government involvement was identified as a variable that brought the two sides together. However, the literature reviews lacked the power to make a broad, all-encompassing statement that government was always needed.

In an attempt to have a more contemporary review of secondary sources, ERIC was once again accessed. In general, the broad descriptor for the business-education relationships from 1995 to 1998 was used for the search. Using the descriptor, 521 sources were identified. Using additional descriptors such as welfare reform, small businesses, professional associations, STW reports, and work-based learning helped to identify 19 usable sources mostly from 1997. The literature was influenced with the contemporary debate over the effectiveness of STW. This was in sharp contrast from the
previous literature review that touched only briefly on this subject. The influence of STW in national literature was consistent with its presence at the local field visits conducted by the researcher. The national STW reports tended to be descriptive rather than explicit in the evaluation of this program effectiveness. This was justified, in part, due to the preliminary stage of implementation of STW.

The top three research studies were Hershey (1997) which tied in closely with the Mathematics Policy Research Study (1998), and Lewis (1997). These studies focused exclusively on the STW issue. The Hershey report suggested that successful STW programs were built upon the previous work of Tech Prep, Cooperative Education, and Goals 2000, as well as other vocational education programs. It did recognize that activities were taking place, but it raised the question, “How many students were actually involved?” In response to that question, it suggested that better monitoring may be needed in developing data and measuring how many students actually get exposure.

While work-based learning and career exploration may be implemented with some students actively engaged; the bigger STW initiative of career majors was lagging behind in curriculum reform. The concept of career major was an attempt to have a course of study arranged to assist the student in better learning with a tailored curriculum. This approach, rather than work-based learning and career exploration, required teachers to change the way they were teaching, consequently, resources must be allocated to facilitate this change, and parents and students must know what educational direction they want the student to take.

While Hershey (1997) was realistic and held of promise, the Lewis (1997) report
addressed the barriers to restructuring secondary education. It also discussed the parallel of the career education reform of the 1970s to the STW reform of the 1990s. Additional reform movements of the 1870s featured manual training and the 1914 Vocational Education Act also like Career Education and now STW sought to address discrepancies in the work place.

Career Majors discussed in Hershey (1997) indicated they were not a priority of educators. In the follow up report issued in 1998 saw some movement towards the acceptance of career majors. This education reform required teachers to change the way they provided instruction. Programs must start early with the students in the educational process, and their lifeblood would depend upon industry contributing its fair share. Another challenge was to recruit adequate number of employers. Both of these reports gave powerful updates on the status of the effectiveness of STW and along with a couple of select articles helped to support the foundation article.

Two additional STW reports helped to give insight into the subject’s effectiveness. The first article National School-To-Work Opportunities Office (1997a), indicated that 37 states were now involved in the STW program. Not unexpected, this report like others revealed that the number of partnerships was increasing. This report indicated that the physical location of the department and the STW officer’s position in the hierarchy of state government made a difference. In states where the Department of Education oversaw administration it, then STW usually was perceived as seeking education reform. In states, where STW was in the economic development office it was seen as a vehicle of economic development. When STW was in the hierarchy of workforce development effort it was seen as enhancing the quantity and quality of the
workforce.

The second article, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1997), was a comprehensive report by state STW and local partners, coordinators in the states that have STW. One of the worthwhile findings, was the definition of partnership as defined in the legislative act.

A local entity that is responsible for local school-to-work programs and that (a) consists of employers, representatives of local educational agencies and local post-secondary institutions (including representatives of area vocational education schools, where applicable), local educators (such as teachers, counselors, or administrators,) representatives of labor organizations or nonmanagerial employee representative, and students; and (b) may include other entities such as employer organizations: community-based organizations; national trade associations working at the local levels; industrial extension centers; rehabilitation agencies and organizations; registered apprenticeship agencies; local vocational education entities; proprietary institutions of higher education; local government agencies; parent organizations; teacher organizations; vocational student organizations; private industry councils; federally recognized Indian tribes; and Native Hawaiian entities.

Additional findings stated that the longevity of the partnership did positively impact both school-based and work-based learning. Of the two, the length of the partnership had even more impact on work-based learning. There was an identifiable pattern that the additional years invested in the partnership caused greater levels of employer understanding and greater number of work-based learning opportunities for secondary students. This was caused due to the extra time it took to set up the work-based learning. Likewise more mature partnerships had established more teacher internships.

Outside governmental and private dollars beyond STW were being used to facilitate the partnerships. The larger the business the more likely it was sought out to be a partner in the 31 states responding to this survey. On the measurement of student
participation, a significant number of schools did not keep track of the actual number of students that were participated in either school-based or work-based learning. Measuring the number of operating partnerships, the state of Iowa has 75 of the 964 eligible partnerships. This represents the greatest number of partnerships among the 37 surveyed states (Office of Educational Research and Improvement 1997).

While STW dominated the literature as the premiere government program of the mid-90s, there was a focus on work-based learning prior to that. The secondary tier of articles began with the work-based learning at LaGuardia Community College. In the original literature review, LaGuardia Community College (1993) discussed the need to have meaningful dialogue between education and business to make things happen. The follow up research Wieler and Bailey (1997) talked about the internship program that was started at this institution in the 1970s and had remained a viable entity to the present. Originally, the internship program used federal money to start the program and evolved into a self-sustaining program. This was similar to the desired outcome of the seed money for STW programs that business partners would come and go depending upon their need for workers, and financial status. Some internships were paid and some were unpaid. The state of the general economy could influence the availability and willingness of companies to work with the college.

Both LaGuardia studies pointed to the need for communication between the two entities, and the program would continue if there was a need. If the program was to continue it must change and evolve to make it attractive for business to participate. This researcher believed that this was a viable point, that if any partnership between business and education was to continue it must meet the needs of the marketplace, and would
continue independent of available federal funds.

Another study Lewis (1997) also sited examples of progress that local sites had made in implementing STW. But it also drew attention to the dangerous parallel to Career Education, the school reform movement of the 1970s. The author indicated that the work of Career Education was disregarded, instead of its use as a foundation for STW.

Two opinion papers by Donald Clark while not empirically sound identified a dissenting view of STW. In 1996, Clark pointed to growing disenchantment by industry of the process. Since 1983, many business/education partnership studies consistently reported little, if any impact on producing fundamental change in school reform. In 1997, Clark suggested that STW failed and questioned whether it would be sustained beyond the seed money. It was also critical of the STW movement, not from the intent of its mission, but rather by not consulting the 1970s Career Education model. Clark argued that if STW had consulted the career education model, STW would have been more effective much earlier. Clark (1997) reinforced the findings of Lewis (1997) on the lack of usage of the Career Education work.

Taylor (1997) focused on work-based learning, it identified the obstacles of special groups like welfare recipients when they attempted to enter the world of work. Evidence indicated that many employers were steadily raising the requirements for entry into the low-end of the labor market. Despite serious skill deficiencies of welfare recipients, many employers felt no responsibility to people who lacked the basic skills needed to hold a job, and provided little support for understanding who could not function effectively in a work environment. This appeared to be a missed opportunity
since industry, nationally, was in dire need of entry-level workers.

Moore, Myers, and Silva (1997) addressed work place literacy through the National Workplace Literacy Program. It found that larger employers were most likely to be involved. Most common partnership activities were attending advisory meetings, monitoring program services and recruiting learners. The most common reason for instituting a Work Place Literacy program was to reduce errors in work, and the most common activity was providing instructional material. Again, quality of the workforce was a motivation for the partnership.

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (1997) indicated that 52% of employee absences were related to family issues. Consequently, this was one of several variables from the new economy that caused people to be stressed out. It also reflected the lack of parental involvement of children lives. It argued the need for family-friendly company policies toward employees.

Rutherford, Anderson, and Billig (1995) focused on educational reform, and, parent and community involvement in middle schools. While fiscal resources were necessary to operate school/family partnerships, it illustrated the quality of the program depended upon dollars. However, the human resources involvement was the key to success.

Finally, school reform was the ultimate goal of STW.

State and Local Studies

Boddy Media Group.

The State of Iowa School-to-Work office contracted with the Boddy Media Group in 1997 to access the current well being of school-to-work in Iowa Boddy Media.
Group (1997). In short, the goals included identifying obstacles and opportunities influenced the progress of STW with regional partners, how the state office supported this activity, and what could be done to build sustainability in the system once the funding ends.

Thirty interviews were conducted either in person or by telephone, and the results were held in confidence. The sample respondents included a cross-section of STW coordinators, superintendents, principals, classroom teachers, community college officials, Area Education Agency staff members, community leaders, and representatives from business and labor provided by the State of Iowa School-to-Work office.

A brief summary of some of the individual comments concluded that many business partners had little understanding of the concept of STW implementation, while educators felt that time was a major obstacle to implementation. There appeared to be a real need to hire qualified STW coordinators, which could overcome the different cultures of business, education and labor to work through the process. Historically the barriers to implementation, included business’ reluctance to be patient through the internal feuding, education’s historical unwillingness to let outsiders into the decision making, and labor’s desire to be more than a signature on a grant application. The lack of parental involvement was not surprising, but was a significant finding. There was a concern that STW would be little more than an add-on to existing vocational education and tech prep programs. The standard STW implementation typically followed a chronological program of high school, then middle school, and the conclusion at the elementary school. Finally, to make STW work it must be seen as a community driven agenda, not as a way to help the schools. Again, this was a summary of individual comments.
Clarinda Association of Business and Industry.

The Clarinda Association of Business and Industry conducted a survey of its membership and related businesses in February 1997 (Clarinda 1997). The mission of the STW survey was to measure the current level of activity with education or gain a better understanding of what future activities the membership would be willing to undertake.

Businesses in Clarinda, Shenandoah, and other communities that would rely on the Clarinda public school for future workers were selected in the study sample. This process was facilitated to canvas the 300 plus membership of CABI. There was no indication whether the businesses were asked, if they had a preference as to what level of the school district they would prefer to work with.

Of the 300 potential respondents, 96 or nearly one-third of the companies answered the surveys (see table 1). Questions 1-7 were to be answered as either yes or no to indicate whether the company has participated in a specific activity or were willing to participate. If a respondent answered as “maybe” the response was not recorded. Therefore, the true number of yes responses may understate the actual number of companies willing to conduct a specific activity with the appropriate amount of explanation and encouragement. Questions 1, 2, and 7 had a follow up question to name a specific company representative as the contact person for that activity.

Consequently, these follow up questions helped to validate the previous response and helped to ensure that the prior answer was true. Question number 8 was not tabulated for this report since it dealt with where the company recruited workers.
Table 1

Sample Questions and Responses of the 1997 Clarinda Association Business and Industry Membership Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your company have speakers to make presentations to school classes and youth groups?</td>
<td>57 or 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Would your company provide staff for discussion in regard to specific careers?</td>
<td>63 or 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Company provides staff for teachers and students to shadow jobs?</td>
<td>44 or 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Company tours available?</td>
<td>57 or 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Would your company accept placement of students?</td>
<td>39 or 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is information available concerning your company?</td>
<td>34 or 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Company provides summer employment/internships?</td>
<td>23 or 24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to questions number 1 and 2 appear to be validated with the high number of follow up answers that the company did have a designated person to conduct this function. These questions suggested that business was willing to talk to students interested in learning more about their business. Question number 4 showed a similar number of companies willing to have students and teachers tour the business. Questions number 1, 2 and 4 were answered in the affirmative by more than 50% of the responding companies. The response to questions number 3 and 5 showed that shadowing and internship opportunities were available in less than 50% of the responding companies. Question number 7, which dealt with only summer employment/internship, was found in approximately one-fifth of the total respondents.
However, when factoring in the businesses that responded to the survey that did not elect to participate in many of these activities, it could be theorized that the lack of staff may explain their lack of participation.

The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce.

Omaha 2000 (1997) surveyed the membership of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce on a variety of developmental issues, in particular the state of education in Omaha. Some of the findings related to the Omaha Public Schools, the Millard Public School district and other surrounding school districts.

More specifically on education reform the Omaha Public School students from April 1994 through the 1996 school year more than 8,000 students, who had been assessed with the Work Keys Test. Over 50 job profiles had been completed on Omaha jobs with growth potential. Nearly 100 teachers took part in internships coordinated by the Omaha Job Clearinghouse, all committed to writing lesson plans designed to raise Work Key scores Omaha 2000 (1997).

Out of its 2,500 plus members, 183 firms or approximately 7.3% responded to the questions (see table 2). These firms ranged from the one to nine person firms to corporations that employ thousands of workers. 134 of the 183 organizations reported an estimated time donated to K-12 education at 171,146 hours annually, or the equivalent of 82 full-time employees. 141 organizations estimated the amount spent on early childhood and K-12 education as $4,936,230 annually, not including grants or scholarships. Finally, 122 businesses estimated the total amount of money spent on post-secondary education was $4,844,581 annually, exclusive of grants or scholarships.
Table 2
Partial Findings of 1997 Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Work/Family practices?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Employee release time to visit schools</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Encourage participation in mentoring/tutoring</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Encourage board participation</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Tuition/fee reimbursement</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participation in business/education partnerships?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Adopt-A-School (Omaha Public School)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Other (Over 30 different possible options named)...</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Paybac (Millard Public Schools)...</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Regarding Mentoring/Tutoring?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Provide class instructors</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Serve as mentors...</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. School-to-Work Involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Tours</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Student Interns</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Career Days</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Shadowing</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Omaha Job Clearinghouse*</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Apprentices</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Teacher Interns</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. AIM Member*</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Work Keys</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Omaha Job Clearinghouse and AIM are programs designed to facilitate the awareness of and accessibility of employment options in the Omaha metro area.

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry.

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (State of Iowa chamber of commerce) generated a report in the first quarter of 1997 of its members’ attitude about STW (Iowa Association of Business and Industry 1997).
A total of 311 of the 2,000-2,100 or approximately 15.5% of the membership responded. These were companies that had a presence in the state of Iowa and were voluntary dues paying participants. The researcher was uncertain if there was any bias in the return sample as far as the size of the respondent, geographic tendencies or sector of the economy. The following was a selection of some of the findings from the sample of 311. More than 2/3 of the 311 respondents had heard of STW. However, there was little indication of the depth of the understanding of that concept.

More than 50% of the respondents were familiar with local efforts to make STW workable. Interestingly, when they were asked what would get them involved, 156 said they were already involved. The next largest response was 121, or little more than a 1/3, indicated the guarantee of a better trained/prepared work force, while 88 or 28% want an explanation of the benefit before getting involved.

How company representatives would like to be involved showed a slight preference to work with students over teachers. These questions did not indicate whether a company was working exclusively with either the students or teachers, or inclusive of both groups. Tours of industry for audiences was the leading activity for business. Classroom presentations by business representatives were next in most frequent business activity. The third most frequent response was job shadowing or internships. Apprenticeships and team teaching with educators were near the bottom of desired and actual activities. However, there was a significant range of business interest in all categories of business participation in the partnership, with a lower number in all categories of actual participation.

The question of whether the organization had done a formal assessment of the skill
needs for each position had 127 positive responses, while 170 responded no. This may be indicative of the difficulty of the implementation of Work Keys in the work place. For example, an attempted implementation of Work Keys with financial incentives found little interest in the Council Bluffs business community in 1996, according to Mark Hopping, Iowa Workforce Development, Council Bluffs Office.

The business respondents were asked to state what age their children were, and due to varied family size there could be multiple responses from the same respondent. For parents with children 0-5 years of age there were 49 responses, children 6-12 years had 86 responses, children 13-18 years had 73 responses, children 18-22 years received 78 responses, children more than 23 years had 84, and no children had 27 responses. Those with children were asked what was the parent’s educational attainment goal for their child. Realization of a High School diploma received no response, achievement of an associate’s degree received 24 answers, vocational training received 48 responses, achievement of a bachelor’s degree received 223 responses, and the other category received 24 responses.

**Omaha Public School District (OPS).**

The primary objective of the Adopt-a-School program was for the community and school partner to plan and implement a program, which helped prepare students to compete more successfully in modern society. Secondly, the partners should seek to improve administrative-managerial activities through application of combined professional expertise. Benefits the adopting organization may receive included job skill training, facilities usage, community exposure, an improved work force, music programs, art displays, admission to sporting events, and many other services. Benefits the adopting
school may receive included tutoring, mentoring programs, transportation, field trips, special recognition efforts, internships, community improvement, career seminars, and many other services (Omaha Public School 1997).

The Omaha public schools had partnerships within specific buildings as well as school district-wide with businesses. In 1997, more than 350 partnerships were in force. Elementary, middle, and high schools were eligible for participation. The partnerships were complete in that each party received benefits and provided services to each other. For example, Boyd School provided student artwork for display in the business, gym usage, decoration of grocery sacks by students, and advertisement in newsletter; while the Baker’s supermarket at 90th and Fort streets gave tours for students, classroom visitations by various departments, student work displayed monthly, employees read to first graders, donation of food for school functions, and discounts on products.

Businesses that participated with individual schools tended to be restaurants, grocery stores, retailers, and banks. In addition, businesses engaged in district-wide projects tended to be larger institutions that were represented by health organizations, Laidlaw Transit, Urban League, higher education, and the Omaha World Herald Newspaper.

Some schools would have more than one business partner. For example, Belle Ryan school had individual partnerships with the Henry Doorly Zoo, and the Hy Vee Food Store at 51st and Center. However, in an attempt to quantify the most popular level of the school district that had the most different business partnerships was difficult. Reason there were numerical more elementary schools than middle schools and likewise high schools, consequently there were potentially more partnerships at the elementary
level. Another justification may be the relative minimal commitment of the Adopt-A-School program. Simply using the criteria of activity the elementary schools had the most partnerships in the Adopt-A-School program, more than either middle schools or high schools.

A typical relationship at the elementary level was the Ashland Park-Robbins School and Burger King at 49th and L streets, included the school giving holiday/seasonal art work, family visitations, banners, appreciation gift in December, and posters. The business reciprocated by dispersing certificates to students for the quarterly honor roll, beverage and cups for field trips, family chili nights, and open house prizes.

The middle school business/education partnership included these examples: the Lewis and Clark Junior High encouraged students to read at story time, students made bookmarks for use at the partner’s store, provided tickets for musical “Annie”, hosted Teacher Appreciation Breakfast, stickers for “Random Acts of Kindness” Week, “Warm Fuzzies” for Warm Fuzzy Week, vendor booth at open house, and “A+” pins for AAS Week. In exchange the business partner, Story Monkey Bookstore, did the following; donated a gift book for advisory activities, author parties, awarded gift certificates to the winner of bookmark contest, shadowing experience, judged Valentine’s Day door decorating contest, reviewed student-authored books, demonstration of “enthusiastic” read to Literacy Group, professional storytelling to Youth Volunteer Club, and recommended books in newsletter and for supplementary materials.

The upper grades of high school were illustrated by the collaboration of Bryan High School and Nebraska Furniture Mart. The education partner provided to its business partner passes to school events, partners appreciation luncheon prepared and
served by Foods and Nutrition class, appreciation business cardholders, students provided through business internship program, floral bouquet sent at holiday time, and invitation to participate in school’s job fair. The business partner attended the fall planning committee meeting, attended the Breakfast/Flag ceremony, attended the coordinators’ workshop, participated in Business Internship program, advertisements in the newsletter and yearbook, sponsored the of fall pizza recognition party for staff and families, attended teacher recognition programs, honorary commercial discount cards for staff, sponsors of National Honor Society’s induction ceremony, attended the academic excellence banquet, participated in metro Omaha Builders “Playhouse Project,” and sponsors of end-of-year staff appreciation luncheon.

District-wide relationships included the Omaha Public School District’s Psychological Services department that gave referrals of students and families for services. In exchange its business partner Alegent Health (Immanuel Hospital) provided information to be shared with student patients re-entering their environment. Another district wide relationship was with the Omaha Public School District’s Technology Education department, which provided the business partner the following items: materials and students from Benson, Bryan, and South to build playhouses, student participation in the 42nd annual architectural awards competition, and contractors and supplies supported for a Benson residential home building project. Metropolitan Omaha Builders Association (MOBA) gave back to education: a donation of materials for playhouses, scholarships for students, a contractor worked with each school on the design and construction of playhouses, field trips for students, employment of graduate students, and support of the MOBA architectural awards program.
The previous examples of business participation tended to build upon the natural expertise, and the services and products of the enterprise. As the partnership advanced into the higher grades of the school system those activities tended to be more complex and more numerous. This could be explained, in part, because the students were more mature, more accessible for these activities, and less of a liability concern. It was critical not to necessarily draw the erroneous conclusion that simply because the tasks were more complex they were better. It was important to recognize the age appropriateness of the partnership activities when designing them for student participation, according to Lynne Johnson, elementary educator, Saint Albert school district personal interview (November 20, 1998). Final consideration should be made on whether or not the activities contributed to students learning.

Riverside School District

The Riverside, Iowa school district, Spring 1997, planned to administer the same survey to industry that Walnut had collected data on identifying the characteristics successful people possessed to enter the world of work. One of the oversight committees felt the three top responses would be: “takes initiative,” “prompt and good attendance,” and “willing to be a team member” (Riverside Committee Minutes 1996-1997).

The following were additional comments from minutes of committee meetings related to current activities and planned functions. In January 1996, students at Riverside High School were surveyed to determine their preference for the top six career pathways. Spring 1997, several discussion points on how to improve the output of senior portfolios were presented in the STW committee meetings. These included the portfolio assignment originated from the English classes and review portfolios at the end of the
grade to enhance the final product. Also, individual discussion on the separation of college prep students and vocational students to better prepare their final portfolio. Another suggestion was the inclusion of the attendance record of the student in the portfolio to give potential employers more information on what kind of employee that he/she may become. Additional topics included the possible creation of a school store managed, in part, by students with the oversight of school officials, to teach students in grades K-5 “What a portfolio is?” provided grades 6-12 career portfolio building activities, and expand work-site learning options like job shadowing and other related projects. It was not known what the outcomes of the survey or the discussion points were, what was noted was the awarding of a “Goals 2000” grant that Riverside recognized as part of the consortium of Anita, Glenwood, and Atlantic, which the total of $200,000 divided evenly among the four participants. This grant could be used to assist the STW movement for system change. Another point was reflected in “the goals of STW/Goals 2000 fit in very well with the School Improvement Goals that the district listed in the Consensus Plan (280.12 Goals), and also fit within the parameters of 280.18 (Student Achievement) goals.

Southwest Iowa STW Baseline Survey.

The Southwest Iowa School-to-Work (STW) base line survey, February 1995 attempted to inventory the existing activities prior to the grant awarding and implementation of STW. The following were excerpts from a nearly complete draft of the results of this survey that was to be submitted to the STW Guidance Team (Southwest Iowa School-To-Work baseline survey February, 1995).

Study sample included varies consortium members, regional partners, business
people, workforce development center representatives, public school district employees and staff members, and citizens. These representatives were partners and participants engaged in the process and were perceived to be knowledgeable of the work-based and school-based learning activities, connecting activities, and various governmental funded activities like Perkins, Tech Prep, and Work Start. A total of 32 school districts were surveyed.

While the State of Iowa STW office did not directly collect the data, instead the various regional coordinators apparently were responsible for the selection of the participants, gathered the information, and generated the report for each respective part of the state. This rough draft focused on the activities at the end of 1994 and early 1995 in southwest Iowa. It provided a snapshot of the baseline of activities and interaction between community partners. Also, it identified labor pools and adult workers commuting patterns, which helped to identify how far workers were willing to travel to be employed. In addition, there was an attempt to determine the activities that took place at each age level. This helped to determine what partnership activity students influenced. This was a qualitative study and this synopsis focused exclusively on southwest Iowa.

The actual mode of collecting data was difficult to determine. Therefore, it was difficult to determine what the non-respondent population and other limitations of the study were. Finally, this gave an overview of southwest Iowa, as well as specific school districts, and helped to build historical data.

Table 3 presents responses to selected questions. Only responses that clearly identified specific school districts were included. Several questions had responses that could not be attributed to specific school districts and were not included in this thesis.
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Study Sample</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Carl Perkins funds were used in these districts.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Districts where students are currently involved where Carl Perkins funds are used.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Districts planning programs for student involvement using Carl Perkins funds.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. List sites where Work Start programs were offered.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Districts involved in School-Based Learning.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Districts involved in Cooperative Education.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Study sample includes 7 of the original site visits. Red Oak is not Area 13 and was not included in this survey.

A closer examination of the original study samples responses to the questions in Table 3 are displayed in Table 4.
Table 4

*Study Sample of the 7 Original Site Visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Districts</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
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<td>n</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These questions were taken from Table 3

Table 4 shows a strong presence of federal dollars in the study sample sites. Please note Tables 3 and 4 show the presence of federal dollars, however, they do not demonstrate a correlation of students' involvement. This may be due to the time frame of 1994 to 1995, and the activities were being planned for later student participation.

**Walnut High School Study.**

Walnut High School representatives canvassed the business community to determine two objectives. One, what kinds of entry-level skills would workers coming out of high school or with limited post-secondary training need. Two, the research effort attempted to identify potential business partners willing to do job shadowing experiences, or internships/apprenticeships/work experience. This research effort was completed prior to 1997 (Walnut High School Business Survey
Business representatives in close proximity to the Walnut school district were canvassed. There was no indication of the sample size. The first step was to determine student/worker skill set and business respondents were asked to rate the needed skill set from 1-10 with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important. The results provided to the researcher only quantified the summation of scores. These were forced responses. There was a tie for the most responses in the need for “prompt to work-good attendance” and “good communication skills.” The second greatest number was “willing to learn on-the-job.” There was a tie for the third most important attribute between “initiative-starts projects without having to be told or constantly supervised,” “good math skills,” and “flexibility.” The fourth most important skills were tied at “willing to be a team member,” “willing to take constructive criticism,” and “leadership ability.” Interestingly, the background in technology did not make the cut.

Federal Legislation and National Associations

Cooperative Education Program.

The Cooperative Education program, Title VIII, is part of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Obviously, cooperative education was a visible component of work-based learning. Cooperative education provided a forum for students to receive simultaneous the world of work exposure and class credit. Employers received free or discounted labor that could perform meaningful tasks and the employee could be reviewed on whether he or she was worthy of continued employment. Iowa Western Community College had been involved in some aspect of cooperative education since 1973, prior to receiving grant money. This institution was committed to this concept with
or without grant money (Iowa Western Grant Application, 1994).

DECA.

DECA was founded nationally more than 50 years ago and has been active in the state of Iowa for 42 years. This was a national association of marketing students, with members in high school, college, and the professional levels. It's mission was to foster career preparation in the marketing field. The local association promoted regional and national competition for students. Thomas Jefferson High School in Council Bluffs provided work-site learning both on and off campus. Off-campus learning included internships with local businesses. On-campus included oversight of, the Beehive store, a snack and gift stand in the school. These proceeds paid for all DECA activities. It served as a laboratory for students to learn retailing skills.

Marketing education and DECA helped students make the transition from school to the workplace. Locally, Thomas Jefferson high school in Council Bluffs combined classroom learning focused on courses like Introduction to Business, Business Management, and Marketing Education and work-site learning. “It was promoting partnerships between schools and business long before ‘school-to-work’ became a catch-phrase.” According to Gary Bannick, teacher/coordinator at Thomas Jefferson high school (Nonpareil, March 3, 1997).

While DECA at Thomas Jefferson high school did meet many of the goals of STW and built business/education partnerships, it was one of the few in southwest Iowa (Local Expert S).

Health Occupations Student Association.

Health Occupations Student Association (H.O.S.A.) is a national organization
with a handful of chapters throughout southwest Iowa. Most notable are the chapters in Council Bluffs, Missouri Valley, and West Harrison. The primary mission of H.O.S.A. is to stimulate interest in high school students to learn, prepare for, and enroll in post-secondary education and enter health care occupations. Most notably the S.P.A.C.E. program had joined forces with H.O.S.A. local chapters to help influence curriculum and expand work-site learning opportunities for high school students. The three previous sites in southwest Iowa had extensive and multiple partnerships with business tailored to comply with local resources. H.O.S.A. provided forums for competitions at the regional and national level. One Council Bluffs interviewee, indicated, “even if the student did not enter the health care profession, they gained valuable exposure to this sector of the economy that will make them a better informed consumer.”

Job Training Partnership

Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 (JTPA) contained special provisions for economically disadvantaged youth and unskilled adults Swift and Clint (1989). JTPA tried to redirect people into more productive lives with training in a sector of the economy that was growing and could pay a livable wage. In order for JTPA staff to be successful it must cultivate relationships in the community. While this was a national program, states did have local jurisdiction. Iowa residents could qualify if their income fell below the poverty level or they received government assistance in the form of food stamps or Supplemental Security Income through the Family Investment Program. Individuals who were displaced from their jobs for any reason other than personal fault also might be eligible (Nonpareil, December 31, 1997). Examples include Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where Private Industry Council and Veterans
Administration paid for tuition (Swift, McElhinney, & Pershing, 1989).

**Jobs for America.**

Jobs for America (J.A.G.) was first piloted in the state of Delaware in 1979 under Governor Pete du Pont, with senior government and private sectors supporters. Once the model was designed, a nonprofit corporation (Jobs for Delaware Graduates) was organized (Jobs for America’s graduates, June 18, 1999). It was designed to help at-risk students stay in school and get a job. With the help of the Rockefeller and Ford foundations and the United States Department of Labor, it was rolled out to the states of Massachusetts, Arizona, Missouri, and Tennessee. It was hoped that this could become part of a national strategy to combat youth unemployment and the dropout rate among the nation’s most at-risk young people.

In 1980, a five year study was conducted using monies from government and the private sector. At the conclusion of the five-year study, eight states had participated and more than 40,000 young people had been served. Nearly 70% of these young people were minorities and 60% could be proven to be poor. Based on the outcome, the advisory board attempted to reach out to all 50 states. It was now the largest, most consistently applied model of STW transition for at-risk youth (Jobs for America’s graduates, June 18, 1999).

Key characteristics of this program were that it was comprehensive, with services provided at age 16 or younger and continued up to 12 months after participants left school. There were specific expectations for enrollees, one that 90% of students achieved a high school diploma or G.E.D., and 80% of those graduates continued to post-secondary education or entered the world of work.
Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack encouraged his state to become more involved in the process by targeting existing STW funds for J.A.G. (Local Expert J) Local school districts were encouraged to apply for J.A.G. grants. The funds were to be used in conjunction with comprehensive school improvement plans, STW, and other workforce development efforts. Again, it must be targeted to disadvantaged youth or those most at risk of dropping out of high school.

**National Association of Business.**

The National Association of Business is a business-led nonprofit organization advocated at the local, state, and national levels to increase workforce quality through improved education and training. The alliance provided business leadership to reform education and enhance job training through public policy; and the creation of partnerships among business, education, and community. The alliance was governed by a Board of Directors comprised of chief executives and other senior business leaders from companies like Arthur Andersen, Bank of America, Xerox, Motorola, Johnson and Johnson, Jones Intercable, and MCI. Besides work with various levels of education and government other business partnerships included the Business Roundtable and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Recent initiatives included the 1994 School-to-Work Act, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Welfare to Work), and the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (National Association of Business, June 18, 1999).

**Secondary Programs in Area Career Education.**

The Secondary Programs in Area Career Education (S.P.A.C.E.) project was approved in 1972 by the Iowa State Board of Public Instruction to provide new or expand
vocational-technical educational opportunities for secondary students. The 15 different community colleges approached the administration and reimbursement policies in different ways. Currently, Governor Vilaseck was reviewing this program and was proposing changes in the approach to funding. More specifically, Iowa Western Community College worked with local school districts to develop and jointly administer 17 different S.P.A.C.E. Programs to cover 1,000 students annually (Appendix B). Normal student participation was limited to selected juniors and seniors in this program, which featured applied/hands-on learning. The learning took place at the high school or designated sites. The Tucker Center was the designated site that worked with up to six high schools S.P.A.C.E. (1998).

S.P.A.C.E. offered a dual credit option that allowed eligible high school juniors and seniors to earn simultaneous high school-college credit for jointly administered classes. The teachers were frequently high school instructors who met the state guidelines to teach students in college classes. Other teachers were hired exclusively to teach these students. The high school district paid the funding for college credit and the student or parent incurred no additional direct expense.

C.O.R.E. (Career Opportunities and Related Employment) classes were one of the more career-related course offerings of S.P.A.C.E. They provided instructional overviews of the world of work, job finding and keeping skills, entrepreneurship and leadership. This curriculum went beyond the previous components and helped to provide lessons on the bigger picture, job seeking knowledge, and the technical know-how of the job, as well as needed people skills in the workplace. While CORE curriculum was powerful, it was limited to high school students who were in a career-related program.
Cooperative education could also be part of the curriculum. Obviously, the vehicle was dependent upon the industrial base, local opportunities that allowed minor-aged workers, teacher willingness to be part of the curriculum, and laid the foundation for the establishment of relationships.

Students received not only exposure to the world of work, but specific vocations that the local high school might not be able to provide. In addition, S.P.A.C.E. helped to organize various student chapters of national associations. For example, various local chapters that actively promoted the health field as a career option had enhanced the national HOSA organization.

**Talent Search.**

Talent Search was part of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This federal program was now funded through the Trio Grants and Student Support Services. The Talent Search program was designed to help youth complete their secondary education and enter a program of post-secondary training. Ideally, the target market was potentially a first-generation college student and had household income that met designated poverty guidelines.

In southwest Iowa, IWCC staff had taken the lead position. In 2000, IWCC discontinued this program. Other schools included Luther College, Iowa State University, and Drake University also had programs. The program as it was administered by IWCC delivered candidates to the schools. IWCC actively recruited likely candidates that met any of this criteria currently enrolled grades 6 through 12, young people who had dropped out that wished to re-enter, economically disadvantaged youth and high school graduates, or G.E.D. holders who wished to enter college. Students were exposed
to career exploration, interest inventories, viable occupation options, and what being a part of higher learning was all about. Success in school, like any new venture was difficult without mentors and support groups. The Talent Search program attempted to fill the gap, showing students how to fill out applications, how to prepare for taking the ACT test, and how to develop good study habits. Traditionally, the program was geared towards students attending four-year institutions, which changed with the needs of the marketplace and potential students exposed to other options (Local Expert J).

Welfare to Work.

The Welfare to Work or (Personality Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996) tapped an underutilized segment of the labor pool. Historically, under section 1115 of the Social Security Act, the Health and Human Services (HHS) department was authorized to grant states waivers of current laws governing the AFDC and Medicaid programs. Since 1993, HHS approved welfare demonstration projects in a variety of states, including Nebraska and Iowa. On August 22, 1996, the President of the United States signed into law the Welfare to Work reform legislation that embodied the principles of work and responsibility, and built upon the success of the state initiatives Department Health and Human Services (National Association of Business, June 18, 1999).

The Welfare to Work Act, in essence, eliminated the guarantees of cash assistance to the poor and required states to impose lifetime limits on assistance to be no longer than five years, and 50% of all welfare families must participate in work-related activities by 2002. There were exceptions for the disabled and households with children under designated ages (National Association of Business, June 18, 1999).
In August 1993, the state of Iowa was granted a waiver to implement the Family Investment Agreement and a second waiver was granted on April 11, 1996. Fundamentally, clients were allowed to have family assets increase and were encouraged to expand their earning power. The end result was that the clients should strive to be self-sufficient. If the client demonstrated a willing effort, but was not able to find employment, then the time of assistance was extended. There were exceptions in the program which included disability, people employed at least 30 hours per week, and children at home under the age of six months. Other funding sources of At-Risk, Transitional, Promise Jobs, and ChildCare Development Block Grants were continued under this program to ease the move into the workforce Department of Health and Human Services (National Association of Business, June 18, 1999).

Business must be committed to hire applicants to make the Family Investment Agreement work. As an incentive, businesses may be able to take advantage of a tax credit of 35% of the first six months salary of the new hire. This credit came from the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program. Business once again was asked to assist government and education to remedy societal ills.

Prominent Federal Legislation

There are three federal programs that seemed to be dominant or the more promoted components of contemporary governmental influence in southwest Iowa during the middle-1990s.

The original act used federal funds to initiate education reform. In particular, the change was centered on vocational education. This act was an umbrella concept to assist and fund the promotion of vocational and applied technology. In addition, the Perkins act provided money for equipment purchases and staff development to programs focused on students with special needs (American Vocational Association, 1990). While this act continued to fund special projects and other support efforts, it could also be a supplement to helping STW achieve system reform and other initiatives.

The renewal of the Carl Perkins Act in 1990 (Perkins II) brought with it some minor changes providing secondary, post-secondary and adult vocational education programs with federal assistance for another five years from July 1, 1991 to June 30, 1996. While initially authorized for five years it was extended for two more years. One of the minor changes of Perkins II created an interdepartmental task force to integrate research and develop means to coordinate the Adult Education Act, the Perkins Act, the Job Training Act of 1973, and Wagner-Peyser Act. Every two years this task force would submit a report to Congress on the success of the coordination effort. Also, Perkins II discussed elements of cooperative education, displaced homemakers, the disadvantaged, and other special populations (American Vocational Association, 1990).

Perkins III was reauthorized in 1998 for an additional five years beginning in FY2001. In Iowa many vocational education organizations experienced linkages with some elements of STW. The conventional trend was to merge regional partnerships of vocational planning, boards, tech prep consortiums, and STW regional partners. For example, 12 tech prep coordinators, funded by Perkins dollars, also serve in the role of STW coordinators Iowa Vocational Education Performance Report (1998).
Tech Prep.

The tech prep continues to be funded through the federal government by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (Tech Prep in Iowa, 1997-1998). It was defined as a forerunner to the STW transition strategy because it highlighted helping all students make the connection between school and employment. Some of the elements of tech prep included equal access for special populations; partnerships among secondary schools, post-secondary schools, and business; articulation agreements between secondary and post-secondary school consortia; curriculum with a common core of math, science, communication, and technology with the integration of applied learning; encouragement of students to follow a path of 2 +2 or 4 +2; and the outcome was a career path that can lead to placement in employment.

The 2 +2 or 4 +2 format meant that students identified a potential career pathway and built the curriculum throughout high school geared, in part, to prepare for post-secondary education at a community college or four year educational learning experience. While tech prep may be considered to be a predecessor to the STW education reform, in theory it focused on grades 9 through 14 and the latter was to be implemented Kindergarten through 12 grades.

In Iowa, 15 Tech Prep consortia were geographically co-located with the community college system. A consortium included all school districts, the community college, the area education agency, many businesses and industries, the regional workforce development office, and some four-year colleges and universities in the designated area.

All local education agencies in the Region 13 (the predominant study area for this
were invited and encouraged to be members of the Region XIII consortium. Exira high school decided to continue membership even though it was geographically outside of the region. The C & M high school would not participate even though it was in Region 13. The Consortium Membership included the Area Education Agency, IWCC, and Kindergarten through 12 grades school districts, ex officio advisory committees and STW implementation sites, and Thomas Jefferson high school, which hired its own STW coordinator independent of STW funds were part of Region XIII Vocational Education and Regional Planning Consortium (Tech Program, 2000-2001).

Table 5 illustrated a two-year time period of classical and modified tech prep programs in southwest Iowa. The potentially more important information was the growing number of students being counted as participating in this program.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Program</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Modified</td>
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<td>494</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>217</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Classical</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>5,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Modified</td>
<td>3,827</td>
<td>10,372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Classical Tech Prep program: A program consisted of two years of secondary school preceded graduation and two years of higher education or an apprenticeship program of at least two years following secondary education.

*Modified Tech Prep program: A Tech Prep program with some of the post-secondary classes offered to junior and senior high school classes.

Some of the proposed statewide activities sought continuous improvement and included the involvement of local businesses and other partners to pursue system change, encouraged more linking activities for the partners, and helped to measure and monitor the change. Tech Prep students took the Compass test before starting their senior year, gained exposure for technology fields by having fairs, training for faculty and staff to better use the Choice program for career guidance, and CADD workshops for instructors to help keep teachers current on contemporary technology (Tech Prep in Iowa, 1997-1998).

Some highlights of operational programs throughout the state included mention of programs in Atlantic and Anita, which were two among the 14 mentioned. The Atlantic school district had a simulation of a business start up. This was done with second graders who went to the local bank to get a business loan. In the Anita School District, a “Rent-a-Kid” program was developed to help service business.

Future Tech Prep activities included a measurement of student success in conjunction with state standards for students in the Tech Prep program. Also, the consortium would work with MOC and CORE instructors, Workforce Development Centers, Talent Search outreach counselors, and the regional STW coordinators to assist students with placement in appropriate employment related as much as possible to the student’s chosen career pathway. Created curriculum development with partners to cause system change in
grades 7 through 12. There would be outreach to the local chambers of commerce and site visits, when possible, of business and industry and made this more of an economic development issue (Perkins IIIE Tech Prep Regional Plan, 2000-2004).

In closing, Tech Prep in Area XIII appeared to be coordinated and utilized a variety of program resources to meet its mission. It also worked with grades as low as the seventh grade. Assessments were implemented. There was also an attempt to integrate with business and other local partners.

School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (STW).

STW legislation was designed to address the nation's serious skilled worker shortage through partnerships between education and employers. Funding was for five years and would be rewarded on a competitive grant basis to local partnerships. This was meant not to be a program, but rather education reform.

Even before STW resources were available, the current presidential administration attempted to help fund this change through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). This act, originally passed in 1982 and amended in 1992, established programs to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force and made training available to economically disadvantaged individuals and others facing barriers to productive employment. Also, the Perkins Acts of 1984, 1990, and 1998 provided federal funds for secondary and post-secondary and adult vocational education and helped to fuel STW efforts along with Tech Prep (American Vocational Association, 1995).

STW had program requirements that included the following elements of work-based learning, job training, workplace mentoring, work experience, school-based learning, integration of academics, vocational education, and career counseling. Future planned
connecting or linking activities included matching students with employers to establish liaisons between education and work to encourage participation of employers.

STW, the true umbrella concept of education reform attempted to incorporate all existing programs to fully maximize the concept, through grades K-12 and beyond. Ultimately, education and business were partners committed to the creation of a better skilled workforce. This ambitious goal was aided with five official years of funding to cause system change. Several interviewees in this thesis process, both field respondents and content experts, felt that true system change took more than five to seven years. In addition, there were two issues: coordination of existing entities with potentially conflicting mission statements, and the liability issue of students in the work place who could threaten the fulfillment of this goal.

A question arose, What is STW’s purpose? plausible answers included to be an education issue, a commerce issue, or something else. The location of the STW office and its reporting relationship within state government may influence its success. In response to the previous question may influence how the program may be implemented in the field. Some field interviewees suggested that if the STW office was housed in the economic development office it may make it the most powerful.

Opponents of STW complain it was an attempt to inappropriately direct people into professions to keep wages low, and that training the workforce is a job of corporate America. It could be further argued that it free labor for industry and discourages people from obtaining a bachelors degree with the focus on post-secondary education in the vocations (Nonpareil Newspaper, September 9, 1998).

Proponents argued that a changing world needed new methods while staying true to
the original principles of education. Learning was good, but it must be relevant to the learner. That success in the classroom could lead to success in the workplace. STW was not about specific job training, it was instead about improving schools in preparing students for the world after high school (Nonpareil Newspaper, September 9, 1998).

A selected number of vocational teachers throughout southwest Iowa responded to the question on the activities in their district. These results reflect vocational educator responses from selected school districts specifically studied in this report and are shown in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>STW</th>
<th>Shadowing</th>
<th>Tours</th>
<th>Guest Speaker</th>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyer Valley</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinda</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Central</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Harrison</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#Twenty-seven teachers responded. Not all school districts in Area XIII were either asked or chose to respond to this question or the questionnaire. This question was selected, because it addressed one of the major focuses of the thesis.

The top three responses of all reporting vocational educators were:

1. Guest speakers listed 27 times
2. Job shadowing listed 21 times
3. Tours listed 19 times

In summary, these government acts and business associations were included to demonstrate their respective influences on the process, as well as to portray that reform
came from more than the STW initiative. Multiple legislative acts may have had real influence over the formation, direction, and system change. Both Work Start and Promise Jobs had elements of federal and state influences in directing activity, as well as AFDC, Cooperative Education, Welfare to Work, and Transitions played a role in shaping the form of service to whom and by whom. Honors Early Start, Select Seniors, and Dual Credit were also programs that accelerate high school students entrance into post-secondary education. The community college system was at the forefront of many of these programs in the implementation of education reform for both high school and college students. These legislative acts and associations, as well as others mentioned in the thesis, pointed to influence on education reform. While the inclusion of acts and associations was extensive, it was not exhaustive.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Chronological Progression

The researcher developed the initial literature review for REID212, Research Methods, at Drake University. During the former exercise, the researcher gained a national perspective and insight into selected state studies on the status of business-education partnerships. Also, the consistent visibility of government programs in these business-education partnerships caused the researcher to question the potential influence of that entity on the process. In addition, it identified various reoccurring types of local business and community participants in these partnerships, thus, raising the question, “What were the motivating factors that caused partnerships to form?” In the different case studies, the researcher found different types of partnerships, which may indicate that the term “partnership” was too strong a term to describe the interaction between these two sectors of the economy.

This research generated many interesting possible research subjects, but ultimately they were too broad for a workable research topic. These possible research ideas included a comparison of a national perspective with the activity in the state of Iowa. A second proposal was a comparison of the State of Iowa with the State of Nebraska. A third approach was to review the whole state of Iowa and see how these results compared to the activity of southwest Iowa. A fourth consideration was sampling the eight largest urban centers in Iowa and the three largest urban centers in Nebraska. While the top eight Iowa urban centers were not of similar size, they were an often referred to barometer of the state’s population. Similarly, the three largest urban centers
in Nebraska represented a majority of the state’s population. All four were thought to be logical approaches and would have enough data to have valid numbers. However, it was felt the study sample might be too large to deal with effectively. Also, could the research instrument be designed to account for all possible scenarios? Finally, a finite number of communities in southwest Iowa were selected that utilized all secondary and primary research as supportive of these targeted field studies.

The next issue, who would be the targeted individuals within the study sample? One approach was to survey chambers of commerce executives and school superintendents. This was justified, in part, by the researcher’s familiarity with chamber of commerce involvement, and the original literature research indicated the importance of school principals leadership in making things happen at the local level (Hodge, 1988.) Another targeted audience was the membership lists of the State of Iowa American Business and Industry (ABI), and the State of Nebraska Chamber of Commerce. However, the representatives of the sample could be skewed, because state membership tended to include larger companies, possible geographic concentration of companies, and the exclusion of locally active companies that chose not to participate in state organizations thus introducing the potential bias for the exclusion of smaller companies. Acquisition of an accurate mailing list or lists was thought to be an obstacle of both accuracy and cost-prohibitive. Also, were the communities precise in the identification of the decision-makers so the mailing would be directed towards the appropriate person? Consequently, there was no clear-cut identifiable survey audience that would have the needed reliability to ensure that the right people would be canvassed in the selected communities. Consequently, work on identification of the best port of entry continued.
One local expert provided insight into additional resources and recommendations on where some of the school districts may be placed on the levels of the partnership, according to the foundation article. Additional attempts were made to gain documents from school practitioners on what was the current partnership activity in their respective districts.

Revision of the research instrument continued with input from people knowledgeable in this area. The preliminary study sample of communities was decided with the assistance of local experts and the graduate advisor. Geographic location of the selected sites was also a factor. An important strategic decision was made with input from the graduate advisor to opt for field visits as opposed to other research instruments. The critical “port-of-entry” was decided to be the STW coordinators in the selected communities. While this could skew the results with a report that was too narrowly focused on STW, it readily identified activity in the respective communities, and the STW coordinator was a known entity that should ease entrance into the larger study sample. The ideal community study sample included two educators and two business representatives. One would be an administrator who helped to set policy and resource allocations, and the other a grassroots participants who understood the shortcomings of the policy and how to stretch the resources to meet the goals. Since the STW coordinator would normally be the initial contact with the respective study sample, it would be requested of that person to provide a list of pertinent people to continue to approach to make the previous ideal. Then the STW coordinator would be referenced to as the door opener in each community as the working partners in each community were approached to be interviewed. In an attempt to make the respondents more comfortable their
responses, they would be recorded without using names, but would be reported in the categories of general business and general education. The initial timeline was to make two visits in each community; first one focused on educators and the second for business representatives.

There was also the opportunity and perceived advantage of expanding the number of people interviewed in each site; so more people were interviewed than the predetermined limit of four people. This lengthened the timetable to complete the field visits, but in most cases it did improve the specific information acquired. However, the drawback was that some of the initial site visits would not provide as much information as the latter. There was also the concern of mortality of the earlier site visits. The research instrument continued to be refined as the research process evolved. Three questions were formally added, which included the following; “Did your school district offer block scheduling?” “Did the partnership increase customers for the business partner?” and “What were some key historical moments in the local partnership?”

As the field research drew to a close, there were two major concerns. One, was enough information gathered in each field study? Two, what community would be selected to replace Atlantic? The first concern could be addressed by recontacting the previous interviewees or visiting new people in the previously completed communities. This would be done, if necessary, after the research notes were drafted. After multiple failed attempts to begin the research process in Atlantic, it was decided to pursue Red Oak. While other communities like Riverside, Walnut, and Elk Horn (which was considered a level four by one local expert) were good replacement candidates, they did not meet the ready access that Red Oak offered. Red Oak had an excellent “port of
entry” and had been mentioned by some of the previously studied communities as involved in good partnership activities. It was also considered to be a similar population sized school district to seven of the eight original eight communities, Council Bluffs excluded, which made it an attractive study site. Since it was served by a different community college system, potentially it added a new dimension to the overall research.

The researcher continued to make revisions on the actual format of the thesis report. Upon closer examination, it appeared that little follow up would be needed with the actual interviewees. Generalists, those working with many of these people, may be consulted to help fill in the blanks. A working draft of the thesis was forwarded to the graduate advisor for review.

In February 2000, local experts were once again consulted to help combat the potential mortality of the validity of the data. This update with local experts helped to gather information on new local decision-makers, new budget realities, and changes in the direction of the implementation of the partnerships. In the summer, another revised thesis was forwarded to the advisor for review. Recommendations were incorporated for submission for the final fall draft. Additional revisions were made to the report to ready it for the library check. However, a strategic decision was made to limit the scope of the thesis to be reflective of the time period of the late 1990s. Therefore, the title correctly limited the focus of the report to the late 1990s, and ignored more contemporary activities.
Exploratory and Qualitative Research Design.

The researcher examined three major research questions; however, this was not enough to guide the research project to prove or disprove any of these questions. Rather, the three research questions were the catalyst to help frame an overview of the topic. Instead it helped to gain a better understanding of the overall relationship between business and education in southwest Iowa. Exploratory research tended to study many variables and their relationship in order to further understanding of the phenomena (Borg & Gall, 1991). Consequently, this research strategy helped describe the phenomena in a manner that could create hypotheses for future descriptive research.

In qualitative research, the literature should be used in a manner consistent with the methodological assumption; namely it should be used intuitively so it does not direct the questions asked by the research. One of the chief reasons for conducting qualitative research is that the study is exploratory (Creswell, 1994). There had been some studies on the influence of business/education partnerships, as well as the measurement of the success of local STW initiatives. However, there appeared to be no extensive umbrella research study. The repeated, expressed interest displayed by many of the field interviewees, in part, helped to validate the need for this research study.

Consequently, quantitative research, the traditional, hard number crunching of most academic research fits well with the casual research using a deductive form of logic; however it was rationalized that this approach would not be a viable option for this thesis.

The foundation for the field visits was laid by the primary data collection of the ERIC system to identify studies on business and education. Proximity searching or full
text searching for citations was entered into the database for specific works (Borg & Gall, 1989). Some of the phrases or words used included business/education partnerships, cooperative education, internships, business/education relationships, STW, and Carl Perkins. This helped to shape the original literature review and the revised literature review, as well as the research instrument.

The exploratory and qualitative research designs were important in the overall guiding philosophy of this research. Opportunities arose that allowed the inclusion of quasi-quantitative data that provided a narrative to the findings. This narrative attempted to implement ordinal ranking of the communities. However, this data was not meant to imply that one community was better than another was, but rather the categorized data helped to explain the activity and suggested that some communities may be further along in developing their partnership.

Field research as previously discussed, was used in conjunction with secondary sources to gather data. The field research instrument evolved through pre-testing and the incorporation of modifications that followed the pattern of responses in the field. The section on demographic profile of the interviewee was relatively standard. The intent was to discuss common backgrounds of the interviewee’s, gain an understanding of the interviewee’s employer, and realize insight into the dynamics of the respective communities. This section was to be completed by the interviewee prior to the interview. Along with the first section, an advance copy of the entire research instrument was mailed to the interviewee. This action attempted to increase confidence in the research process, familiarize the interviewee with the line of questioning, and to expedite the process. The second part of the questioning was to be done face to face, not to exceed 60
minutes. However, during actual implementation it was difficult to stay within that imposed time limit. While the questions were structured for comparison with other respondents, there was significant latitude to explore additional subject matter (Appendix C).

Justification for the line of questioning in the first section of the research instrument was based upon two assumptions. One, that the professional background of the field interviewees would be relevant. Two, the composition of the community would influence the formation of the partnership. In the second section of the research instrument, again, there were four assumptions. One, that government funding was important to the process. Two, there was a need to measure education, business, labor, and parents involvement. Three, there were forces that maintained the partnership. Four, there was a method to measure the positive impact on student learning and achievement.

During the process, a concept that was not originally included in the questioning, but appeared to be critical for the realization of work-based learning was the utilization of block scheduling. Another question that was not directly asked was how many students in the specific school district actually participated in partnership activities. The second question could help to measure the breadth of the partnership. Some incidental examples were captured, but it was difficult to extrapolate too much from this information for the other communities.

The reported data would follow a disguised approach, where interviewees would not be identified by name. Therefore, only aggregate business and education responses would be used. The disguised and grouped recording of the individual responses reflected those interviewees familiarity with the partnership, willingness to share that
information, and ability to sell the impact of the partnership to the interviewer. This disguised approach should free the respondent to be more candid with their responses.

Therefore, the guiding philosophy of an exploratory, qualitative research design seemed to be a reasonable, logical approach.

**Ranking of Communities**

A critical element of the research process was the four levels of engagement between the business and school partnerships. Using the foundation article and the counsel of the local experts and limited input from selected practitioners helped to rank the school districts. While the foundation article posed the ideal criteria, it did seem to have a lack of input from business alliances such as the National Alliance of Business and ABI in developing the definition of partnerships. This finding did not diminish the impact of the foundation article; however, it was a good realization of the limitation of the article and the importance to gain additional input before assigning the school districts to the appropriate level.

Therefore, the consulted local experts who worked with the school districts in southwest Iowa were imperative. Each of these people worked with different governmental programs that were implemented in various communities (school districts). This gave them a special vantagepoint to see the implementation of STW, as well as other government programs. While their understanding of this interaction may be different, there was a common ground for them to observe the interaction between business and education, and the quality of the partnership output. Finally, they helped to qualify who incorporated system change, not just those that applied for grant funds.

The researcher's initial consultation with local experts allowed them to become
familiar with the four levels of the foundation article. Using that document as a guide, the local experts (Appendix D) were asked for input on how to rank the school districts. Table 7 reflected their suggestions on where the districts rank. (Please note not all communities were included in the first wave of questioning. Therefore, some districts were not included in all experts’ responses, because of the method of the questioning, or lack of familiarity.)

Table 7

Local Expert Ranking of Communities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Local Expert: J</th>
<th>Local Expert: H</th>
<th>Local Expert: S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>4 or 3</td>
<td>4 or 3</td>
<td>3 or 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>4 or 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyer Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 or 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elkhorn-KM</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 or 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 or 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Central</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 or 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
<td>3 or 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnut</td>
<td>3 or 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Harrison</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbine</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rankings were 4 to 1. The higher the number the better the score.

Local Expert H provided a numerical count on the estimated number of partnerships in southwest Iowa and this can be found in Table 8. There was no reference to the viability or impact of these partnerships.
Table 8

Number of Active Partnerships by Community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnut</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sampling Criteria

The ideal sample would include two school districts meeting the basic criteria for each of the four levels of the partnership, for a total of eight school districts. Additional specifications encouraged a sample of one larger sized school district and one smaller sized school district. Seeking this sample was unattainable due to the lack of diversity in the size of the school districts. Another consideration for site selection was the geographic dispersion of the possible site visits. Commuting patterns, centers of commerce, labor pools, and access to other economic tools may influence the results or the visibility of the success of the respective local partnerships. In relative terms Area XIII, the original geographic boundary, was small, but within it there may be clusters of centers of influence that could impact the outcome. Therefore, care must be taken not skewing the results through the selection process. Six of the eight sites were clustered in pairs of two. For example, Anita and Atlantic were near one another in Cass County; Clarinda and Shenandoah are near one another in Page County; and Council Bluffs and
Lewis Central border one another in Pottawattamie County. The other two original site visits were Missouri Valley in Harrison County and Glenwood in Mills County. The test site West Harrison, along with the incidental interviews of Boyer Valley and Woodbine, were also in Harrison County. Consequently, five of the 13 counties in Area XIII were represented in the original sample (Appendix A).

### Table 9

Table of the Original, Selected Community Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>School District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>Elk Horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
<td>Walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Clarinda</td>
<td>Glenwood</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
<td>Lewis Central</td>
<td>Harlan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* School districts in **bold** were part of the eight original selected sites.

An argument could have been made for the inclusion of Elk Horn-Kimballton and Harlan from Shelby County, but they did not have an acceptable “port of entry.” While Riverside and Walnut had good ports of entry, there would have been two more school districts in Pottawattamie County causing an oversampling of that governmental body, whereas Missouri Valley and Glenwood helped to maintain the geographic dispersion with Harrison and Mills County represented respectfully.

This raised another issue regarding the integrity of the port of entry into a community. Ideally, the school district (community) would have two educators and the business representatives, one at the administrative level and the other at the grassroots level. While the “port of entry” may have the potential to skew the local sample of interviewees, it would have been difficult to gain locally knowledgeable people without
this tool. STW coordinators were chosen as the first point of contact because, they were perceived to be on the cutting edge of contemporary business/education partnerships and the researcher had a track record of working with many of them. The Port of Entry was asked to provide a list of potential interviewees (Appendix E). Since the intent of the thesis was to measure the contemporary perspective on business/education partnerships the STW coordinators seemed to be the logical starting point. However, one of the potential limitations of the research was the influence of STW in the field interviews.

The criteria for the selection of the eight original communities appeared to be intact with adherence to the majority of view of the following: the researcher, local experts, incorporation of the foundation article, geographic dispersion, and quality ports of entry appeared to set the guidelines for beginning the research process. As the process unfolded seven of the eight sites were accessed and interviews were completed. Unfortunately, the Atlantic site was not completed. This was due to inability to coordinate an adequate time to interview the STW coordinator. Potentially, another port of entry could have been pursued, but another appropriate community was identified. Therefore, Red Oak, a community that had been mentioned in preliminary discussions and had a good “port of entry,” was included in the study. Red Oak was located in Montgomery County just outside of Area XIII and was served by Southwest Community College. This increased the number of counties covered in the study to six.
Expert Evaluation

The following three local experts: J, H, and S gave an evaluation of the study sample prior to the researcher’s field visits. It was meant to provide a basis for comparison to the field results and help guide the drafting of the conclusion.

Anita: Two of the three local experts felt that Anita was a level 4 or 3 community. In summary, it was a small community doing a lot of big things with business/education partnerships. In order to achieve these outcomes, they had secured numerous grants with the assistance of community members, and worked with a limited Anita commerce base that has necessitated the expansion into the perimeters of the Atlantic business base. All three respondents indicated that the banks were very active.

That perception was contrasted with the minority view that overall, the district is a level 1 with spots of good activity. For example, the health care program was probably a level 3 with the local nursing home allowing employees time to further their education.

Clarinda: This district was thought to be in the beginning stages of development. Business was perceived to be the driving force. The Clarinda Academy of Business and Industry had done surveys of its members to see what level, they will participate at in the partnerships. Also, the grant process was underway.

Council Bluffs: This was the largest district in the study with a measurable amount of activity and has much opportunity to capitalize on. The district had recently developed high profile partnerships with large 1,000-employee plus employers. It had a long-running DECA program and a solid S.P.A.C.E. program that had embellished the connection between business and education. It was also characterized as having many new administrators except for the continuity of the superintendent’s tenure. While the
district had some significant partnerships, it was thought to be spotty and not universally applied throughout the district. The majority view was the overall district was at level 1 with one dissenting opinion that was ranked as high as 3.

Glenwood: In the past few years, this district had been successful in securing grant funding. Another sub-component was that the high school building and trades program was perceived as strong.

Lewis Central: There was little relevant discussion other than the Reading Buddies program.

Missouri Valley: The business/education partnerships by one local expert were thought to be limited in quantity, but very meaningful. Another expert indicated that they possessed a solid health program. A couple of experts reflected on the pilot program with students maintaining the chamber of commerce's Internet site. It seemed to be generally recognized that the district had been active in securing grant money.

Red Oak: There was activity, but since it was not located in Area XIII little was said about this school district.

Shenandoah: It had been doing a good job of securing grant funding. The district appeared to have a high level of positive activity, and has done a good job of securing business engagement in the process.

Local Expert Update: In February 2000, three local experts: J, S, and P were consulted to gain their overall assessment of the eight sites, as well as the pilot studies. Due to attrition local expert P replaced expert H. Their specific site comments were attached in the appropriate section of each site. The following information was general comments about the sites and other related material.
One expert had been at a recent seminar and reported that 40 percent of community college graduates leave the state of Iowa and 60 percent of regent university graduates also leave the state of Iowa. This expert felt that this loss, if nothing else would be a motivation for partnerships to form.

All sites were no longer funded with STW funds, but other programs continued to provide some dollars. An explanation for the influx of activities in the elementary schools may be reflective of a change in state law, about five years ago, that required the buildings to have guidance counselors. It was rationalized that this move helped to spur more career-related activities at the lower grade levels. The experts provided additional clarification of staff roles, in particular, the influence classroom teachers. CORE instructors must be vocational instructors. This was a fundamental program where students were taught life skills and receive information on careers. English teachers or other teachers that want to pursue some aspect of career preparation could do so, but they would need to seek other resources to accomplish this. The special education teacher is required by state of Iowa law to have an educational/career plan for its students. (Two of the prominent coordinators in the study had this background.) This influence may lay the foundation for career/education plans for all students.

In general, the three local experts had this to say. One expert was amazed at the depth and variety of activities in the sites. Another expert, indicated that while rural school districts may not have all of the resources of a larger district, it’s innovative nature tended to make them more independent in developing new methods. The last expert stated, there are many project based activities in the region, and the partnerships need to evolve to the next level using a series of incremental steps. By doing a better job
of planning there may be system change that goes to the next level. (These local experts primarily work at the high school level with some activity at the middle school, and to a lesser extent at the elementary school.)
Pilot Field Studies

West Harrison test pilot.

Local experts were surveyed to gain their perspective on the school districts and communities throughout southwest Iowa. This information was used to guide the research including the sampling of the communities. The following chart was their individual feedback using the foundation article to indicate where the community of West Harrison ranked. The ordinal ranking will be 1-4 with 4 being the highest rank. All communities would have such a chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consulted experts, knowledgeable of Area XIII, generally agreed that the West Harrison School District may not have sufficient measurable activity to be classified for the first level of the partnership scale, but it participated in Tech Prep and Carl Perkins programs. However, the consulted experts felt that this district would be a reasonable and receptive starting point to test the research instrument. The following was the outcome of testing the research instrument, which generated a partial overview of the community, and therefore, would not include some of the comments from some of the more comprehensive site visits.

The West Harrison School District of 515 students, 1997-1998 school year, was
located north of Missouri Valley off of Interstate-29. Initially, the researcher mailed the
interviewee a sample survey with a cover letter explaining the project, then contacted
him/her by phone in February 1998 to set up a site visit (Appendix F). This point of
entry was consistent with the researcher's methodology of contacting an educator that the
researcher had previously worked with. Due to conflicts in scheduling, the site visit
became a phone interview. Following the phone interview, the researcher decided that in
future interviews, the respondent should complete the professional profile prior to the site
visit to shorten the length of the interview. This phone interview identified ways to
improve the research instrument, possible partnership activities, and what could occur
within an ideal partnership.

The respondent felt that West Harrison did not have a district-wide business-
education partnership due to the lack of a sufficient commerce base. However, the
recent construction of a new high school building could have been the result of a
past partnership that was funded with the passage of a local school bond election.
This occurred prior to the superintendent's arrival, and he was unaware of the alliance
that made the building a reality. This building, it could be argued, happened because of a
temporary alliance, called a business-education partnership.

In addition, to a sufficient commerce base in close proximity to the school, the
school district would also need to generate additional money above the regular budget to
fund necessary activities. Some of the activities might include student work experience
and the teachers would also need the opportunity the experience of work experience in
industry. Additional staff would be needed to fund an educational staff person; as well
businesses should also designate people to coordinate these activities. Finally, in this
ideal model there would need to be adequate public relations to keep everyone informed.

High school students were potentially the most likely to participate in a partnership. The rationale was that they were most likely to be ready to work, and are less likely to be a safety issue. While some West Harrison high school students may be engaged in work-site learning, it was limited according to the educational interviewee. For example, the local (HOSA) chapter connected high school students interested in the health care field with practitioners in the profession (Local Expert S). The education respondent profile could include belonging to service clubs and previous work experience in the business world.

If an educational institution pursued a business to be involved in a partnership, the respondent suggested the following criteria might help in targeting the most promising candidates. If the business representative’s prior work experience included some involvement with education or civic activities, that could influence this person’s participation. For larger employers, the local manager as well as managers higher in the organizational hierarchy need to be connected to the community. While mom and pop stores could be in the partnership, their capacity to participate may be limited in comparison to the corporation. Business leaders with students in the school system may be motivated for involvement. Another critical element could be the creation of peer pressure within the business community to keep the individual businesses involved in the process.

Part of the long-term hypothetical plan included students doing shadowing at the work site, and professionals doing classroom presentations and mentoring for students. Organized labor and parents would also participate in the partnership. In addition,
organized labor could provide funding.

Publicity needed to be positive and long-term. One cannot say thank you enough, according to the West Harrison interviewee. As stated earlier, it could build peer pressure in the business community and cause a ripple effect throughout this sector of the community. Also, the word of mouth by the students would help shape the general public’s understanding, to create grass roots support for the continuation of the partnership. The key message is that this partnership made a difference in the student’s career decisions and made them more productive workers.

While pursuit of the ideal partnership, the reality was that many educators would not want business getting too involved in the education policy setting or curriculum development. The rationale may be that business could be perceived to be too bottom line oriented and educators could be resistant to that mindset.

In summary, money may be the most critical element to ensure that the program was implemented equitably grades K through 12. No matter how large the school budget there will be a need for additional funds; whether it is grant money or indirect contributions from business, discretionary funds will be needed to carry out this initiative. While students could learn career exploration in school, it is imperative that schools partner with business to take the student learning experience to the next level. One concern of the work-site learning experience was potentially the bad publicity from utilizing unpaid students. Some of the general public may perceive it as business receiving “free labor.” However, for it to be a quality learning experience work site learning must be included in the curriculum. Parents could be a big influence in the process. The educational respondent had seen how parental involvement on other social
issues had made a difference.

**Conclusion:** This was a partial overview of the West Harrison school district that provided one opinion on what went into making a partnership work, and suggestions on how to improve the field research instrument and process. While helpful, the limitation of this review was similar to Woodbine and Boyer Valley with primarily one educational person interviewed.

**Update:** In an attempt to provide a more contemporary look at the districts local experts were interviewed in February 2000. These local experts included J and S, as well as new local expert P. The site reports would be included as an appendix in all sites.

West Harrison originally only received minimal STW funding to establish standards and benchmarks. There was consensus among these local experts that this community was lacking in a commerce base that caused it to be innovative and reach beyond its political boundary.

**Woodbine Community Interview.**

Representatives from Woodbine and Boyer Valley were on the campus of Iowa Western Community College for a July 1998 meeting, and they were gracious enough to visit about their developing partnerships. The following is a recap of the Woodbine interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Woodbine School District was located in Harrison County.
Mission statement: The partnership of Woodbine School District sought to expand the usage of work-site learning opportunities. This should help all populations, particularly special education students improve their performance through applied learning. (Woodbine had a significant population of special education students’ grades 7 through 12 according to the interviewee.) In addition, it helped utilize business’ expertise for the implementation of a needs assessment.

The employment profile of the educational interviewee, prior to an academic career, included self-employment as well as working in the banking fields.

Woodbine School District had block scheduling, which was perceived as a facilitator for STW to work.

The partnerships included local businesses, as well as businesses outside of the Woodbine community. Consequently, Woodbine defined its pool of potential business within a 60-mile radius. Some of the businesses involved in the process were Earling Bank, Oliver Clothing, Commercial Federal, Tommy Gate, and Community Betterment.

Woodbine’s strengths included that it was a small town that had the positive attributes of being safe and secure. It was a very interdependent community, while its weaknesses include getting new families to move into the community.

Some of the indicators of academic involvement included tours of industry and work site learning, business receives access to student workers, and parents partake in the Needs Assessment Committee. Currently, 26 students were involved in work experiences.

All sophomores were required to participate in job shadowing through the
English/Counseling courses.

Future plans included the integration of career and job indicators into the curriculum.

Both business and education were the beneficiary of strong media coverage that helped to raise the awareness of activities of the partnership. Which would encourage more participation and the students/workers better prepared to enter the world of work.

So far the partnership had not helped to secure government funding, but may in the future.

Some theorized student high school graduation rates may improve, if they were involved in successful partnership activities. It was too early to determine if the partnership activities improved high school graduation rates. Some of these partnership activities included Senior Select and Honors Early Start at Iowa Western Community College, which did not necessarily increase high school graduation, however, it led to more students continuing post secondary education.

Yes, some students gained work-site learning experience. However, was there a danger in a negative work-site learning experience? It was generally acknowledged, that regardless if this work-site learning was negative or positive it helped the students’ overall learning experience, because they received a dose of realism. In addition, students gained an appreciation for comprehension of applied math, English and physics. In addition, some students’ positive experiences continued with employment beyond the internship.

Media coverage was perceived to be only somewhat important in sustaining the partnership. The issue of the labor shortage was perceived as a rallying point for the
formation of partnerships. However, the concern over community development was seen as a bigger catalyst for forming partnerships.

Distributing trends in the state legislature suggested there may be rising opposition to STW. STW may be under attack, because ACT scores were not rising and there was a need to make education more accountable. This is justified, in part, because STW was perceived to be in conflict with core curriculum. To combat this conflict, partnerships needed to grow and show results. The challenge for teachers and students to knock down barriers to bring curriculum up to date.

Conclusion: This interview highlighted many elements including the importance of small communities reaching beyond its legal boundaries to broker with business. Consequently, this outreach created more work-site learning experiences. These work-site learning experience were helped by having sophomores doing job shadowing through the English/counseling courses and the utilization of block scheduling. Both could be portrayed as the integration of curriculum and the beginning school reform.

Update: Since the field interview, some of the local experts indicated that Woodbine was on the move because of local leadership. For example they did more job shadowing, because an instructional teacher had been hired who was given one hour a day to facilitate this activity.

Boyer Valley Community Interview

A Boyer Valley representative along with a Woodbine representative were on the campus of Iowa Western Community College for a July 1998 meeting and were gracious enough grant the researcher an interview. This representative and the researcher had
Mission statement: The Boyer School District’s business-education partnership was in its preliminary stage of development. Even in this stage, there were some accomplishments, such as receiving a planning grant, teachers visiting industry, as well as creating manuals to assist in setting up partnerships. However, the economic development corporation, which was a key component of the business connection, had been struggling and could not focus on this initiative. Finally, teachers and business people needed to overcome the fear that they must stay only in their respective areas, if they were to develop the potential of this partnership.

The high school level was considered to be the most active sector of the district due to more exercised leadership. Boyer Valley at the time of the interview did not utilize block scheduling for classes.

Businesses that were participating must feel that they were receiving something in exchange for their input. In addition, the possibility of attracting entry-level workers was another incentive to belong to the partnership. Finally, agricultural businesses were also likely to be associated with this activity. Some of the businesses that had been active in the recent past are Cargill, Lehan Pharmacy, DCDC organization, and Iowa Western Community College.

Strengths of the Boyer Valley community included its friendly and welcoming culture, the development corporation was helping to address community concerns, and
the Main Street project was helping to revitalize the downtown area building upon its historical heritage. Weaknesses of the district were the lack of industry and consequently the low paying employment options for the residents. The Main Street project diverted attention and resources from the partnership. A growing challenge was the changing demographic profile of the community with the influx of a new Hispanic population with a different language and customs.

Academic involvement included the expenditure of money for school staff development, as well as the incorporation of the school’s integrated curriculum. In addition, businesses opened its doors to field trips from outsiders, and sent representatives to the classroom. An encouraging trend in the past year was the increasing number of parents with an active role in career development, which helped to make it a reality for students. In the future, the district planned activities refocusing efforts to get all people involved.

Both education and business enjoyed positive media coverage. Students and employees were perceived to be prepared for the world of work. The partnership provided business some influence over policy setting and curriculum development. Another benefit for business was the realization of the acquisition of more customers.

Because of partnership, the Boyer Valley public school district had received government funding.

Currently, the high school graduation rate was 92% and the partnership was perceived to be helping some to graduate. Boyer Valley was also sending more students to Iowa Western Community College. Finally, the partnership had realized an increase of new programs and curriculum.
Students, who participated in work-site learning, realized a positive impact on their overall academic experience. In addition, because of the partnership, students gained enhanced employment options, and society gained a better prepared workforce. Consequently, the labor shortage became the economic incentive to partner with education in an attempt to remedy this issue. There was a perspective that commercial development and positive media coverage had a strong influence on the formation of partnerships.

The opportunities to receive external grant money caused education to contact business, and to a lesser extent it caused some businesses to pursue education in an attempt to gain these moneys. STW dollars, external grant moneys, were the short-term incentive to form the partnership. However, for this to enjoy long-term success, it needed to be a priority for the business community. Finally, for the money to work, both education and business needed to designate personnel to this task.

In essence, to make partnerships work key community leaders and business leaders needed to be engaged, as well as school board members also needed to be supportive for the long-term. However, education had significant challenges to overcome that included the school board commitment for only two years, a pending budget crunch, changes in key personnel that could encompass the school board members, the principal and the industrial tech instructor. Again, consistency at the top was critical for effective change that could take five to seven years, since the average superintendent tenure in an average district was only two to seven years.

**Conclusion:** While the labor pool was relevant to the formation of partnerships, the community positioning of this issue was the larger and potentially more impactful
catalyst. The integration of traditional and applied curriculum illustrated potential signs of academic change. The presence of outside governmental grants played a role.

**Update:** Boyer Valley demonstrated consistent activities according to the local experts. They had a career fair every other year and the food service class did activities such as providing dinners for the larger community, which brought the general public to the school building.
Community Profiles

Table 10

Economic Overview of Study Sample Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>1990 Community population</th>
<th>Companies with 100 or more employees</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>Tax/ $1,000 assess value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>1,100*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinda</td>
<td>5,104</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3%- 4-98</td>
<td>$38.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. Bluffs</td>
<td>54,315</td>
<td>11#</td>
<td>2.9%- 1-97</td>
<td>$39.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood</td>
<td>4,960</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1%- 1-98</td>
<td>$33.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Central**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo Valley</td>
<td>2,888</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5%- 9-98</td>
<td>$38.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>416,444</td>
<td>20##</td>
<td>2.5%- 98</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Oak</td>
<td>6,264</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0%- 10-98</td>
<td>$38.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
<td>5,610</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not avail</td>
<td>$37.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Anita statistics were unavailable. Anita was located east of Atlantic on Highway 83. While the Anita economy was influenced by Atlantic, Atlantic’s statistics would not be substituted for Anita in this chart.

**Lewis Central community would be considered the Council Bluffs community for the purposes of this chart.

# Council Bluffs: All of the top 11 employers had 300 or more employees.
##Omaha: The top 20 employers had 2,500 or more employees each.
NR: Not reported.
Table 11
Overview of Public School Districts Respective Enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Bld.</th>
<th>Elem. Students</th>
<th>Bld</th>
<th>Mid Students</th>
<th>Bld</th>
<th>H.S. Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G7-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>G9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G7-9</td>
<td></td>
<td>G10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5,604</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,575</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G7-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>G9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G7&amp;8</td>
<td></td>
<td>G9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Central</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G6-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>G9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G5-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>G9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Oak</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G6-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>G9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G5-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>G9-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Anita statistics were from the 1998-1999 school year.
** Lewis Central statistics were certified students from the 1999-2000 school year
Note: All other categories except Anita and Lewis Central were taken from the individual Community Quick Reference Reports 1997-1998
Bld.: The number of buildings at each level of the public school district
Community Partnership Field Research

Missouri Valley Site Visit.

This was a review of the site visit interviews, as well as the beginning of the integration of outside material. This included direct comments from the interviewees, and feedback from other people familiar with Missouri Valley. All responses reported in the aggregate and paraphrased to encourage unbiased responses. The goal was the identification of work-based learning, changes in school-based learning, and linking or connecting activities between the two entities. All of the three previous indicators of a partnership borrowed from the concept of School-to-Work, which was the current dominant federal and state initiative. However, a true partnership expanded beyond a single government program, therefore, the true test of the partnership would be the strength of its comprehensiveness. Which could include answers to these questions. What were the barriers and the facilitators to working partnerships? What were the characteristics of the participants that make a partnership as integrated as possible? Finally, did the foundation article really have merit? In general, the responses were generated by the sequence of questioning found in the research instrument found in appendix C. The other seven site visits would follow a similar pattern.


Expert rankings of how Missouri Valley ranked in the four-tiered level, according to the work of Timpane and McNeil (1991). Scoring ranged from 1 to 4. The higher the number, the more intense its business/education partnership. The names of the target experts were kept confidential to encourage objectivity.
Education Perspective

Mission statement: The contemporary workplace and beyond was changing; therefore, education must go beyond traditional curriculum to keep pace. In practice, empowered students through exposure to professions and vocations made better career decisions, and thus created more productive citizens. Ultimately, the better connected the students/workers were to the community the more likely they were to remain.

The consensus from the educator's perspective was that all grades (K-12) were involved in the process. The district provided block scheduling helped to facilitate work-site learning.

One of the educators indicated previous employment in the private sector.

The perceived common characteristic of businesses engaged in partnerships was favorable to education and was community-oriented. Some of the local businesses identified were First National Bank, the Chamber of Commerce, American Travel, and Vulcan Industries. Missouri Valley businesses encompassed the majority of partnerships, but the district would go outside the district to engage additional businesses.

Strengths of Missouri Valley were characterized as a strong sense of community, a diversified, strong business community, and public support for the partnership. Weaknesses included lack of employment opportunities and housing options, a shortage of qualified labor, and a sector of the community that was older and tended to resist change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert Name</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indicators of academic involvement in the partnership were reflected, in part, by the integration of STW principles into the district’s 280.12 and 280.18 formal goals for school improvement. Additional benchmarks for measuring student achievement were used. Career education units were included in the curriculum throughout K-12. Finally, staff members served on the STW committee.

Business involvement in the partnership was also an important component. It was reflected by the sheer number of businesses that had participated in some interaction with education. The STW funds helped to expand the preexisting shadowing experience and made it available to more students and all certified educational staff.

Beyond STW, the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) had a very active chapter in Harrison County. HOSA was an organization that exposed students to the world of work in the health professions. S.P.A.C.E. money distributed from the state of Iowa, which Iowa Western Community College, through a contract agreement with the Missouri Valley School District, administered the project with disbursements for normal operating costs. The program was housed in the high school and served multiple roles which included career exposure, career-related curriculum, and job sharing experiences through a variety of local medical offices.

Representation from organized labor and parental involvement independent from place of employment was minimal to nonexistent. This was consistent with the national research. This could be rationalized as Missouri Valley parents who served a dual role as parent and business representative. Certain local businesses may be motivated to assist in the process, because they currently have or had students in the school district.

The high school graduation rate did not seem to be dramatically impacted by the
partnership. However, the argument to make more of the curriculum relevant to everyday life, caused some marginal students (at-risk students) to graduate that otherwise would not have finished their studies.

Planned or desired future activities of the partnership would continue long after the STW funding ceased. STW funding helped to fund staff development, paid for community partners to attend conferences, and purchased curriculum materials that accelerated the acceptance of the concept of STW beyond high school to all-grades. School officials pointed to historical activities and contemporary attitudes, which suggested that this work would continue after the external STW funding ends.

Measurement of success was a sticking point in much of the literature, and local school officials attempted to gather feedback from participants as a beginning point to access the effectiveness of the activities. In February 1998, a report surveyed participating businesses, and the following data was displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missouri Valley Survey of Local Business Representatives Attitude Toward Partnership Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*95% of the responding 20 businesses involved in student job shadowing said they would do it again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*95% of the responding 22 business involved in teacher job shadowing said they would do it again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*35% of the responding businesses indicated some participation in STW activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a 1997 survey of Missouri Valley high school students helped to reinforce that applied learning was well received. A partial listing of those responses could be found in Table 13.
Table 13
1997 Partial Findings of Missouri Valley High School Students

a. I have received career information that has been beneficial in helping me make career choices.

g. I feel job shadowing is an important part of obtaining career information.

h. I would be interested in participating in some type of job shadowing activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strong Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strong Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

i. Where have you received your career information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counsel</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Employee</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners of Business</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Library</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Students could pick more than one choice.

Additional questions focused on what other activity students would like to undertake to find out more about the world of work, and as well as what was it that employers want from successful employees. It appeared that the students in this survey were in general agreement that the programs were of value.

Business, as well as education perceived it achieved positive publicity by involvement in the partnership. Exposure was almost guaranteed with the local newspaper in attendance at all STW monthly meetings. However, it was too early in the
process to determine whether industry realized a better-trained workforce. The partnership was a perquisite to access to government grant funding. However, when pressed to answer whether it caused either entity to pursue the other entity to gain funding, the response was inclusive.

According to Timpane and McNeil (1991) a critical perquisite for the partnership to evolve to a higher level was the business partner’s involvement in policy setting. The Missouri Valley business community, which had indirect involvement in policy setting (curriculum development) through planning committees for local school improvement. In addition, the presence of needs assessments and exit outcomes that measured the change. The shadowing experience was a visible and direct change to curriculum, and the one-on-one interaction with students in the work place provided a more specific influence of business upon the visitors.

Educators indicated planned curriculum changes that included a new construction class, and assessment of vocational programs grades 7-12. The instructional support level helped fund changes in the school district’s computer system. These changes appeared to be consistent with policy development focused on responsiveness to the external environment. For example, Missouri Valley school district provided free computer classes available to businesses as a sign of appreciation for the partnership. This action helped to reinforce the reciprocal nature of the partnership.

Another incentive for the formation of a partnership was the entities’ self interest or self-preservation. To illustrate this, social ills were identified as a potential concern that caused community partnerships to form. In addition, the chamber of commerce used participation in the partnership as a tool when recruiting industry. The partnership
was a visible symbol that business was working with education for the improvement of the community. Another major issue was the local labor shortage, defined not as the lack of potential people, but as a lack of qualified workers that influenced the partnership. A good linking or connecting activity was the planned Fall 1998 Career Fair that the chamber of commerce coordinated to bring educators, students, and business together. This provided a forum for students to gain local awareness of employment, and employers a pool of potential future employees.

**Business Perspective**

Mission Statement: People are potentially the community's greatest competitive advantage. This partnership provided youth, the future of the community, both career education and greater employment awareness of their community. However, it was understood that many students would graduate from high school and leave town. Consequently, this partnership attempted to build a bond that would improve the likelihood of their return, and those who chose to remain could help expand a quality labor pool. In addition, the STW initiative was a visible integrated reform approach to reform that aided this partnership. Because of this emphasis on career development, in part, the high school was perceived as the most highly energized level of the school district.

The partnership sought community-minded businesses, as well as those focused on economic revitalization and the labor shortage challenge. In addition, close geographic proximity of the business to the city of Missouri Valley and Harrison County increased the likelihood of participation with the partnership. For example, Perfection Farm in Logan, First National Bank, Vulcan Industries, American Travel,
Edward Jones, the local implement dealership, a floral company, and the jewelry business in the city of Missouri Valley appeared to validate these conditions of participation.

While the base of in-depth local business was impressive, the strength of business involvement went beyond the legal boundary of Harrison County. Non Harrison County businesses included Harveys Casino in Council Bluffs, Homestead and Perry engineering firm in Omaha, and the Omaha office of the Union Pacific Railroad (the railroad had a significant local Missouri Valley physical presence).

One business leader’s spouse, an educator, had personally benefited from the DECA program in the 1960s, and that influenced this company’s interaction in the partnership. Size of the employer was not considered a perquisite for involvement, however, financial stability was necessary for it to be a viable partner. Consequently, the leadership at the top of the organization could be inferred as important to the company’s participation.

Missouri Valley’s business climate benefited from both low local tax rates and a low cost of living, as well as access to transportation, and a school’s curriculum as advanced as surrounding local school districts. These assets provided the strength for the pursuit of new community initiatives and economic development.

Weaknesses of the Missouri Valley community were that it could not compete with the wage rates of the Omaha community. Therefore, it needed expanded financial resources to attract more industries with higher paying jobs. In addition, there was a need to improve the city’s infrastructure. Certain segments, particularly the older population, were resistant to change. This was a bedroom community influenced by Blair and Omaha, Nebraska.
Indicators of educational participation in the partnership included representatives of businesses attending conferences funded by educational grant money, implementation of curriculum changes, teachers performing job shadowing, and the career fair. Additional indicators of engagement were business people presenting in the classroom, participating in the career fair, and contributing to advisory committee meetings. Indicators of student involvement included work site visits and student feedback on the programs.

While the previous activities were growing in popularity, the leaders of commerce were concerned about numerous items including the number of businesses participating. Businesses were also concerned about the lack of participation from both organized labor and parents, which was consistent with the educational interviewees' opinion. The career fair left the impression with some business interviewees that few of the students were taking the exercise seriously. Student job shadowing would continue to be encouraged as long as customer security and student safety were not issues.

In general, business and education received favorable publicity, which was consistent with the educational interviewees' comments. However, some of the business community felt that favorable publicity should not be a perquisite for involvement in the partnership.

Business had yet to see an improvement in preparedness of the new workforce, but participants were hopeful. Gaining customers because of the partnership had not been a motivating factor for business involvement; however, one business interviewee had received favorable feedback from some of its customer base.

The business partners felt that they had influenced the setting of school policy
with their involvement in both the school’s curriculum committee and the STW committee. This was relatively consistent with the education perspective and one of the critical criteria of Timpane and McNiel (1991).

One dissenting business interviewee felt the need to attend more meetings before feeling qualified to respond.

Consistent with the educators’ interviews, the business comments confirmed that the partnership had helped the school district receive grant dollars. Concurrently, the partnership allowed each side to examine the other side’s operating environment.

Interestingly, the business community was not aware of much of the new curriculum or proposed new curriculum, except for a new auto technology program with Ratigan Motor Center.

It was generally felt that because of the partnership, more students would attend post-secondary schools and would make better decisions on where to attend post secondary education. They didn’t know if students obtained better employment, however, they felt that if the student was given the opportunity for work-site learning, it would contribute to enhanced learning. This view of business was similar to the feedback from the student surveys. Not all high school students were required to do job shadowing. Currently, it was an optional program, with the school doing the appropriate screening to ensure a better fit for the student and the employer.

While the general consensus for all parties was that job shadowing needed to expand, business was most concerned that it be a good fit. A good example of a program that had a good fit, which was not a job shadowing experience, was the development and maintenance of the chamber of commerce’s web site by computer trained high school
students.

Contributing factors for business participation in partnerships were similar to the education interviewees’ view, which included the need to change the imbalance between the under-qualified workforce and the rising standards of marketplace employment; and the importance of business and education working together to recruit new industrial prospects. Some of the business community felt those social ills like crime and substance abuse could facilitate the formation of partnerships.

Historically, business and education did not communicate. In 1994, the chamber of commerce approached educational leaders to begin the process of collaboration. This took place before the introduction of STW, and about the time of the new superintendent’s arrival in town. Prior to the usage of STW, Tech Prep and Carl Perkins funds, S.P.A.C.E. program dollars were being utilized. In addition, instructional support levy money, from the educator perspective, did play a role in helping finance the activities.

While education played a big role in the pursuit of STW grant money, it appeared that prior to that action business worked to move the partnership forward.

Conclusion: Missouri Valley cultivated multiple factions that helped to create this partnership. This included an active chamber of commerce, whose executive vice president served as a STW coordinator and a STW coordinator at the high school level. The high school had a person dedicated two hours a day to this activity, which helped to illustrate the important issue of this issue to education. Also, the STW funds helped to expand the efforts beyond pre-existing programs like HOSA, as well as break new ground in other grade levels beyond high school. A stable school board membership, a
relatively new superintendent involved in the process, and a defined labor shortage of qualified workers helped to bring these entities together. While the partnership was neither universal nor complete throughout the community, there were demonstrated examples that significant progress was being made.

One of the interviewed educators suggested that meaningful system change took five to ten years. Consequently, if this proposed system change was to take hold it would have to be realized beyond the life of the STW funding.

Expert Update: One expert agreed with the philosophy that local managers and managers further up the organizational chart need to be committed to the partnership. One example, was when Alegent Health purchased the Missouri Valley hospital and consequently proposed a change in the local working relationship. In spite of this change, the commitment of the local managers helped to overcome this new proposed policy and the partnership continued to flourish.

In addition, one local expert indicated that significant progress had been made on the city’s infrastructure citing the erection of the overpass. Also, Ratigan Motors was considered to be a big supporter of both the West Harrison and Missouri Valley School Districts. The local education computer-program was available to businesses that participated in the partnership.

Another local expert felt that the Missouri Valley partnership was at the third level. For example, there were several ongoing activities with a strong chamber-education relationship as the foundation that would normally be found at the third level. In addition, even though the STW funding had ceased, the school district still had a teacher dedicated to partnership activities, which reflected education’s
commitment. However, while Missouri Valley generated solid local activities it generally did not participate in regional meetings, which could hurt the awareness level of this strong partnership.

Red Oak Site Visit.

The Red Oak school district in Montgomery County, which is located just outside of Area XIII. The geographic coverage of Area XII contained the entire 8 original field sites, as well as Iowa Western Community College. These political boundaries were devised a generation ago to identify which counties would be served by their respective local community college throughout the state of Iowa. Consequently, Red Oak was not included in the sample because of its geographic location and, therefore, was not subject to the experts' rating. Several site interviewees consistently mentioned the city of Red Oak as a community that was doing good things with its business/education partnerships, and its community college of influence was Southwestern Community College. Representatives from the Red Oak partnership were gracious to participate in the program after the researcher was unable to make appropriate arrangements with Atlantic officials. Interviews were conducted in November 1998-January 1999 during the 1998-1999 school year.

Standard operating procedure was to contact one person who was perceived to be both the most knowledgeable and most helpful person in identifying additional people in the local business/education partnership. While this particular person could be classified in either the business or education sections, this interviewee was later included in the business summary. The advice of this person was implemented and generated additional interviews with two school officials and two representatives from business for a total of
five primary interviews. This portfolio of interviews included no school administrators.

**Education Perspective**

Mission statement: While there was general agreement on the mission of the partnership, it was perceived to be operating at two different levels of intensity by the interviewees. It was felt that some people and programs were doing a lot, while others were doing very little. The district attempted to change curriculum to encourage students to explore various career avenues. This included, but was not limited to, job shadowing and problem solving business research problems. Ultimately, the goal was to motivate students to understand what was happening in the world of commerce.

The level of the school district that was most engaged generated a split opinion. One perspective was that all grades, K-12, were engaged in interaction with business with the recent incorporation of the “adopting-a-course” program. In this program, business did not necessarily donate direct dollars, but provided supplies and equipment to schools. Another opinion suggested that the high schools were most engaged in partnerships. Vocational and CORE-like classes were prevalent at both the middle and high schools. This raised the question how widespread were these activities throughout the district? The school district’s organizational chart showed the elementary schools structured much like the Lewis Central School District with buildings housed K-1 and 2-3 grade respectively. It can not be determined whether that was a barrier or a facilitator to building partnerships at the elementary school level.

All primary educator interviewees were veteran instructors at the middle and high schools with significant private sector work experience.

Their comments suggested that the typical local business manager’s profile included
shared leadership vision with the corporate office, positive attitudes toward education, and desire to participate in the community beyond chamber of commerce and industrial foundation memberships. For example, businesses with local offices in Red Oak were inclined to be involved. In particular, the lower grades tended to be involved with businesses located in closest proximity. While the core of high school students job shadowed with Red Oak businesses, the pursuit of the right match did expand to businesses, for example, in the cities of Glenwood and Villisica. One of the keys to the growth in job shadowing was the district’s commitment to block scheduling. Some of the largest and most prominent Red Oak businesses that participated included: Montgomery Hospital, Oakview Construction, Hy-Vee Food Stores, ROMEC, Treco, Mid-American Energy, and Parker Hanafan.

Red Oak was perceived as a strong agricultural community. Consequently, the community sought economic development to diversify its commerce base and thus, compensate for the loss of both high paying professional and manufacturing jobs with the recent closing of the Eveready plant. However, this city had become a bedroom community to surrounding similar communities as well as the Omaha/Council Bluffs center of influence.

The community of Red Oak had internal challenges with a new generation of unmotivated youth. In addition, it was a community of clichés made up of groups that were placed in either the upper class or the lower class. The Red Oak school district, like the Lewis Central school district, experienced an increase in ESL students in the lower grades; which changed the composition of the student population and caused a change in school priorities. Some interviewees indicated that Red Oak's size and characteristics
were similar to the other communities in the sample, which made it a good candidate for inclusion in the study.

Academic involvement included the use of applied curriculum in the classroom, and teachers and school administrators shadowed in industry, while business representatives responded by shadowing a teacher for a half day, as well as participation on advisory committees.

Organized labor did not have a significant presence in the Red Oak workforce area, except for employers like UPS and Mid-American Energy whose membership belonged to the Electrical Brotherhood. The Mid-American Energy's union had been active throughout this region. Independent, parental involvement, outside of PTO, was lacking in Red Oak and that was consistent with the results in the other communities.

Student involvement could be found at all grade levels, the following were some of those examples. All students taking high school Ag or Multiple Occupations courses were required to do one day of job shadowing. Seventh and eighth grade English classes were also involved in job shadowing or problem-solving business research projects. Grade school students were involved in other activities.

Recently, 100 sophomores took part in the 3 R's program through Southwestern Community College. The activities focused on hands-on exercises that assisted the student in learning about various occupations including outside organizations like Future Farmers of America. These programs showed the creation of a partnership beyond STW funds and the influence of Southwestern Community College.

Some interviewees editorialized that some businesses tended to react to education leadership. Consequently, business did not comprehend the challenges of education
dealing with today’s adolescents and what help was needed to expand the partnership. This suggested that some educators want to see a greater emphasis on understanding and enhancing communication. In theory the concept of business/education partnership could evolve with more business participation, thus deepening the involvement. Therefore, education’s in-service days needed more business representatives making presentations and in return, educators would attend business-oriented seminars along with their business partners. Finally, a larger cross-section of people from the community should be invited to observe and participate in the educational process. The new Superintendent seized upon this last directive and broaden the participation by increasing the variety of groups that had input on educational change. For example, one of the more visible organizations was the ministerial association.

One of the indicators of success was the realization that some students/employees were better prepared to work because of the partnership. Consequently, the partnership was helping students to receive better employment upon high school graduation. However, the downside was that many those good workers left the community for better compensation.

Both business and education benefited from friendly news coverage in radio and newspaper. Educator interviewees were split on whether the partnership afforded business the chance to have influence on educators’ policy setting. Whether local businesses realized new customers was debatable, since the composition of the local Red Oak commerce base had changed with a shrinkage in retail base and fewer local businesses that had direct contact with consumers. For example, the local men’s clothing store recently closed its doors.
High school graduation rates varied from class to class. However, some interviewees raised the concern about the number of students that dropped out of the system. The school district had a truant officer to monitor student attendance, which was common among many districts. This action showed that the district was addressing the problem. In addition, it appeared to be that more students were attending college, in particular, Southwestern Community College.

Society gained from the partnership with better-prepared employees and the public was more engaged in the process consequently, the public felt better about the process. The ultimate goal was to have the process become habit and then no effort would be needed to manage it.

Local environmental issues that caused partnerships to form included the quantity and quality of the labor, the attraction of commercial development, positive media attention, and social issues like crime and substance abuse. There had always been pockets of interaction between education and business, which big business wanted education to embrace this change. Interviewed educators had lengthy and solid track records of working with larger business and even one had served on national STW boards. Partnerships were essential to improved communication by publicity to the non-parent residents. However, image building was critical to sustaining the partnership.

Government grant funding helped to integrate new concepts in teaching, particularly high school math, English and science courses caused more “hands on” curriculum options to have direct application stimulated the interest of more students. Some educators felt that business directed the implementation of the change through the funding of Tech Prep, Carl Perkins, and STW grants. Consequently, the prospect of
secured grant funding motivated both business and education.

**Business Perspective**

Individual business-education partnerships may be among the best in southwest Iowa. However, the overall concept of partnership could be too strong with only spotty relationships throughout the district according to business. One interviewee argued that many of these spotty partnerships were “surface” and lacked in-depth relationships.

Mission statement: Provide students exposure to the business community without weakening academic standards, to provide a better understanding of the job/career opportunities at specific companies in Red Oak. This commitment to work-site learning was achieved, in part, through student job shadowing and regular employment.

All business people indicated that the high school was the most visible level of the school district, primarily because of the most options for “out of the building” programs for vocational skill building activities. One business interviewee also mentioned the middle school was engaged in the partnership. One of the factors that helped to facilitate these work-site learning experiences was the inclusion of block scheduling.

The components that caused various businesses to join partnerships were numerous. There was general consensus of the importance of leadership at the top of the organization. The pursuit of qualified workers influenced business to broker with education. Civic-minded businesses with ties to the community, particularly among business people with family members in school, to be active. Companies that tend to join the chamber of commerce or industrial foundation were perceived as natural candidates for partnerships. Involved companies were Mid-American Energy, Oakview Construction, Wilson Concrete, and Houghton Bank.
Other communities that were mentioned with strong partnerships also, had the common denominator of a STW coordinator with prior private sector work experience. Interviewers projected that the recent STW grant would have a similar impact in Red Oak.

The consensus on the strength of Red Oak was the job opportunities available with larger employers, primarily blue-collar employment. The quality of life was perceived to be good. Other business interviewees were divided on whether Red Oak was good at identification of “needs,” but sometimes had trouble addressing them.

Weaknesses included the lack of interface between education and business, caused by education and business speaking different languages and coming from different cultures. Each side needed to gain a better understanding of each other’s environment, that included an appreciation of the clients, pressure groups, resource restrictions and objectives that made up their respective operating environments. Some expressed concern about the future role the young people could play in the community. Finally, while there may be a lot of job opportunities, many were entry-level, and the labor pool remained relatively unskilled and in need of remedial training.

Academic indicators of involvement were teachers shadowing in business and usage of applied curriculum. Business involvement was varied depending upon the business respondent. Some of the mentioned activities included shadowing students, mock interviews, job fairs, advisory committees, and participation with Odyssey of the Minds.

Prominent student involvement included 17 high school students, who built a house as part of work-site learning. In addition, students and businesses were also involved in Junior Achievement. Historically, student involvement in work-site learning had
experienced peaks and valleys for more than 20 years, according to one business interviewee. Older versions were sometimes mandatory for seniors, and geared more toward job placement before graduation. The current the work program was voluntary with only an estimated one-third of the high school students participating.

A lack of significant organized labor and parental involvement was consistent with the national literature and the other Area XIII sites.

There was no consensus for future activities among the respondents. These included expansion of the shadowing program to students actively working. There was a need for a mentoring program for students, as well as the reallocation of funds to directly help students and less for staff development and conferences. More teachers and business representatives needed to get to know one another better. For example, the Red Oak Leadership program needed teachers to participate in the program. There were also several comments about expanding the role of the community college. Above all the mission of the programs needed to be meaningful, if they were to flourish.

The partnership’s media coverage was average to not being applicable according to business. In addition, education was perceived as not to benefit from media coverage, except for a minority view.

In general, business interviews perceived they had no influence on educational policy setting, and a minority indicated that it was in the process of being created. There seemed to be little consensus that the partnership caused a change in curriculum or influence on a new philosophy in teaching by business.

Students found career awareness and exposure beneficial to the overall learning experience. The outcome, a student, was more likely to be successful when his/her self-
esteem was improved. Another singular comment was that employees/students were better prepared to enter community colleges. A minority view was that more students made better choices in post-secondary education.

Today's youth were neglected and it was critical that the partnership addressed this issue. This implied that the partnership must engage young people to wean them from being dependent upon social programs. In theory, the creation of a good labor pool matched with better employment options meant that people would earn more than entry-level minimum wage compensation over their lifetime. Thus, people with higher levels of disposable income would make the community stronger. Consequently, the labor shortage was generally agreed to be a justification for the partnership to form. Other social problems, such as, fighting substance or illiteracy, were less likely to bring people together. However, the community issue on taxes, mobilized voters led, by various partnerships, to the January 1999 local sales tax passage.

The conventional wisdom was that grant money would accelerate and help with the planned change. However, the majority opinion was that grant money was nice, but not necessary. For example, the building and trades program was done without outside funds. It was agreed that the pursuit of grant money was not a motivating factor for most business to be a part of the partnership.

There were doubters in the community over the concept of business-education Partnerships, and it carried over to some educators who were concerned about lowering academic skills. Some communities, like Shenandoah were not only concerned about lowering academic skills, but the impact it would have on securing school funds.

Conclusion: The data suggested this community had different levels of partnership
activity throughout the district. Some of the interviewees suggested that cultivation of the partnership was needed to implement it universally throughout the community. A step towards broader implementation of the partnership was facilitated with the school’s block scheduling, and the willingness to recruit local, as well as distant businesses through the coordination of the new STW coordinator, which created more useful student work-site learning experiences. All of this pointed to many of the important elements being present for a good partnership to develop. However, the general business opinion was a lack of input into the educational policy setting. What is the appropriate level of business involvement in educational policy setting was subject to debate? This community like many in the study sample was experiencing a change in the composition of the student population. In addition, its commerce base was evolving with the decline of a local retail presence, and a growth in the influence of manufacturing, while retaining the influence of agriculture.

**Expert Update:** One expert suggested that Red Oak was active in the STW concept prior to the acquisition of external funding. Recently, a prominent partnership leader, relocated to another community to pursue a new career and would no longer be a significant force in the partnership, which was seen as significant setback.

**Glenwood Site Visit**

Glenwood is a community of change, where the residents no longer knew everyone on the Town Square or in church. It had seen a growth in a new, affluent population that caused significant tracks of new housing in Mills County, just outside of the city limits. The county’s average per capita income was the fifth highest in the state of Iowa (Glenwood, 1998). This was driven, in part, by the commitment to build significant
new housing divisions that attract corporate executives who worked in downtown Omaha and wanted to escape the hassles of the big city. A side effect of this growth in prosperity was an increase in Latchkey kids, when adults left and returned to their Glenwood home in pursuit of commerce.

The Glenwood site visit included the prescribed standard of identification of one administrator, who also served as the STW coordinator (who recently transferred to another community) and one veteran teacher, both from the high school. The education interviews were completed in May 1998 (1997-1998 school year) and the business interviews took place in December 1998 (1998-1999 school year.) The business interviewees included one small family owner/operator business, one community-oriented business whose customer base was the entire town, and one large governmental organization. All three of the business representatives had long ties to the Glenwood community. After the site visit an additional elementary educator and one more family-owned business were identified as people who were actively connected to the process.

Due to time constraints, neither was contacted.

The preliminary ranking of Glenwood by the local experts generated these scores.

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Education Perspective

Mission statement: The macro partnership assisted the students in developing marketable skills, and to help them reach the Iowa behavioral skills benchmark that was equated with success in the marketplace. The micro perspective included job placement
for students, and the acquisition of job getting skills as well as job keeping skills. The outcome was a student, who would become a better-qualified employee and ultimately build a better career.

The high school was the most active level of the district in participation with business partnerships. The most visible elements were students engaged in work-studies and job shadowing activities that included Glenwood work-site options or geographic sites beyond the local community. For example distant work-site options included, a mechanic job shadowing experience in Mineola, Iowa, and many students had shadowing experiences with First Data Resources in Omaha, NE. In addition, annually 50 students or one-third of the graduating class, would take Principles of Technology, which gave them exposure to career transition information. Businesses were more inclined to help at this level because they had a chance to recruit employees. Comments from interviewees suggested that these activities should be introduced at an earlier stage in the student's academic career. There was some indication that some activity had happened at an earlier stage, for example, the elementary school hosted career fairs, which gave students exposure to possible career options.

The businesses most likely to be involved were Glenwood-based or had an office in the community, had 10 to 25 employees with a few examples of larger employers, service-oriented companies, and the need to have access to the labor pool. Some of the mentioned businesses included Glenwood State Bank, LaRue Drug, Kiamans Grocery, the Glenwood State School (which had a STW coordinator), and the chamber of commerce played the role of facilitator and information source.

Strengths of the town included close proximity to the Omaha metro area, while
maintaining the chance to live in a small town. Traditionally, the people were community-centered with an interest in the success of their schools and local businesses to maintain its growth image.

This growth brought new residents, who lived in the new housing developments, but worked elsewhere which transformed the town into a bedroom community. The new residents lacked civic pride and diminished the local commerce base through lack of patronage. For example, needed new infrastructure for the school district to accommodate this growth in student population strained its financial resources, and forced the election of new bond money to pay for them. Until recently, several bond issues had failed. There was also a need for economic diversity not only to broaden the tax base, but also to increase local job shadowing options. Finally, the changing profile of residents created a less homogeneous community and accelerated the dividing of the population into the have’s and have not's.

Academic involvement included outreach to business by hosting breakfast meetings with employers to build bridges of understanding, facilitated and the expansion of job shadowing options, and provided a vehicle for resumes to industry for critiquing and refinement.

Some of the educators suggested that much of the Glenwood employment market primarily needed high school graduates. Therefore, the plan should reflect improved reading and math skills to reach the desired levels. Business helped to identify these needs and the plans were drafted to address them. In addition, business provided guest speakers to classrooms as contemporary mouthpieces on the state of the marketplace.

Union involvement was minimal with only the Glenwood State School and the
Glenwood Public School System with sizable union employment. There was interaction with the iron workers union in Omaha that provided information on jobs and general promotion of the trades. Parent advisory committees at every school were mentioned as an example of parent involvement. Local service clubs were seen as a means of interconnection with a variety of resources. In addition, parents must fill out commitment work forms for students involved in the previously stated activities. All of these activities were seen as improved communications. In addition, students also had the chance to be a part of FFA and FHA. Planned activities included expansion of career exploration for the advisee/advisor, specific career pathway usage and more extensive general curriculum changes, the introduction of a mentor program, and the introduction of business ownership/franchisee options as a career choice for students.

Measurement of the impact of STW needed to be quantifiable, once national funding will be gone in 2001 in order to justify its continuation. One example was the state of Iowa using integrated curriculum with student development/SCANS. The bottom line was that the activities were now documented and could be included in the process. Then, once the benchmarks and assessments were in place, the process could continue and could be easily measured, which heightened its credibility.

There was divided opinion on whether the partnership had received favorable media coverage.

The student/employee was better prepared to work because of the partnership from one educator’s perspective; but the other perspective argued it was inclusive if the student/employee was better prepared, however at least students were exposed to the realities of the work world.
The Goals 2000, STW, and other grants had been relatively abundant in the last few years, for example, the Glenwood school district received $1.1 million in the last two years, and helped the partnership to evolve.

While the partnership had little, direct impact on the 97% graduation rate of the 1996 senior class, it did appear that these graduates made better post-secondary education choices. However, the partnership had limited impact in enhancing career/job choices for graduating students. It did help more students realize work-site learning, but, it had divided educator support as to whether it helped overall learning.

Both educators indicated that business had influence on educational policy setting. Examples included a seven-year curriculum review. A more specific example was the incorporation of life skills into the career transition course. Two new programs had been added: the introduction of the construction trades program and the computer aided drafting program; while the automotive mechanic trades program had diminished. (As a side note, the special education model and senior career transition program had influenced the shape of local partnerships.)

Societal buy-in for philosophical justification for the partnership would be a commitment to worker satisfaction, that caused more citizens to be more productive workers and would broaden the contribution to the tax base. One educational respondent indicated that the recent labor shortage was an especially strong catalyst to bring about these partnerships, while another suggested that the labor shortage had actually forced business to accept substandard workmanship, because there were limited alternatives. Consequently, the attraction of commercial development helped to spawn the new construction trades program. On social issues, it was divided opinion whether education
was being asked to focus on behavioral rather than marketable skills.

Yes, the pursuit of governmental dollars motivated education to contact business. However, one educator indicated that the partnership caused business to be more critical of spending priorities and to be more concerned with accountability.

At the time of the school interviews, May 1998, the STW initiative was only two years old. A critical finding was that other partnerships (relationships) had been underway for longer periods of time. For the partnership to build upon the broad principles of STW, according to one comment, it should be seen as a two-way relationship between education and Glenwood-based businesses. Above all, the name of School-To-Work should be thought of in terms of School-To-Life to avoid opposition from forming. Otherwise, STW may be perceived negatively as training only for industry. Interestingly, one of the Council Bluffs Community School’s STW coordinator was actually known as a School-To-Career Coordinator in an attempt to combat this perception.

**Business Perspective**

Mission statement: Business felt that today’s first-time entries into the workforce did not have the proper workforce skills. Therefore, there was a need for the implementation of effective career awareness and worker preparedness learning earlier in the students’ academic career. To resolve this concern, education must be changed to be more realistic in order to relate to today’s student. Part of this change would be reflected in more real world opportunities for students. Consequently, success of the partnership was dependent upon people and institutions participation for the long haul. Business needed to be committed to giving something back to the citizens. One businessperson
agreed with the basic premise for the need of change, but voiced concern about the start of a new program that cannot be sustained, in order to effect change.

It was unanimous that the high school was the most involved level in the school district, while there were examples at all levels. Business was most motivated to work with high school students, because of the students’ age and potential to enter the world of work. A few suggested those middle school activities such as the “Helping Hands” which focused on students working with handicapped students as a positive example of connecting to the community. At the elementary school there were career exposure functions that included career fairs. In theory with the implementation of STW, partnership activities would be fully realized K-12.

As recently as 1997, the faculty voted down a proposal that would have allowed block scheduling. Proponents of this proposal argue that can limit the potential of students maximizing work-site and school learning experiences.

Businesses outside of the Glenwood community, as well as high school students from other districts participated in the Glenwood partnerships. While these external participants were engaged in the process, there were several Glenwood-based businesses that contributed to partnership. Some of the common characteristics for businesses to be involved include financial stability which can afford release time for employees, a sense of connection to the community, and an appreciation for the close geographic proximity of the business to the individual school and how that could cultivate customers. Finally, leadership at the top of the organization was critical to making the partnership work.

Glenwood strengths included building on its strong school system and its image of a small town with the advantage of being next to, but distinct from the larger cities of
Omaha and Council Bluffs. The perception and reality of Glenwood as a growth-oriented community also added to its attractiveness. One business interviewee stated, that one of the direct benefits of a growing population was that Glenwood moved up to 3-A level sports conference. Glenwood traditionally supported local sport programs, and this move into a larger sports conference could accelerate pride for both old and new residents. In general, a move to a higher level was seen as a positive; while a move to a lower level was seen as a negative. Therefore, similar studied communities like Clarinda, which moved up, and Shenandoah, which moved down, could react accordingly.

While Glenwood enjoyed several strengths, one weakness, in part, was the challenge of retaining its small town values while its population grew. This invasion of new affluent corporate citizens transformed Glenwood into a town with different expectations; in essence, they wanted to maintain access to the resources that a big city provided while enjoyment of the advantages of a small town. This new group transformed the composition of the historical wealth of the city of Glenwood. This was reflected, in part, by the new wealth resided in the Mills county housing projects that reinforced the growth and distinction of the have’s and have not’s. The traditional retail base continue to erode as new and established residents had more and more options in surrounding commerce centers. Finally, the population continued to age as young people left, because of the lack of good paying jobs.

Academic involvement included maintenance of the database of businesses that participated at various levels of the partnership. The general public was invited to be a part of the school district, and to encourage their participation the school buildings were now open for the public’s use. Also, teachers were involved in evaluating student
employment programs. There were concerns about the overlapping jurisdictions of various educational representatives; such as the Work Experience coordinator, STW coordinator, and the “Building Bridges” coordinator. The intent of these programs was not necessarily in question, but the potential for duplication of efforts or the unnecessary repetition of effort by business was an issue. Business involvement included class presentations, student job shadowing, industry tours, mentoring, and traditional work-study students. There was no mention of organized labor participation or parent interaction with the partnership.

One interviewee mentioned that one of the challenges of working with students was to be helpful, and constructive without hurting their feelings.

There were varied opinions on the future direction of the partnership that included more work relationships with teachers and union representatives. Above all, established continuity in the way the partnership was administered was seen as important.

In response to the measurable indicators of the partnership, business did not perceive itself as the recipient of favorable publicity. Conversely, education perceived it had received some positive coverage. To determine what was a measurable outcome of the partnership, in general, was difficult. One indicator would be, if the people made better decisions related to their academic career. In addition, students would have learned of and responded more effectively to local employment opportunities. Ultimately, the student/worker was better prepared to deal with the issues of both environments.

There was general agreement among the business interviewees that the partnership assisted education in the acquisition of grant money. As a side note, one
business interviewee stated that several surrounding towns like Shenandoah and Red Oak shared the similar challenge of new, diversified residents that relocated to these once homogeneous population bases. These various situations included an influx of people who were attracted by the job openings of local industries, potential life style change, or general opportunities that their prior dwelling did not offer. Consequently, the needs of the new residents added to the financial strain of these towns. It was implied that the current funding mechanism for Glenwood education would be inadequate to meet the needs of the volume of new residents; therefore, grant money could be helpful for budgetary reasons.

At this time, the evidence was unclear whether Glenwood High School graduates had made better post-secondary educational decisions. An additional goal of the partnership was for more people to gain a better understanding of the big picture that helped to avoid an “us” versus “them” mentality. Also, there was an economic benefit by the retention of youth that helped build a better community. The labor shortage was a societal issue that brought about partnerships. One interviewee said that negative issues, like substance abuse, could actually bring partnerships together.

Grant money was seen by some as optional and others saw it as crucial to effect change. It was generally agreed that education pursued business to start the grant process in hopes of the acquisition of new money. The business interviewees were interviewed later than the education partners, and at that time one of the major STW education leaders had recently left the community. Since the interviews, yet another key player had transferred to another school district. Therefore, there was a concern by some of the business interviewees on how the partnership would survive this transition.
One business interviewee saw minimal opposition to the partnership from current residents, who were motivated to have the curriculum remain with the traditional 3 R’s. Also, new residents were a challenge, because they did not understand the need to be involved. Because these new residents believed, in part, that they now resided in a community that did not have the problems of their previous residence. Another interviewee said that he/she saw great possibilities with a town that believed in education and wanted to support the young people. Another said students needed to balance outside work with education. Thus, “the partnership was based upon the understanding that this was a time to prepare students for work, not to work them.”

**Conclusion:** Glenwood was a community, like much of southwest Iowa that was evolving, and consequently placed more strain on the educational budget. The recent success in acquiring grant money, had afforded the school district the chance to expand some of its offerings in spite of these growing pains. In addition, there had been recent changes to key school personnel, which could impact the partnership. However, there remained several committed professionals in the school district to carry on the work. While not all students were required to have work-site learning, local opportunities were available as well as beyond its borders in spite of no block scheduling.

**Expert Update:** In the 1999-2000 school year, Glenwood became involved in the JAG program. Which could be argued is a variation of STW under essentially a new name. Additional STW influence was found with the usage of brain based learning for some students. Broader district support was needed and became the focus for measuring student success through school improvement goals. Also, the new high school building and trades program used the “Wheels of Learning” curriculum, a recognized national
apprentice program. The 2000-2001 high school graduates would have completed a portfolio development course. One concern was that the administration would continue to be in flux with possible additional changes in the near term, the departure of the superintendent after the 1999-2000 school year was one example.

Lewis Central Site Visit

The Lewis Central School District was a unique district for a couple of reasons. One, it was a relatively new school district compared to some of the other districts in the study sample. Two, it was a hybrid of population centers that made it hard for its students to have a sense of community compared to students in other school districts that had one main city at its population core.

Standard operating procedure was to contact the main educational contact or the most visible person. The researcher had worked with one of the high school educators, and that was the starting point with this district. In addition, the geographic proximity of the district made it a natural for inclusion in the study, as well as the perceived level of participation by the experts. The educational interviewees met the model of one teacher and one administrator. The business interviewee sample came from the recommendation of the educational interviewees, which was consistent with other site visits. The composition of the business interviewees included one department manager, and two general managers. These interviewees came exclusively from large businesses that enjoyed significant market coverage, financial stability, and number of employees, as well as a distant corporate office. It could be argued that these companies were not really local businesses, but were companies with regional influence and were unique from the business sample found in the other site locations. The interviews took place in both the

The experts gave the following rating of the Lewis Central School District for its business/education partnership.

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**Education Perspective**

Mission statement: The education mission was split with opinions from both elementary and high schools.

The elementary school mission provided students with experiences they may not have received without this partnership, develop a respect for different types of people, and learn the value of community or charity work, particularly to the elderly.

The high school mission helped to prepare students for the workplace and not only to get a job, but to keep one. In addition, society would gain more productive students, which would make them better employees and in the long-term fewer adults dependent upon welfare.

It was inclusive, which interviewee presented the strongest case, that their level of the district was the most involved. The elementary school representative argued they were most involved for several years with a variety of age appropriate activities, displaying student art work in business and the use of business volunteers in reading programs for students. The high school representative argued that it was their level that was most involved because it was easier to engage business with students that may actually go to work now rather than on the promise of later. While much of the high
school program was optional for students, the Workplace Readiness course introduced
the student to much of the critical career process. The education respondents generally
agreed that the middle school was not as engaged in the process.

The profile of prominent business partners included companies of size, top
management that placed a priority on the partnership, close geographic proximity to the
school building, and the opportunity to gain potential employees. Some of the businesses
mentioned were Peters Personnel, Risen Son Retirement Village, Pizza Hut, Sam’s Club,
Mid-American Energy, Bluffs Run Casino, Burger King, and Southwest Orthopedics.

Strengths of the district included, strong parental support, schools gathered data to
measure if they were meeting the needs of students, and a reading program for youth.
In addition, this district tended to have newer housing developments, which attracted
people from surrounding communities who wanted an upgrade in house valuation, and
the relocation of people because of corporate reassignment.

There was little consensus on the weaknesses of the district. Some of them
included the trend of more students in school unprepared for the rigors of academics. A
growth in financial stress not only to build or repair infrastructure, but to meet the needs
of new students. At the elementary level, 47% of the students were on free or a reduced
lunch programs in the 1997-1998 academic year, and a growth in the number of students,
with English as their second language. These developments impacted operational changes
in the school district.

Another perspective suggested that the geographic coverage of Lewis Central
school district was unique to the study sample, which bordered on Glenwood and Treynor
school districts, and into the Council Bluffs district. Without a city for its base, Lewis
Central's geographic dispersion of people of rural, urban, small town, and transplants from the large cities caused a cross-section of people that did not have a common theme to unify them. Finally, the economic dispersion helped to transform it into a community of have's and have not's.

Communities that influenced Lewis Central school district included the surrounding small communities as well as the city of Omaha; while the city of Council Bluffs had a special influence on the Lewis Central school district, since part of the district fell within its boundaries. The state of Iowa's open enrollment law and special contracts with Iowa School for the Deaf also influenced the composition of its student population.

Academic involvement required high school seniors to take a Workplace Readiness course. CORE and student job shadowing were optional at the high school. Academic involvement continued at the elementary level with the goal of increased life skills. In essence, gave the students an experience they may not receive elsewhere.

Business interaction included mock interviews and information for curriculum supplements at the high school level. At the elementary level, the new dominant activity was the "Reading Buddies" program. One company, Sam's Club, was engaged at all levels. Part of Sam's Club's involvement included staff development for teachers, and opened a store for students to do a comparison shopping exercise as part of an applied math assignment. These were just two examples of activities that helped build the connection from school to business.

The educational interviewees, were consistent with much of the national
literature, when they indicated little presence of organized labor or independent groups of parents.

Additional student involvement at the high school level included enrollment at the Tucker Center. The Tucker Center, a vocational magnet center for area Council Bluffs schools, accepted high school juniors and seniors from Lewis Central, Council Bluffs, St. Albert, Missouri Valley, and Glenwood districts. The learning exercises at the Tucker Center centered on building direction for students to learn about the world of work.

While much of the previous material was optional, high school students enrolled in the Lewis Central “Workplace Readiness” were exposed to all elements of career exploration that led to the development of a portfolio that assisted the student on the job search. At the elementary level, career exploration activities included the interviews of Sam’s Club employees to learn about the world of work, and the K-1 students visited the senior population at Risen Son Retirement Village.

Future planned activities included expansion of the Reading Buddies program as well as enhancing current programs at the high school level, and adding a transition course with more career planning. The 1998-1999 senior class would be the first group to have Work Keys testing as freshmen and as seniors. There was a proposal to move the job shadowing exercise down to the Freshman/Sophomore levels. Hired a new coordinator during the 1999-2000 school year, some seniors would have the option of internships, and in 2000-2001 school year, all seniors would have internship opportunities. It would require the implementation of a two-hour block of time to make the new internship program possible. This would be part of a new business partners
program that matched students with the appropriate business.

The consensus was that both business and education had received positive media coverage. It was perceived that in time the partnership prepared students to become better workers.

The general opinion of educators was that business influenced policy setting of education. Examples included business representatives who served on task forces and advisory committees, and business leaders had recently participated in literacy workshops in Des Moines. One of these advisory committees helped with fine tuning the career transition courses. Opinion was split on whether business participation helped education receive government funding.

The partnership should help students make better post-secondary education decisions, but it was too early to tell the actual outcome. It was generally agreed that some students learned more about the expectations of the workplace, but it was felt that many seniors left high school unfamiliar with career awareness. Measuring the proposed change, in part, would be done with the implementation of new graduate follow up surveys.

One of the characteristics of the district was the significant turnover of superintendents and principals over the past few years resulting in changing priorities. There did not seem to be any other mention of local environmental issues that influenced the success of the partnership.

Historical perspective included interaction with business practitioners through the Kindergarten-Fifth grades’ Talented and Gifted programs, which focused on applied learning. Traditionally, student involvement was voluntary and resistant to graduation
requirements like career prep courses. But it was the actual “portfolio” class, which produced a tangible output that won students and parents over to the new concept. This encouraged educators to lobby to increase the number of graduation requirements that were career related.

At the time of the interview, the Lewis Central school district had no STW coordinator. In the 1999-2000 school year, the high school planned to add a career coordinator. The use of Carl Perkins funds demonstrated a limited presence of federal funds in the school district. Additional external funds included the state of Iowa commitment for regular spending for improved technology in the classroom. Voters had rejected various school bond elections, but the instructional support level fund continued to be a source of funds. Finally, a bond issue was passed to erect a new high school building.

**Business Perspective**

Mission statement: While there was some interconnectedness between the three business interviewees, there was a divided opinion on what was the mission of the partnership. In general, business needed to be supportive of education, because it was the receiver of the output: student/workers. Therefore, students needed exposure to the world of work and business needed to play a role in this. Finally, the appetite of industry for workers rationalized interaction with education and economically justified the partnership. One response indicated that the term “partnership” was too strong and that a more appropriate term to describe this interaction term could be “relationship.”

There was general agreement that the middle school of the Lewis Central district was the least engaged in the process. There was no consensus, on whether the
elementary or high school was most involved in the partnership. All three of the interviewed businesses were located relatively close to the school buildings. However, one of the business interviewees indicated that they were willing to work more closely with the Council Bluffs, Treynor, and Glenwood school districts. While another business currently assisted the Council Bluffs district, but not to the same extent as Lewis Central. Ultimately, the philosophy of the corporate office must be supportive for the local manager to be involved. While the larger business may have more resources to be a partner, the smaller business must have the personal connection to be involved. A minority view was the motivation to be involved was to fulfill unmet needs, such as workers or the pursuit of publicity.

The city of Omaha was the dominate metro population mass that influenced the Lewis Central school district, along with nearby small towns that fed into the Lewis Central school district. The Lewis Central school district’s proximity to Omaha was generally considered positive. Additional strengths included the improved vitality of the greater Council Bluffs business community with growth in the number of service offerings, thus it was more of a regional draw from mid-Omaha and throughout southwest Iowa. Finally, this growth had a synergistic effect of increased business activity.

Weaknesses included a population with a high number of poor young people, a community that lacked a significant number of highly compensated jobs, and a community that was not fully complete with the kinds of services normally found in a community with this population mass.

The activities of education participation in the partnership varied based upon the
age appropriateness of the students. At the elementary level, teachers selected the material for the reading programs; while at the high school level, teachers organized mock interviews and created more strategic career strategies activities. Finally, teachers took part in exercises that included shadowing business.

Business participated in the previously mentioned activities. In addition, they assisted in the grant writing process. One particular business was very aggressive in the pursuit of different ways for the embellishment of the partnership.

Union participation included representation on various School-To-Career committees, and organized labor along with the utility employer, promoted electrical safety to students. Parent involvement varied depended upon the individualized building issues.

Future activities included the expansion of the Book Buddies program, family nights at the elementary schools to energize parent participation, increased internships, and more business presence at high school career days.

Perspectives on the subject of media coverage for the partnership varied, some saw it as a side benefit of involvement, others preferred to be a silent partner, while still others had no opinion. This contrasted with the perception that education had received favorable coverage.

Business may have received some favorable tax deductions for donations to school, but it was not a big incentive for participation.

In the near-term, it created greater awareness of local job openings for students/workers that helped to ease the labor shortage. For example, student participation in mock interviews provided students with immediate feedback on how
viable their job seeking skills were. In the long-term, the partnership should help prepare students to be better workers.

The majority view was that business did not influence educational policy setting in the general or in the specific as far as curriculum development. A minority view suggested that business involved in the grant writing process it did more than the acquisition of new funds, and played a role in the influence of curriculum. This particular business interviewee helped with the grant writing for both Lewis Central and Council Bluffs Community school districts. That same person implied that teacher shadowing broaden the instructor’s understanding of the contemporary external world. Therefore, the “curriculum” was modified to include those experiences and the student was given a truer picture of commerce.

There were divided opinions about whether the partnership gained more customers for the business, but it was generally agreed that most businesses saw it as a positive image builder.

The majority of business representatives felt that their participation had influenced the acquisition of grant funding. One person with a global perspective indicated that the ground rules of involvement in the community had changed. Society had changed from people being responsible citizens to those seeking freedom. He further stated that it now took new forces to rectify contemporary challenges.

Opinion was divided on whether the partnership had improved students’ selection of more appropriate post-secondary education. The majority view was that the partnership did provide work-site learning options, and after graduation, generally, the student found better employment. The type of work-site learning impacted the level of
student learning, but it also influenced the depth of the commitment of the business. Another Lewis Central business interviewee stated, that issues determined what business would commit, which could include time, direct and in-direct costs, and liability. This particular business interviewee felt that the most commitment was for mentoring programs, followed by internships and finally job shadowing. (Another business interviewee, at a different site, suggested just the opposite that shadowing was more disruptive than internships to the business day.)

Through job shadowing participants gained an understanding of what it was like in the world of work. Use of this tool caused a switch in roles where business people learned, what it was like to work in the confines of the classroom as a teacher, and conversely, teachers experienced the pressure of the competitive marketplace. It was generally agreed that the shared experiences produced positive results.

Business interviewees unanimously agreed that the lack of quality and quantity of the labor pool motivated business to work with education. One business interviewee indicated that it costs up to and possibly more than $2,000 to hire and train new workers. All business interviewees felt the need to identify the best possible employee candidates.

The current Lewis Central partnership was considered to be in its infancy. The grant funding system encouraged education to contact business. On the broader issue of who initiated first contact, two of the three of the business representatives said that education made the first contact.

Opposition to involvement for the majority of the business respondents was because of the nature of their business. The rationale was that some in the general public misunderstand why businesses should be involved in the partnership. Some managers
think it would be inappropriate usage of the customers’ money. Also, there was a perception that some teachers did not want change and did not welcome outside interference.

Conclusion: The Lewis Central school district was not a homogenous school district dominated by affluent students. Instead, it was a heterogeneous mix that continued to evolve. Its district boundaries were a combination of the urban with city of Council Bluffs and rural that touched both Treynor and Glenwood school districts and this made it the second largest student population in the study. This was all done without a real sense of a city to draw upon for civic support and to a lesser extent a commercial tax base. There were some significant businesses involved in the preliminary development stages of the partnership. Some student readiness curriculum was implemented with more school-to-career activities planned. Opinion was split if business influenced curriculum development. There was a sense that a great deal of potential was available to be exploited with the right leadership.

Expert Update: In the 1999-2000 school year, Lewis Central school district became involved in the JAG program. In addition, a transition class was offered in the ninth grade and seniors were now required to take a work readiness class that included portfolio development. The addition of a new coordinator was helping the high school to improve its partnerships. One observation was that the new high school building was under construction and until it was complete the district’s attention would be diverted.
Anita Site Visit

The city of Anita was considered a suburb of Atlantic, since it was only 10 miles away, and was centrally located between Omaha, NE, and Des Moines, IA. Following standard practice, the researcher contacted the education representative that he had worked with previously. This individual went beyond the normal practice of suggesting potential future interviewees; instead this person contacted, controlled, and coordinated the site visit of June 17, 1998 during the 1997-1998 school year. Unlike most community visits that took at least two trips, Anita was completed on that one day. The two education interviewees met the model of one administrator and one front-line teacher who also served as STW Coordinator. The business contacts included a husband and wife proprietor of a small business, and a person who was active in city government as well as the chamber of commerce.

The following expert rankings suggested how Anita might be placed in the four-tiered levels.

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Education Perspective

Mission statement: To make sure (all) students had a successful life. Required education classes must change outcomes to better meet the needs of today's challenges. There were over 25 different entities involved in this partnership.
There was divided opinion as to whether the high school had the longest running and most powerful partnership in the school district. Justification for this, in part, was the early transition grants that assisted the special education population in this process. The other opinion differed in that it was really a district-wide effort, including “out-of-school students.” The district did practice block scheduling, which was seen by some as a facilitator for work-site learning.

Both educator profiles included employment in the private sector prior to their respective tours in public education.

There were multiple factors that influenced business participation. Businesses had to have a general philosophy of community involvement in the partnership. Career clustering influenced the attraction and placement of business with the appropriate level of education. This could be illustrated by the business, particular affinity that matched well with a level of students or classroom’s career interests. The leaders of the business currently had or have had students in the Anita School District might influence their willingness to come on board. A conflicting view suggested there was no common thread to easily identify companies that would be in the partnership, therefore it took a controlled marketing effort to show results.

Specific businesses or business types thought to be involved include the Anita Chamber of Commerce, the banks, Brenton-Harverstores Coop, the state park which was overseen by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), several insurance agencies, and many Atlantic businesses such as Sky Jack, Glacier-Vanderbilt, and the Atlantic hospital. Sky Jack closed its Atlantic office in 2000.

The city of Anita was perceived to be close-knit and active. There were many
work-based experience opportunities for students. One weakness of the school community was whether there “would be enough staff to deal with the challenges of the Anita School District?” Some of the weaknesses included the close-knit nature of the community, which made it difficult for a newcomer to assimilate, and concerns about growth in substance abuse, and parenting issues.

Academic involvement consisted of outreach to non-school members to attend school improvement meetings, an open hiring process for school administrators, and focus group meetings for the general public and the business community. While business provided work-site learning, such as internships and job shadowing for students and teachers. Union representatives were also involved in STW.

Parental involvement was measured in parent-teacher conferences with more than 90 percent of parents visiting elementary teachers, as well as 80 percent or more of the parents met with secondary teachers Anita Public Schools (1997). Every eighth grade parent and student met with a counselor to discuss career pathways. One interviewee characterized this as a community of an upper class and a large lower class with no middle class. Consequently, this mix may limit the amount of parent volunteerism.

Indicators of student involvement included 90 percent of seniors who were involved in work-site learning. In addition, some special education students were involved in work-site learning. More specifically, business major students registered for entrepreneurship classes and learned how to operate student-run businesses.

Future goals of the partnership included getting students placed at higher levels of business organizations, to experience more than entry-level shadowing experiences, and ensure that the overall work-site learning experience would gain more depth. STW
would be the coordinated format for school reform, along with improved usage of assessment.

Measurement included implementing the first five-year follow up assessment of this process. Anita Community Schools (1997) revealed the breakdown of how many students did shadowing, work experience, volunteering, senior project or class project. From 1994 to 1997 participation grew from 41 to 158 students. Additional measurement included surveying parents, business, and students on levels of participation. Finally, a perception survey was conducted on the understanding of the concept.

Business and education were both the beneficiaries of positive media coverage. One interviewee mentioned that the state legislature recently passed tax breaks that made it easier to do apprenticeships and internships. The response to whether the student/employee was better prepared to enter the world of work was either a yes, or a qualified yes by the education interviewees. Business felt they gained insight into educational policy setting and curriculum development. For example, a site visit to Glacier-Vanderbilt motivated educators to make changes in their English program.

The high school graduation rate was nearly 100 percent and, therefore, the partnership had minimal impact on the high school graduation rate, but it helped students make better post-secondary education decisions. The Anita Public Schools (1997) seemed to validate this statement. In addition, students found better employment, in part, because of work-site learning, which also was credited, for increased overall learning. Consequently, society gained a better-prepared student/worker, whose understanding of different generations’ concerns resulted in improved civic pride.
Opinions were split on the issues that motivated the formation of partnerships, which included the topics of labor shortage, commercial development, media attention, or social issues like crime and substance abuse. Contrasting this split opinion was the general agreement that education was motivated to start the process for the pursuit of grant money, and this partnership helped to secure the grant money. While one respondent said that education approached business, another said the sequence was more like education to parents to students to business, and finally to education staff.

STW and other grant moneys were needed to affect system change, but when the question was raised as to what would be done once those sources were gone, one education respondent indicated that the work would continue with new sources of money, but hopefully with similar results.

To some extent the Anita school district had been the victim of the "open enrollment" program that caused a migration of some students to the Atlantic school district, and consequently, a loss of funds Anita Community School Report (1997). Most of those students were lost to Atlantic, because their parents worked there, and thus continued the pressure to merge with the Atlantic School District. Therefore, in part, outside financial resources were important to continue the Anita partnership. Another change of significance was the new superintendent for the 1998-1999 school year, and this new leadership could influence the allocation of scarce resources. The prior superintendent had been at the helm from 1991 through 1998.

Business Perspective

Mission statement: (Business/education interactions prior to the STW coordinator were not formalized and consequently, there was not one person making the appropriate
connections. Since the incorporation of these two factors, the partnership had become more effective.) In general, the added curriculum encouraged students to learn life and work skills. The life skills focused on youth programs that connected one generation with another generation, and built civic pride that resulted in a reduction of vandalism. The inclusion of work skills helped students identify the correct career options.

The high school level had the longest running relationship with business, but the grade school was now involved. One business respondent had indicated participation in a similar program in a prior community. In addition, that business respondent had a child in special education classes that gave him/her incentive to participate.

Some of the common characteristics for business participation included companies of size, business decision-makers who had children in the school district, or students who had the potential to become workers. Some of the prominent businesses mentioned were Union National Bank, Rolling Hills Bank, Brenton-Harvestores, and the Atlantic Hy-Vee Food Store. Another example was the Development Corporation that renovated a house with the help of students.

Anita enjoyed the strength of a good school system, the nursing home was a sizable employer, and recreational opportunities with the local lake and golf course. Weaknesses and challenges were the need for better housing, more employment options, and maintained Anita’s economic independence. A stagnant population of 1,100 residents, in part, could not grow because young people left for more options elsewhere, and the youth that remained had a growing disconnect with the large older population.

Atlantic, Iowa was the logical geographic commerce base that influenced Anita the most. Both Omaha and Des Moines were about equal distance away at 60 to 70
miles, and perceived to have equal and secondary influence behind Atlantic.

Activities of academic involvement included improved relations with business. The public school system was the single largest employer in the community, so it needed to position things appropriately when asking business to contribute. The STW coordinator belonged to the chamber of commerce and visited business sites. Business reciprocated with work-site learning and assisted with grant writing. Many parents had supportive attitudes but commuted to Atlantic for employment and thus reduced their participation. Besides the obvious work-site learning, students did a significant amount of volunteer work that directly and indirectly helped the senior population. Another volunteer activity was the Future Farmers of America, which ran the annual agricultural breakfast.

Both business and education received positive press coverage from both the Anita and Atlantic medias. The Anita STW and other programs had gained recognition from both state and national publications on its award winning STW programs.

Students/employees were better prepared to work and the businesses realized greater productivity due to the partnership. The opinions of the business respondents were split on whether business influenced education policy setting and curriculum development. Neither business interviewee was from a retail establishment so it was hard to determine if the partnership would benefit the business with more patronage.

Both respondents agreed that the partnership had realized access to government grant funding, as well students made better choices for attending post-secondary education. It was split as to whether students gained better employment because of work-site learning, but both agreed that overall it should positively impact student learning.
Society gained a more productive citizen both in work and responsiveness to the community because of the partnership. In conclusion, student respect rose for the school, while vandalism declined.

There was general agreement that the labor shortage was motivation for the formation of the partnership. Organized efforts to promote commercial development used the partnership, as a tool to attract industrial prospects. While media coverage was good, it was felt that it could be improved. There was a split among the respondents whether partnerships were formed in an attempt to remedy social issues. Both business respondents agreed that the pursuit of grant money caused education to approach business. They were not aware of organized opposition to STW. In general, the partnership helped many students understand what it was like to work.

**Conclusion:** Anita, the smallest school district in the study sample, demonstrated a good documented case for the vitality of its partnership. This included a track record of measurement. In addition, the school district had been good at the acquisition of grant money and provided block scheduling at the high school level for some time that encouraged work-site learning.

**Expert Update:** The concept was well understood and the curriculum showed signs of integration and probably deserved a number 3 ranking. The long-time STW coordinator recently retired, and without her/his leadership the partnership seemed to have uneven performance. A new superintendent and two new principals in the school district caused some discussion on where the partnership was headed.

**Clarinda Site Visit**

The city of Clarinda located in Page County IA approximately 90 miles south of
the city of Omaha. While Clarinda was relatively free of the influence of Omaha, the shadow of the state of Missouri did impact the city of Clarinda. The point of entry was once again with an educational contact that the researcher had previously worked with. This person provided the potential business and educational interviewees. Then, the researcher called to introduce the research project using the original educational contact as a point of reference. After the interviewees agreed to participate, a survey was mailed to them prior to the site visit. The interviewees were asked to complete the demographic profile prior to the actual site visit. Clarinda was one of the first site visits in the research process and led to modifications in future research instruments.

One group was interviewed in early March 1998 and the second visit was made in the middle of April 1998 for the 1997-1998 school year. While the list of actual interviewees was solid, it did cause a slight variation from the other site visits. The variation included a coordinator/instructor from the Clarinda campus of Iowa Western Community College and an administrator from the public high school. The business contact included the Clarinda Academy of Business and Industry and manager from a significant business.

The following experts ranked Clarinda in the four-tiered level criteria Timpane, McNeil (1991).

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**Education Perspective**

Mission statement: The partnership helped students to be more successful and
developed relationships between industry and the educator's kindergarten through the community college level.

The level of the school district most involved was the high school; while the college had the most applied technology programs that made the students ready for work, and had an active internship program for the past four to six years. Currently, the high school did not utilize block scheduling.

The profile of the educational interviewees included, to some extent, private sector employment prior to their current education assignments.

The question was raised on what would be the most likely educational level to interact with businesses. It was argued that elementary schools were more inclined to partner with retail businesses. This was rationalized, in part, by the ease of participation in the partnership. For example, elementary students' art work could be displayed at the retailer. An elementary school teacher was recommended to be interviewed, but due to time constraints this individual was not contacted. A positive argument for the interaction with high school and college students as the most engaged levels were because business was motivated to enter into a partnership because of the need for entry-level and professional workers.

Business organizations that were mentioned as active in the partnership included NSK, Lisle Corp., Clarinda Academy of Business and Industry (CAB), Iowa State University Extension Office, and a variety of mom and pop businesses.

Strengths of the community included a supportive citizenry that was forward-looking and would endorse change as long as it was a quality, conservative change. It had a very low unemployment rate, but could use another significant employer like Lisle
Corporation to increase quality employment opportunities. Clarinda strategically located far enough away from Omaha and consequently, had somewhat of its own identity. A community with the most influence was Shenandoah, Iowa. There was some implied influence from the state of Missouri. The Town Square was filled with businesses, which was evidence of a vibrant retail community that was not adversely impacted by a dominant neighbor.

Academic involvement included college training provided for business representatives, and high school teachers completed shadowing experiences in business, as well as incorporated applied learning in classroom instruction. Business participation included both student shadowing and increased interaction with school administration, hosted field trips, and provided internships. Organized labor at both the Lisle Corporation and in the mental health field were active in STW activities. Parental involvement included planning and developing this new direction, as well as participation in the grant process. For example, the high school called a meeting that invited 98 parents and 92 of them attended. Finally, an increased number of students participated in job shadowing.

Planned future activities included 50 percent of the staff to do shadowing one year and the next year the other 50 percent will participate. There was a need to reverse the poor image, that some long-term residents had of the school system. One of the proposed activities would be to encourage more citizens to visit the schools. For example, citizens would role-play as students to see what they encounter in a typical school day. This would begin to promote a more realistic image of education and why it needed the support of the community. Another activity would be to try to improve and expand the interaction with businesses.
The educational perspective was split with one view of the Shenandoah radio and newspaper along with the weekly Clarinda newspaper that provided good coverage, and another educator saw little evidence of business and education that received positive publicity.

There was divided opinion on whether the partnership produced better prepared workers. Business productivity was potentially enhanced with access to free or discounted labor. There was a need to measure this process, students as well as business people need to be surveyed on the value of the shadowing experience. Finally, teachers needed to show how the shadowing experience would positively impact the classroom.

There was general agreement among the education interviewees that business representatives did enjoy influence in policy setting and curriculum development. In general, there was a connection in the partnership, because each side knew whom to contact. More specifically, the various advisory boards did have input into the curriculum development.

There was general consensus that the partnership had opened the process for education to receive funds for the Clarinda school district through STW. Resources that the partnership contributed included educational training, meeting facilities, food, publication subscriptions, money, and the sharing of information.

Currently, the high school graduation rate was 97 percent, so it was difficult to say that the partnership would have much impact in an improved rate. Again, it was too early to determine whether the partnership would influence post-secondary decision. One education respondent went on to say that the selection of post-secondary education was tied closely to parental influence.
There was a singular education perspective that students gained better employment skills and work-site learning experience. Ultimately, overall student learning was enhanced, because students saw the justification for being in school. As a side note, one of the barriers to shadowing was that some companies were concerned about liability issues.

Society gained from the partnership by making more responsible citizens. Another perspective was that the process was committed to young people, thus producing people more equipped for the marketplace and the outcome would be fewer people on welfare. Finally, society had a greater understanding of the education process because of the partnership.

The issue of the labor shortage received divided responses with a “don’t know” and another as a reason for a partnership to form. One person responded that the larger employer could draw employees from beyond Clarinda and reached into Shenandoah, Corning, and other communities. Both educators agreed that the partnership could be a positive force in the attraction of commercial development. For example, the Lied Center was sited as a key to the recruitment of new business. Positive media attention was seen as helpful and needed to be continuous to have impact. Crime and substance abuse were also seen as influences on the creation of partnerships. One respondent stated, “a successful partnership would keep kids in school and lessen daytime crime.”

Funding influenced the partnership, and helped to implement activities faster, and created more of a district-wide impact. It gave education the resources to treat business as clients if needed, and provide funds to pay teachers for extra activities. There was no definitive response as to what role funding motivated which side to pursue the other.
There did not appear to be an organized opposition to the partnership. However, there were isolated incidents of misunderstanding. One view was that people did not understand STW. Some people perceived that job shadowing took time away from the books and was not productive.

One factor that could build a better bond between high school and college was the articulation agreement. This allowed high school students to earn college credits while enrolled in high school. This helped to build cohesion in the educational world. Another education proposal, that a yearlong school calendar would be a step forwards in management of the image of education a true profession. The recent passage of a school bond allowed the addition of air conditioning in 2/3 of the school buildings, and would be a major step in toward achieving the prior goal. Another concern of the education community was the revolving door of the superintendent's office with four new office holders over the last six years, which hurt continuity of leadership.

Historically, special education was the original catalyst to building career awareness among students, similar to the Anita School District experience, and helped to influence schools throughout the state. Looking towards the future, industry would need more of the output of education, students/potential workers. Consequently, business would be motivated to be engaged in the partnership, but it wanted something for its money. To foster this partnership the Clarinda business community must have a level of trust and understanding with education.

Business Perspective

Mission statement: The partnership was to overcome two languages, different cultures, opposing decision-making styles between business and education. The core of
the conflict was that business produced a tangible or intangible product, and education produced an outcome, the student. A side agenda was the need to make more people aware of local employment opportunities. STW was seen as the facilitator that helped to grow the whole concept of the business-education partnership. Therefore, it was critical for the sustainability of the workforce, the expansion of the industry-business base, and for connecting with kids that this partnership must move forward.

The business community universally agreed that the high school was most engaged in the partnership. One respondent went on to say that after the high school, in descending order was the middle school, and then the elementary schools, which started a significant program called Adopt-A-School program in 1991.

Some of the characteristics of involved businesses included business leaders’ children enrolled in the school district, and larger employers with 15 or more employees, were more likely to be in the partnership. An important element to the retention of individual businesses was to manage the expectations of what could be gained by participating.

An important player was the Clarinda Association of Business and Industry (CABI,) which was positioned to play the role of facilitation and coordination of activities including job shadowing. Some of the kinds of businesses and organizations that were most engaged include CABI, NSK, Lisle corp., IA Workforce Development Center, Iowa Western Community College, Hy-Vee Food Stores, Clarinda Academy, the city police department, the banks, and the other large employers.

The Clarinda community was strong because it was committed to the creation of new opportunities and constantly sought opportunities for self-improvement. A
weakness was the sense of community, which could cause loyalty too a fault, and generated resistance to change.

The city of Omaha was recognized as the community that had the greatest impact.

Indicators of academic involvement included commitment to career pathways, and teachers' participation in job shadowing. This was a significant step since it was the first formal migration of educators into industry in some time. In addition, the grant paid the salary of the STW coordinator, which was another catalyst. Business involvement provided business sites for shadowing for teachers and students, as well as participation in school career days. CAB utilized high school students to conduct market research on local shopping patterns during the Christmas season.

The union at the Lisle Corporation was the prominent participant.

Public involvement included participation in STW meetings. Much of the parent population was not independent of other organization involvement and was currently engaged through their professional positions.

Besides shadowing, student participation included maximization of career portfolio books that started in the elementary grades and carry through high school.

Grant funding of the STW coordinator should last for two years and with the acceptance of the concept in the community, which could bring continued funding for the position beyond the grant. One respondent felt that the goal was to achieve 100 percent teacher job shadowing followed by 100 percent participation of juniors and seniors in job shadowing, and the students would support this activity by participation in portfolio development.

Business felt it had received positive coverage in multiple aspects of the process,
and education was also the beneficiary of kind words from the media. In time the partnership would provide business with better-prepared workers and enjoy enhanced productivity.

Business influence over policy setting in education generated mixed reactions. Business may have influence on how the material was taught and guidance counseling was showing awareness of the subject matter. However, the consensus was that there was no major business involvement in educational policy setting. One example was the lack of engagement on math curriculum development. Consequently, curriculum development was perceived to be sacred turf for educators only.

The partnership improved high school graduation rates and improved the students' selection of post-secondary education. It could be argued those students participating in the high school program should be more successful and had lower drop out rates. Students gained work-site learning, which would lead to a stronger understanding of the work world, and society gained a more productive citizen.

The local issue of the lack of quality and quantity of able-bodied workers was a major motivation for business. Businesses operated in a tight labor market and some felt it was tighter than a year ago. While the pool of available candidates shrunk, businesses improved the process for the review of applicants, which effectively raised the standards for employment furthering tightening the job market. In addition during good macro-economic times, companies' expansion plans caused a heightened appetite for workers, which resulted in a tight labor market. This increased competition for employees encouraged businesses to seek nontraditional solutions in recruiting and retaining an adequate employee team, therefore, the partnership was justified. Conversely, extended
bad macro-economic times caused education tighten discretionary spending, and the private sector laid off employees to boost profits. It was rationalized that the former period of economic prosperity encouraged partnerships; the latter instilled an equal sense of urgency to stabilize the core activities of the organizations making partnerships optional or expendable.

Commercial development may be helped in the future by the partnership. Media coverage was generally perceived as helpful and more was needed. One business respondent suggested that the focused attention on crime and substance abuse did help lower the dropout rate for all students.

On whether the partnership influenced access to grant funding, it was generally felt that the process influenced industry to approach education to write the STW grant to pay the expense of the STW coordinator. Some felt that the grant money or pursuit of it actually slowed the process of forming the partnership. The reality was it took time to get everyone’s commitment and to get everything in place to develop partnership activities.

According to one business respondent, to make a partnership work it needed a baseline of economic activities. (There must be some level of commerce to ensure that there will be an adequate number of work-site learning opportunities.) Otherwise, the school would offer Tech Prep, and Career Pathways programs much like the Treynor and Tri-Center school districts provide, because they have inadequate commerce bases. These two communities do not have adequate commerce base to make STW work, but the school districts make career prepping possible using the previously mentioned programs. To combat the internal community’s economic shortfall, the school district needed the
flexibility to recruit companies outside of their defined political boundaries. An example of the latter approach would be the Stanton school district went to Red Oak to recruit commerce partners.

**Conclusion:** The Clarinda business community had been the recognized force of the partnership and had cultivated more input from education. Activities were continuing, but at the time of interview, it appeared that the partnership was still in the development stage.

**Expert Update:** The school STW coordinator resigned and went to work in the state of Iowa’s JAG office. Since her departure, the Clarinda Academy of Business and Industry was the home of this activity. In March 2000, the STW funding was finished, therefore, the experts were unsure of the continuation of this coordination role. The high school had a new principal, who strove to implement the concept of inclusion of the community and business with the school. The shadowing and mentoring ideas had been implemented.

**Council Bluffs Site Visit**

Council Bluffs was one of the last site visits with interviews in the fall and winter during the 1998 –1999 school year. The Council Bluffs Community School District encompassed the cities of Council Bluffs, Carter Lake, and Crescent. It had the largest enrollment of the communities surveyed. The size of the school district and its proximity allowed the researcher to interview more participants than many of the other sites. As a side note, the thesis advisor directed the researcher to limit the sample size, otherwise surveying the entire population could be justified.

The researcher began the process by first contacting an educator, who also served
as the STW coordinator, that he had worked with previously. The STW coordinator suggested a variety of business people and educators, to contact for interviews. Additional people that the researcher had worked with in other capacities were also contacted, because of their expertise in business/education partnerships.

Ultimately, seven people, four educators and three business representatives were interviewed. All educators were at the high school level. There was also a basis towards the inclusion of larger and more active businesses. Some attempts were made to contact smaller business people, but it was impossible to coordinate schedules. Also, the people and the organizations interviewed tended to be a part of the more visible partnerships. A working majority of those interviewed had been employed professionally in both education and business. One business interviewee had even worked with more than one school district, which was consistent with some interviewees in Shenandoah and Red Oak. There were a total of three people in this site visit whose work took them beyond the district’s boundaries and helped to give them more of a regional perspective.

Experts’ opinions of Council Bluffs level included the following rankings:

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**Education Perspective**

Mission statement: The partnership was to bring business and education together to make students comfortable with the world of work. Within the partnership, if enough different messengers told students the same story of what it took to succeed in the work world, then it would make a difference. In essence, the messenger was critical for the
message to be believed.

One formal relationship was with the Tucker Center that was funded, in part, from the S.P.A.C.E. Program through Iowa Western Community College and also contracted with Council Bluffs public high schools, along with two other school districts, for a total of five high schools. High school students, only juniors and seniors, were eligible for the S.P.A.C.E. program. This partnership gave the student significant exposure to the world of work. Besides direct partnership with business, the Council Bluffs school district had another significant partnership with Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors addressed at-risk kids. According to one of the educator interviewees, one of the charges of a good partnership was for education to return value to the business partner. Jennie Edmundson Hospital had a program that encouraged high school students to work part-time with them in exchange for college tuition assistance.

The most engaged level of the school district was the high school, according to two of the four education interviewees, a third person opted for both high school and elementary as equally involved, and the fourth education interviewee did not see a difference. In general, the high school was perceived as having the longest running tradition of partnering. A minority view indicated that the elementary schools had appeal as a partner, not because of possible potential workers, but as possibly more appreciative students with lower expectations. Thirteen of the 20 school buildings, as of December 1998, had at least one formal business partner in the Adopt-A-School program. Thomas Jefferson High School and Tucker Center were the only buildings above the elementary school with formal business partners. Some of the other buildings were in pursuit of individual business partners. Interestingly it was Abraham Lincoln high school, not
Thomas Jefferson High School that had block scheduling in place.

Three of the four educators, in the past six years worked, in the private sector.

Characteristics that attracted businesses to participate in partnership were varied. They included a desire to connect with a designated profession. For example, a hospital may be motivated to match up with health care students, in part, to recruit current workers or create future employees. The Tucker Center had an award winning partnership with its health care students through HOSA and Alegent Health, as well as its culinary arts students who partnered with Harveys Casino Hotel, which to helped to partially substantiate the former statement. Another important characteristic was leadership at the top of the company, which motivated those in the rank and file to make a difference by involvement in the community partnership. The general manager of Harvey’s was a Council Bluffs native, who had returned to his home and was motivated, in part, to make his town better. Finally, it was theorized that proximity between the school and the business was important to facilitate the partnership. There were several examples that helped to partially substantiate that theory. Some of the companies that were mentioned included the following: Alegent Health, Jennie Ed Hospital, Sam’s Club, Bluffs Run Casino, Harveys, Jiffy Lube, Hy Vee Food Store, Holm Plumbing, Jim Hawk Trailer, Martin Orchards, First Bank, Mercantile Bank, Ballenger Automotive, and Lake Manawa Nissan.

The greater Council Bluffs area was in a growth mode, but still possessed the character of a small town in the way its leadership was interconnected. Community volunteers, in general, understood the interconnectedness of different sectors of the economy. Community leadership was supportive of education. Closeness to the city of
Omaha was seen as a benefit because of the expanded options in recreation, health care, and retail.

Council Bluffs had made strides, but continued to suffer an image problem. There was a lack of skilled and professional employment options. There was the challenge of recruitment of more business representatives and parents to be involved with the school system. The community had a significantly large lower socio-economic class and special needs students that placed additional financial pressure on the budget. There was a segment of parents that did not value education in general, and especially higher education.

The city of influence was overwhelming Omaha, but one respondent mentioned Des Moines, Carter Lake, Crescent, and Bellevue that had impact.

Academic activities included teacher site visits and job shadowing. Business participated with representatives at the school, mentoring students, and evaluating students' readiness for work. Unions assisted with payment for appropriate education or training. One particular union representative provided access to key decision-makers, and served on advisory committees. Parents were involved through PTO, booster clubs, and raised money for various projects. In addition, parents were judges in student contests. Student involvement at Abraham Lincoln High School meant that all sophomores were required to do job shadowing, and juniors and seniors do internships. Thomas Jefferson High School students also did work-site learning, and historically the school had a very active DECA club that did a variety of activities, including a student store.

Future plans included students doing more meaningful career exploration
activities. In addition, there was a need to expand beyond traditional institutional partners into other relevant organizations.

Measuring success of the partnership was, in part, monitored through participation of the elementary schools' Adopt-A-School program. In addition, Abraham Lincoln high school began a post-secondary graduate survey and the HOSA program in conjunction with Tucker Center continued to win national awards based upon measurable criteria.

Business as well as education received positive media coverage. The upgrade in the media coverage of the school district could be attributed, in part, to a new person in the public relations department. There appeared to be ample evidence of this coverage after a review of the local daily newspaper and the cable station’s local news coverage, which were the major carriers of Council Bluffs news. This helped to counteract the dominant Omaha-based, which was perceived to be less favorable of the community.

Some of the financial incentives for business to partner included various tax tools, laws, and scholarships. For example, the Community Reinvestment Act made it mandatory for banks to be involved in the community, and it was hoped that this tradition would continue after the law was relaxed. A logistical hurdle to overcome for educational institutions was their tax status. Educational institutions were not designated as charitable organizations; therefore for schools to receive a donation and the giver a tax deduction, a separate foundation must be formed.

There was mixed opinion as to whether students were better prepared to make career decisions because of the partnership.

Whether businesses influenced educational policy or curriculum development
generated varied replies. One perspective indicated that curriculum development was a district issue, so it had not happened yet. A second respondent stated that the input from the advisory committee had some influence over curriculum. A third respondent simply said yes to the question.

Three of the four educational respondents felt that business partners had received customers because of the partnership. For example, Mall of the Bluffs, a retail shopping center, had a cash back program, which allowed shoppers to designate part of the cost of their purchase to any school district in southwest Iowa. Consequently, the Mall of the Bluffs had an indirect cash partnership with both public and private education throughout southwest Iowa. Critics of this plan suggested that the school districts closer to Council Bluffs had an advantage, which realized more cash than the outlying school districts. If this criticism was true it supported the theory for the need of business to be geographically close to education to partner. Both entities received positive publicity from the partnership.

Three of the four education respondents indicated that the partnership had assisted in the receipt of grant dollars.

All education respondents agreed students that had participated in work-site learning would experience a positive impact on overall learning. It was generally agreed that students involved in the partnership improved high school graduation rates and enhanced the decision making process for post-secondary education decisions. It was also generally agreed that the student that had more career exposure realized better employment. Therefore, the outcome of the partnership was students, who made the connection between the class and the world of work.
One education respondent addressed the issue that dealt with the appropriate level of work-site learning. This individual stated that the optimum number of work hours outside of the classroom should be no more 15 to 20 hours per week. Some research indicated the former level of work could actually improve grade performance. However, when the student worked 30-40 hours per week than grades actually suffered. In order to police this situation, one education respondent said a possible solution would be for the employer to monitor student grades. This could help maintain the quality of the learning experience, but it placed the company in a bad situation and was counterproductive to its goal of increasing the size of its workforce with the tight labor shortage.

Organized labor was seen as not engaged, but generally supportive of the STW effort. There was a need to increase their level of awareness. Finally, organized labor needed to identify qualified younger employees to replace older employees near retirement. There was one local union that assisted Council Bluffs Community School District and other school districts throughout southwest Iowa in the grant writing process. In addition, they attended career fairs and served on various STW advisory committees throughout southwest Iowa.

The labor shortage was a definite motivation for partnership involvement. In particular, one education respondent indicated that the Omaha/Council Bluffs metro area had a shortfall of 400 registered nurses. Two of the four education respondents indicated that the partnership influenced the attraction of commercial development, as well as similar findings on the impact of media coverage fostering partnership development. Three of the four education respondents indicated it had influenced the partnerships focus on social issues. Three of the respondents also indicated that educators were
influenced to pursue the partnership because of potential government funds, which helped
to initiate some programs.

There did not appear to be any visible organized resistance to the partnership.
However, sensitivity to the perception of the mission of STW made it important how the
concept was positioned. The STW committee was known as School-To-Career, which
was thought to imply preparation for more education or immediate entry into the
workforce. A more specific example in health care was the need to show a career ladder,
so students could comprehend beyond the entry-level position. Therefore, it was called
“pre-professional” as opposed to vocational training.

The school district, in the high schools, cultivated a history of positive interaction
with business through programs like DECA, and in the elementary schools, the Adopt-A-
School program existed for many years. One educator stated that the connection between
the world of school and the world of work gained more attention by students, if the
reward was believed to be higher pay. However, when educators delivered the former
message it lost its creditability; because, in part, the messenger must be from the world of
work to win over its audience. Another educator said, a successful work-site learning
experience must be a true representation of the world of work, not just to satisfy
administration goals or student curiosity. Finally, a third education respondent said it
was increasingly important for education to partner with all groups to provide diverse
resources, but above all, the partnership should be for the “right reason.” Ultimately,
students needed to be completely prepared for entry into business as well as social
situations.
Mission statement: The partnership reflected three institutions that were involved in either specific schools or programs. The following were the core values of the missions of three partnerships in the Council Bluffs system:

1. Harveys Casino Hotel with Thomas Jefferson High School: The partnership was designed to increase awareness, enrich the relationship, and develop an ongoing dialogue for the mutual benefit of both institutions. This partnership was built upon four operational pillars: recognition, communications, career, and occupational programs.

2. Alegent Health and Tucker Center: Since 1992 Alegent Health (Mercy Hospital) had been the community health business partner for Iowa Western Community College’s S.P.A.C.E. program. All five high schools had students in this health occupations program. IWCC provided the instructors and coordinated the curriculum development, program approval through the state Board of Education, and program articulation so students may be awarded college credit. Alegent Health provided the clinical area/field training setting in over 20 different areas used employees as mentors. This STW program encompassed career awareness and exploration, career planning, and work-site learning through job shadowing.

3. Pottawattamie county government with the Council Bluffs Community school district was to deal with At-Risk students to ensure that these students do not drop through the cracks of society.

A general theme of a business/educator partnership could be best summed up with this quote: “Support of education was essential to maintain quality of life, a healthy environment, and a competitive workforce. It goes hand-n-hand with economic development. Consistent, strong economic development transformed ideas from concept to reality. Strong, positive, collaborative leadership provided opportunities for the growth of our citizens.”

The high school level of the district was the most engaged in the partnerships. One of the business respondents said that he/she had first worked with education through the DECA program in 1977, and that reflected a long-sustaining relationship. This
example helped to reinforce the longevity of the high school interaction with commerce. While some business respondents mentioned the positive activities of elementary schools.

The profile of the business respondents varied, with one who had been an education major in college, but sought a career in business. Another had been involved in a similar partnership in a previous community. All three worked for large organizations with both local and potentially regional impact on commerce, employment, and various other sectors of the economy. Businesses that were involved see this action as a necessary community project. Enlightened employers had the resources and the willingness to let their people get involved. Also, geographic proximity to the school was helpful fostered the partnership.

Strengths of the community included its growth in more services, and becoming more of a tourist destination. A strong historical heritage that the community could promote aggressively. Economic development was seen as headed in the right direction. Weaknesses included an image problem. Some social issues included children, substance abuse, and crime continued to plague the community. Finally, there was a real need to address the infrastructure of the city.

Academic involvement included teacher shadowing and giving presentations to businesses. Business involvement included providing work-site learning, discounts for purchases, scholarships, career day, recognition programs for people successfully involved in the partnership, and business people making presentations in the classroom. Organized labor served on various committees.

Planned or future activities included the expansion of the “Book Buddies,” a program in which business people read to elementary school students, a growth in current
activities, and the development of the overall school-to-career program.

All business respondents felt that business and education had received good publicity. There may be tax advantages for community volunteers and scholarships. The majority view was that it was too early to tell whether the partnership had better prepared students to work.

While business had input into policy setting with representation on advisory committees, opinion was mixed as to whether actual influence on curriculum development had taken place. The majority felt the partnership could generate more customers for the business partner. The majority view was that the partnership helped secure grant funding.

It was still too early to determine whether students had made better post-secondary education decisions. Only one of the three felt that students/workers would receive better employment because of the partnership activities. Yes, some students gained work-site learning, but the majority view was unclear as to whether it helped students improve their overall learning experience. Incidentally, one business respondent said there was a difference of opinion as to what was the best way to facilitate the work-site learning that was productive for the student and fit into the regular routine of the office. One business respondent from the Council Bluffs community stated that job shadowing had benefits, but was disruptive to the operations of the office. The respondent indicated that the internships were more controllable and held more promise in helping industry.

Society gained students that had a better understanding of multiple aspects of a specific industry. For example, students in the health care field were now better prepared
to be health care consumers, even if they do not pursue a career in that profession. In addition, students were better exposed to local opportunities, created more productive citizens that may stay in the community.

The labor shortage was perceived to encourage participation in a partnership. Business leaders were split on whether commercial development was influenced by the partnership and it was inclusive, if it played a role in the recruitment of new companies.

Likewise, media coverage was helpful, but was not a motivation for two of the three business respondents. Social issues could also influence the formation of a partnership. Grant funding was not a significant influence for any of the three businesses to get involved in the partnership. Only one of them indicated that STW influenced one side to contact the other, and in that situation it was with education in pursuit of business.

Conclusion: The Council Bluffs Community School District was the largest school district in the study sample, and it had the greatest access to resources, in contrast to the others. For example, there were three business institutions, whose participation were excellent examples of strong partnerships. However, there were many other situations with little or relatively little partnership activity. This implied that strong partnership activity was not universally integrated throughout the school district.

Expert Update: Council Bluffs was perceived to be heavily activity-oriented and had varying levels of involvement depending upon the individual buildings. The Talented and Gifted program heavily influenced the middle and elementary schools. Kim middle school was a heavy user of Talent Search activities. Teachers, throughout the district, were involved in job shadowing. These were just a few examples of good activities, but it also reinforced the perception that this partnership lacked what was
needed to raise it to the next level. In order to raise the partnership to the next level would necessitate deeper planning and integration of the curriculum along with an evaluation process.

**Shenandoah Site Visit**

Shenandoah located approximately 90 miles south of Omaha and of a similar size community to its close neighbor Clarinda.

The research process began with the researcher contacting the educational person that he had previously worked with to assist in setting up the interviews. Five individual interviews were conducted on a single day in late May 1998, at the end of the 1997-1998 school year. This sample included two educators, one an administrator and the other a high school teacher; as well as two business representatives both at higher levels of their respective organizations with global perspectives. The fifth person who could fit into either category was also interviewed, and that person, was later classified as an educator.

A sixth person, interviewed in the fall of 1998, was an interviewee that helped open access to Red Oak. This interview was classified as a business interview. Both the fifth and sixth interviewees were certified teachers, but their current employer had elements either in its client base or in its mission statement that could be argued to be business-oriented. One was similar to one of the business respondents and had a regional perspective in the coverage area throughout southwest Iowa.

A total of six people, two more than the recommended total, were interviewed because of situational opportunities. The extra interviews not only provided additional insight but also helped to combat the bias of the closeness or familiarity of the respondents in a smaller, tight-knit community.
Ultimately, after careful consideration, the two additional people were divided equally into the educational and business categories for a total of three in each category.

Experts' opinions on the ranking of the community were the following:

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<th>Expert Name</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
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Education Perspective

Mission statement: The partnership linked respective school district goals 280.12 and 280.18 with aspects of school improvement and was consistent with the vision of the Shenandoah business/education partnerships. Consequently, this mission statement was a philosophy of education, not an add-on program. It included a required portfolio 1 class for sophomores, and provided career exploration resources such as job shadowing, mentoring, research, and higher education choices. Consequently, it took the collaboration of community, business, and schools to educate students and prepare them for the workforce of the 21st century.

Much of the contemporary partnerships did not have a long history. Two of the three education respondents indicated that all three levels were engaged or strove to develop partnerships. For example, high school seniors took Multiple Occupation Classes, the middle school was engaged in the mock bank program, and the elementary school with PALS program. One of the three felt that different individuals drove activities at either the high school and the elementary school.

Common characteristics of businesses that participated in the partnership included: large companies, private ownership, a connection to the community but not
necessarily home grown residents, and children enrolled in the school district, might be more important for smaller firms. The bottom-line that these company representatives were movers and shakers of the local business world. In addition, they tended to have strategic vision and saw this as self-preservation for each business, and it was a win-win situation for those involved. Also, the design of the educational program might influence participation. For example, Hy-Vee Food stores preferred first graders, and City National Bank had a special program with eighth graders. Some companies mentioned as active included HY-Vee Food Stores, Mid-American Energy, City National Bank, Shenandoah Economic Development office, Pella Corporation, and Shenandoah Memorial Hospital.

The Shenandoah community possessed unity and cohesiveness guided by a solid chamber of commerce that helped to create strong economic development. Contrasting weaknesses of the community included the lack of constructive activities for the youth to do, and the struggle of the Main Street downtown development was another challenge. Another pending challenge was the projected budget shortfall, in the general fund for the 1998-1999 school year; therefore, additional external grant funds would be needed to carry on some of the partnership activities.

Indicators of academic involvement were consistent with the 280.12 and 280.18 school improvement goals. This philosophy expanded beyond the four walls of the school building into community education and expanded into work-site learning that included shadowing for both students and teachers, and had elementary students help run a restaurant. Finally, the location of the STW coordinator, in the office of the Economic Development /Shenandoah Chamber of Commerce actually led to concrete networking and connecting activities that facilitated and moved the partnership forward. The STW's
coordinator effectively molded, previously fragmented efforts, into a force for implementation of change. (In addition, this was similar to Missouri Valley where the chamber of commerce Executive Vice President along with a high school teacher was joint STW coordinators.) A national study found that the location of STW in state government could influence its success. More specifically, the STW offices’ chain of commands were varied, which included a stand alone option, inclusion within the department of Education, or inclusion within the department of Economic Development in which the latter delivered the largest impact. The latter finding was reinforced in the planning of future Tech Prep activities in which the partnership needed to be positioned as an economic development issue according to the Perkins IIIE Tech Prep Regional plan 2000-2004.

Participation of the business community included: job shadowing, participation on advisory committees, assistance with research, mock interviews and mentoring of students, and industry site visits. Currently, business leaders investigate alternative modes of funding to ensure the continuation of the partnership beyond STW funds.

Union representation was limited to the larger employers. Parental involvement was spilt almost evenly between parents being engaged through their place of work and independent parental involvement. On a larger scale, the partnership tried to get more parental participation in setting building and district goals. At the middle school there was a strong PTO.

Students were directly involved in work-site learning. Schools collected data on every high school student that had a work-site learning experience. Many middle school students participated in job shadowing, portfolio development, and attended required
career prep classes. Elementary students were engaged in PALS programs.

Future activities included expanding student participation in the operation of a business. This expansion could include special needs students, and elementary and middle school beyond the normal PTO activities. It could also include field trips to the elementary school level, and created apprenticeship program for the trades’ profession. A future career fair was on the list for planned activities.

Table 14

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<td>1. Do they (students) want another shadowing experience?</td>
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<td>60%</td>
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<td>2. Caused a change of understanding about the career.</td>
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<td>SA</td>
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<td>7.4%</td>
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<td>3. The actual shadowing experience matched the student’s career choice.</td>
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<td>74.3%</td>
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<td>4. The shadowing experience helped the student learn about careers.</td>
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<td>SA</td>
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<td>52.9%</td>
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*Above the 1998 measurement survey provided these selected results. Student job shadowing took place within a 25-mile radius of Shenandoah, as well as beyond this perimeter was scored as positive. A Likert scale was used rating choices from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest score. The cumulative average scores were 4.49 for the 51 surveyed students that chose the closest sites, and 4.32 for the 19 surveyed students that chose the work-site learning experience more than 25 miles away based upon the 70 students’ responses.

Also, business people were questioned about their experience and asked about
willingness to continue. Initial results were positive, but no final report was available at the time of the site visit.

Publicity had been good for the business members and a minority view believed that more was needed to avoid burnout. Some partners seemed to operate under the opinion that there were tax advantages for donations. However, one education respondent raised the philosophical question of the value of the contribution. For example, did the donation of old equipment for use by students to simulate job situations really prepare students to enter the contemporary world of work? An extension of this question, was whether or not this process prepared students for the world of work? The latter question generated a split of opinion from yes, or it was too early to tell.

Whether business had influence over educational policy setting, particularly curriculum development, was as varied as the three respondents were. One interviewee indicated that business had significant influence, a second stated the influence was only over special education issues with education writing the curriculum, and a final third view that no input was allowed. In spite of how influence was defined the partnership caused new programs and new curriculum to happen.

Publicity for educators had been good from local electronic and print mediums. This was caused, in part, because of business connections, which helped facilitate this outcome. The partnership helped to secure grant funding, which included $110,000 over the past two years through Goals 2000, Assessment and other funding streams in addition to STW. This independent funding helped to make programming district-wide, as well as helping to make an alternative high school possible. In addition to Shenandoah, Clarinda, Red Oak, and Council Bluffs had alternative high schools.
Two of the three education respondents felt the partnership helped students to make better post-secondary education decisions, as well as two of the three education respondents felt that students/workers made an easier transition to the world of work. One of the three felt that work-site learning helped students with overall learning. Society gained a more directed citizen, possessed with a higher level of understanding and confidence that contributed to the community in multiple, positive ways.

Two of the three education respondents indicated that the imbalance between the need of industry and available labor did motivate the two sides to work together. All three felt that the attraction of commercial development had been influenced by the partnership. Government funding caused all entities to pursue one another. Another opinion suggested that education was the aggressor.

Organized efforts in opposition to the partnership were nonexistent. However, there were people worried about the cost of an add-on program. An additional concern was that it interferes with traditional learning. To avoid these concerns and ensure success, it was imperative to have a committed and viable marketing plan that would carry this concept through to its completion. It was imperative that the program had well-placed support to avoid education being perceived as taking and not giving.

Ancillary information showed changes in community leadership, such as a relatively new superintendent, a new high school principal and new assistant high school principal, and the recently reorganized chamber of commerce had impacted the partnership. In addition, during the 1998-1999 school year, the Shenandoah School District was expected to have a $400,000 budget shortfall. While the grant money was earmarked, it could be a communication issue to the public to justify new program s
pending while the overall district headed towards a shortfall.

**Business Perspective**

Mission statement: To enhance educational opportunities, to broaden horizons, and to expose students to the business world, as well as business staff to the world of education and the larger community. In essence, the concept of collaboration between education/business to create a new awareness for students of career opportunities.

It appeared that business opinion was evenly divided as to what level of the school district was most involved in the partnership. One business respondent implied that scheduling functions were more flexible in K-8 than high school, thus made it easier to get more students involved. Another business interviewee suggested that the high school was more engaged due to a longer history of interaction. However, all levels of the district were relatively new to this activity. The district did practice block scheduling.

Two of the three business interviewees had previous career experience in the field of education.

Opinions on what motivated a business to participate varied. Obviously the business would be pro-education. It was a changing world, therefore, businesses needed to get involved for self-preservation in order to secure high performance workers. A locally owned enterprise with membership in the chamber of commerce, and the marketing ability to reach out to potential students/workers fit well in a partnership. Close proximity to the school district was seen as a plus; however, organizations in Clarinda, Red Oak, and Omaha had participated in shadowing activities. Some of the companies mentioned as partners were Hy-Vee Food Stores, City National Bank, Mid-American Energy, the chamber of commerce, Pella Corporation, and Wal-Mart.
Strengths of Shenandoah included a diversified industrial base with a retail hub that provided jobs that sustain a good lifestyle, and close proximity to larger communities. It was perceived as a personal, friendly, and a relatively safe place to live. While the town was cohesive and focused on its strengths, it was also a town built around exclusive social circles and tightly controlled power bases. Therefore, if you were part of the “in group” you could build a coalition that made things happen.

Perceived weaknesses included the previously mentioned, exclusive nature of the power and social bases; therefore, it could be important to have roots in Shenandoah to get things done. The physical infrastructure of the school was universally agreed to be in deterioration. The issues of housing, recreation, and low wage rates were also seen as challenges.

One of the interviewees thought that Shenandoah could easily be compared to other schools in the Hawkeye 10 athletic conference, which included Atlantic, Glenwood, Clarinda, and Red Oak. In particular, the latter two competed with Shenandoah for the recruitment of labor; however, another community college influenced Red Oak.

Indicators of education involvement included one of the educational interviewees, who was the original MOC teacher, that recruited business people for the partnership, and now was working in the grant writing process. In addition, the school district provided block scheduling, PALS, teachers shadowing business sites, and portfolio development. Signs of business involvement included presentations in classrooms, business people personally committed to community improvement, mentoring for students and then shadowing students during their school day. A house building project that utilized students was also mentioned.
Organized labor did have representation in the region primarily with local government workers and Mid American Energy union members. Adults with children in the school district seemed to be a motivation for participation. Parental involvement was accomplished through a variety of service clubs and civic activities, as well as an active PTO.

Future expansion plans of the partnership included a student run business and creation of social activities to bring more people together. In four to five years, the future held great promise, according to the business interviewees.

All business interviewees stated that both business and education had received positive media coverage. Whether students/employees were better prepared to work ranged from a qualified yes to a solid yes. Whether business had influence over policy setting and curriculum development varied from the mere presence of business in education, to helping educators in the planning process, to service on vocational advisory and STW committees appeared to have marginal impact. Two of the three business interviewees indicated that the partnership had brought greater visibility, positive public relations, and more customers. One of the three business interviewees said the partnership could provide the community a competitive advantage.

There was universal agreement that the grant money helped to jump-start the partnership and helped to secure more grant money. It brought a new approach to education with a STW coordinator as the point of contact, who helped facilitate the change. This new philosophy promoted project-based learning and problem-based assessment. Students gained a better understanding of the world of work and began to create their own personal network that may benefit them in the future.
Two of the three business interviewees stated that students would make better post-secondary education decisions, because of involvement in partnership activities. All three also indicated that work-site learning would embellish the students’ overall learning.

Society gained a better citizen, more apt to contribute positively to the larger community. Consequently, fewer young people were headed towards an unsuccessful career path.

Two of the three business respondents felt that labor shortages brought the entities together, and the same two respondents felt that commercial development was also affected. Only one business respondent felt that media coverage influenced the partners, and one felt that crime or substance abuse influenced the creation of partnerships. Two of the three felt that government funding caused education to contact business, while the other single opinion expressed that the pursuit of government funding brought all entities together.

Only one felt that there were groups opposed to the partnership. The composition of those opposed tended to be motivated by religious reasons, or educators who were worried about the weaken curriculum to achieve the partnership’s mission.

Conclusion: In general, STW helped to bring the factions together. The placement of the STW coordinator in the Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development office helped to legitimize this function. Teachers involvement along with administrators helped the process. Another critical success factor was to keep the partnership rules simple. There were several examples of good things caused by the partnership. While good things happened, one could question the length and solvency of these
activities. The district had been successful at the procurement of outside grant money, which was used for several projects included the paid salary of the STW coordinator. However, after funding ended there needed to be a combination of new public/private money to maintain the STW position. This must be done in the wake of a projected budget shortfall. A future consideration included expanding the school year to a 12-month calendar. This action would help to raise the prestige of the profession and make the partnership more effective, according to one respondent.

**Expert Update:** The projected budget shortfall along with the loss of personnel did hurt some of the programs. For example, the automotive program was discontinued, but Tool and Die Works did continue. The STW coordinator, who had a special education teaching certificate, was moved back to the high school from the Chamber of Commerce’s Economic Development office. The historical philosophy of special education influenced the direction of the partnership, which had an educational career plan that was included in the curriculum. This model was now developed to attract as many of the defined “all students” as possible. The partnership, today, seemed to have activities at all levels with PALS in the elementary schools through activities at the high school linking schools to business. In summary, Shenandoah used project-based learning with heavy application of applied academic learning to make the world of work model. As one of the experts indicated Shenandoah and Atlantic were probably the most advanced partnerships in southwest Iowa.
Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation Guidelines of the Eight Site Visits

The major strategic approach of this research was qualitative, however, it also included quantified findings from the field research. These quantified rankings of activities from the eight districts were helpful in describing and possible explaining the qualitative findings. Therefore, the rationales for their inclusion in this research project.

The following definitions helped to describe the 14 criteria for deciding where the districts (site visits) rank, based upon the foundation article and other supporting research. The assumption was that all 14 criteria were of equal weight in the overall evaluation process. A score of 4 represented the highest possible ranking, followed by the next highest ranking of 3, followed by the ranking of 2, and the last ranking of 1. In the case of equally divided expert opinions on what level the community partnership was at, the higher rank would be recorded. The rating and ultimately the ranking of the communities (site visits) incorporated qualitative and quantitative values of all of the collected data.

A. Historical: Historical trends reflected the longevity as well as the significance of the activities. Consequently, new programs, as some interviewees have suggested, cannot effect system change if the funding and the administration were not committed beyond five years. Thus, the findings emphasized more of the district-wide activities that showed the consist engagement of the two entities over time.

Level 4: Ten years and more
Level 3: Five-seven years
Level 2: Two-four years
Level 1: Preliminary start up phase, or zero-two years
B. **Depth:** Traditionally, the partnerships were anchored in the high school. Expansion beyond this level showed stronger district-wide partnerships. Therefore, documented activities beyond one level were important to receive a higher rating.

- **Level 4:** All three levels were engaged, integrated, and coordinated
- **Level 3:** All three levels were engaged
- **Level 2:** Two levels appear to be dominant
- **Level 1:** One dominant level

C. **Connecting/Linking Activities:** These activities were visible reminders that education, business, and students worked together. While successful partnerships could operate with low public awareness, it appeared to be important for the partnership to have public exposure.

- **Level 4:** Restructuring delivery of instruction
- **Level 3:** Example, lobbying for school bond issues
- **Level 2:** Teacher Internships
- **Level 1:** Business representatives serving on school advisory committees

D. **Number of Partnerships:** This was a subjective measurement of recognized, legitimate partnerships. The ranking could be influenced relative to the number of businesses in the community and community size.

- **Level 4:** partnerships numbered 76 or more
- **Level 3:** partnerships numbered 51-75
- **Level 2:** partnerships numbered 26-50
- **Level 1:** partnerships numbered 1-25

E. **Measurable:** School districts need instruments to measure change. This could be in the form of surveys of parents or business partners. Student measurement could be achieved by the utilization of SCANS or Work Keys. Also, evaluation of teachers, students, and administration would be important.

- **Level 4:** Measurements that influence continued funding
- **Level 3:** Two of the three of the academic participants were evaluated
- **Level 2:** One of the three academic participants was evaluated
- **Level 1:** Evaluation under consideration or study
F. Blocking Scheduling: This educational tool allowed students to have more flexibility in class arrangement in order to realize work-based learning. It was most likely to be found at the high school level. Longevity and multiple levels of utilization resulted in higher scores.

Level 4: More than one level of the district was utilized this tool
Level 3: Operational for more than three years and utilized district-wide at one level
Level 2: Implemented in the past two years, used by some of the students
Level 1: Under study or consideration, not implemented

G. Curriculum Development: This was considered a fundamental element of system change. Therefore, this was important at the instructional level for a new way of teaching to be implemented. Consequently, the greater the role that the business partners played in the curriculum development the higher score.

Level 4: Business/Education near equal partners, significant change in the delivery of instruction
Level 3: Education took the lead, but allowed significant business participation, created new programs
Level 2: Education allowed some business input
Level 1: Advisory committee work/business rubber stamp

H. Work-Based Learning: This is a critical tool to help stress the relevance of school to students through work-based learning. Work-based learning activity range in levels of intensity from site visits to job shadowing to students gaining regular employment.

Level 4: JTPA, Welfare to Work, hired students or paid for their continued education
Level 3: Internships (meaningful projects) and teacher/business exchange
Level 2: Shadowing (a few days in length) and mentoring
Level 1: Site visits, business presentation in classroom

I. Grant money: Funding beyond regular sources was critical to paying for the system change. While it was argued that grant money alone did not cause change, however its presence was associated with educational reform. Long-term utilization of multiple sources of funds to pay for this change resulted in a higher score.

Level 4: Grant money had been used for the long-term, it was integrated into the curriculum, personnel had been hired from this funding source
Level 3: Grant money had hired personnel, more of short-term in duration
Level 2: Secured grants, began implementing new programs, staff development, may have hired personnel
Level 1: Attempted to write grants or in the process of securing first grants
J. Turnover of Top School Officials: Leadership at the top was critical for the implementation of change. The superintendent was the key official along with consideration for other relevant administrators (principals). The longer the longevity of administration the higher the score.

Level 4: Superintendent/principals, seven plus years  
Level 3: Superintendent/principals, five years  
Level 2: Superintendent/principals, three years  
Level 1: New superintendent/principal

K. Sustainability: While this rating was based to some extent on qualitative research, it would ultimately be a subjective analysis on whether the partnership could continue into the future. This was a funding issue as well as the partners' participation level.

Level 4: A change in the partners would cause a substantial shift forward in the momentum of the partnership.  
Level 3: A change in either partner or funding may cause the partnership to move slightly forward  
Level 2: A change in either the partners or funding would cause the partnership to stagnate  
Level 1: A change in either the partners or funding would cause the partnership to move backwards.

L. Change Occurred: The formation of the partnership may influence the way the individual entities provide service. Consequently, the depth of the change can be measured.

Level 4: Achievement standards and economic development were coordinated with school reform  
Level 3: Data collection measures/school improvement  
Level 2: Career Building activities  
Level 1: Dialogue was taking place between business/education

M. Number of students involved: This demonstrated the level of integration, acceptance, and usage among students. While it may not be appropriate for all programs to be used by all students, in general, the theory implied the more students involved in the program, the larger the influence of the partnership’s work.

Level 4: All three levels were engaged in the process, change in the curriculum, mandated or optional requirements engaged the highest number of students possible  
Level 3: Applied academics, integrated curriculum, two levels of the district may be involved  
Level 2: Shadowing/ a growing number of students were exercising this option.  
Level 1: Some students doing something, may be an isolated program
N. Innovation: Part of the partnership’s impact provided the catalyst for new ways to use curriculum. The finding of more innovative activities would correlate with a higher level of the partnership.

Level 4: Successfully implemented multiple activities
Level 3: Tried more than one activity and have at least one successful activity
Level 2: Tried one innovative activity, success not a perquisite
Level 1: Standard Faire

Charts of Field Study Results and Expert Opinions

This chart reflected a quantified attempt to classify the results of the researcher found in the field. In addition, the comments of the new local expert team of J, S and P from interviews in February 2000 were included to provide more contemporary information and to guard against mortality of the validity of the data. The following were terms for each of the 14 categories. The prior section provided a more descriptive definition and rating of the terms according to the four levels of the foundation article. Therefore, the scores should be no higher than four, nor should it be lower than one.

Table 15

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<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-N = The 14 categories (questions) that were ranked. See pages 194-198 for more detail.
The second chart was a comparison of the average composite scores of the individual school districts found in the first chart to the average of the experts’ opinion of the status of the school district’s partnership. Again, the foundation article’s four levels were used as the base, therefore, no score would exceed the score of four.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Field &amp; New Expert Score</th>
<th>Original Expert Avg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Oak</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Central</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinda</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expert Average was based on the judged score divided by the number of experts’ scores. In the case of where an expert provided a range of plausible scores, the higher score was chosen. The experts were not asked to rank Red Oak since it was not in Area XIII.
Table 17 was the field average composite score verses the size of the school district and, was also compared to community population. This was an attempt to determine if the size of the community and its proximity to resources influenced the field research scores. Actually numbers would not be used, but the ordinal ranking would be recorded.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School district</th>
<th>Field scores</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Community population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Oak</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenwood</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Central</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinda</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the community population was defined by the city limits, which may not be the same coverage area of the respective school district that it served. Also, Lewis Central community population was estimated due to the unique coverage area of this school district.

All decimals were rounded to the nearest tenth. It was important to note, that these scores were indicative of measurement of activity, not whether a partnership was effective or ineffective. The fourteen categories (questions) ranged in average response from category E (measurement) of a low of 1.1 to category I (grant funding) of a high of 2.8. The average category response was at 2.0.
Chapter 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction.

An articulation of the rationale and motivation of this study was achieved. A brief historical overview of business and education partnerships uncovered varied levels of involvement, the political and economy influences, and how history may have repeated itself with the 1990s STW version of the 1970s Career Education.

The foundation article developed a good outline for the components of each level of the partnership. Critical elements were identified that helped distinguish one level from the next. Consequently, a theoretical ladder was created that explained the potential evolutionary process of the partnership.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature.

The contemporary literature review was rich with more than 40 primary research studies on partnerships; many were from the 1990s, heavily influenced by STW movement. The researcher took care to safeguard against STW influence, and this thesis becoming narrowly defined as a STW study. The federal legislation of Carl Perkins and Tech Prep were researched for their intended mission statements and how they were implemented in the eight local sites. Additional regional and local research studies were included to help make this thesis more inclusive of most partnership activities. While the former intent was realized, an unintended outcome was the discovery of layers of governmental programs and the potential conflict in the various mission statements.
Chapter 3: Methodology.

This had been a long and extensive search of several years to uncover the state of business/education partnerships in eight selected communities throughout southwest Iowa. This, in part, caused a few respondents from the same community to be interviewed in different academic years. The process followed the qualitative and exploratory research design. The major research instrument was structured to ensure measurable comparison, but allowed the respondent ample room to respond. Consequently, modifications were made in the questions that were asked. Limited follow up research was done to ensure that the same basic questions were asked in all sites. While the intent of each site sample was to include two educators and two business representatives, the actual sample size was normally larger. This was due, in part, to opportunities to solicit more opinions related to the study subject. It also followed the theory that the larger the sample size, the better the data. The original three local experts helped to guide the selection of sites; however, due to change in employment one of the local experts left the region. A new local expert was added and helped in the follow up questions.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis.

The pilot site visits, in part, accomplished the refinement of the research instrument. The community partnerships were, generally, rich in multiple activities. While the threat of mortality to the validity of the study was recognized, it was addressed, in part, with the local expert follow up questioning.

An opportunity arose from the qualitative research design to incorporate a limited
amount of quantitative data. The quantitative data generated fourteen characteristics that appeared to construct some patterns relevant to successful partnerships. These rankings allowed for limited comparison between the local experts’ perception of the partnership and the field research. While the interpretation of this data modified the pure qualitative research design, it was concluded that the quantitative data would more accurately measure the depth of the partnerships in the study sample.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

This journey was nearly finished.

Conclusion

Secondary Research/Literature review.

The initial literature review of secondary studies covered 1986-1995 and generated these four questions. What was a business/education partnership? What made them work? What were the best relationships? Would business/education partnership have a measurable impact?

The 21 articles of the initial literature review with the major emphasis on the foundation article helped to build the direction for the thesis. It raised the question on whether or not the term partnership was an appropriate term to describe this phoneme. The influence of leadership styles and the importance those key administrators could have on the process were also mentioned. Another finding of the readings was the apparent lack of an evaluation system to measure the progress of the partnerships. The final finding was the reoccurrence of higher bodies of government involved in the
process. These preliminary findings were further explored in additional readings.

The previous research guided the second secondary research of 19 articles from 1995-1998, and generated three fundamental research questions. What was the current status of business/education partnerships in Area XIII and Southwest Iowa? Did business/education partnerships produce a measurable outcome? What external forces caused partnerships to happen?

During the 1990s, the national literature was dominated by the School-To-Work model. While the presence of this federal initiative in the national literature was expected, it raised some interesting questions. At the time of the literature review, STW was still early in implementation throughout the country, and therefore it was difficult to determine the exact amount of its influence. Work-based learning, prominent in the literature prior to STW, and was also a key element of a successful STW program. One issue was, what was the appropriate level of work-based learning that a student should be exposed to? In an attempt to include all students, it could be reasoned that a very preliminary introduction to the world of work would provide tremendous insight for a student from a home, where the head of household had never worked. However, a student from an entrepreneurial household might find that same experience lacking the criteria of a meaningful project. On a related concept of curriculum development, what should be the appropriate balance between learning by doing, and traditional academic learning? A second fundamental question asked, could the presence of an external governmental program cause the creation of activity simply because of its existence. However, did this new official program simply divert attention away from preexisting programs? Or stated in a more critical way, were the merits of STW justified in the
displacement of current programs? A third question related to a higher goal of STW, was the implementation of career majors into the school curriculum appropriate. The philosophy of career majors restructured the curriculum, to guide students into a particular career path, and that created empowered high school graduates that made better post graduation decisions. Some of the national literature suggested that many schools failed to implement this latter stage. This finding, potentially, weaken the argument that implemented STW programs differentiated itself from other existing programs.

Another finding of this contemporary research effort was the Career Education movement of the 1970s. In many ways STW mirrored Career Education, which was an earlier attempt to better prepare students for the world of work. Both of these recent initiatives were consistent with previous attempts of the federal government, over the past 100 years of public education, to address the needs of the marketplace.

Regional/local studies.

The regional/local studies, in several ways, reaffirmed the findings of the national studies. This included the involvement of higher governmental bodies in educational reform with emphasis on the measurement of activity and less focus on results. Most of these studies indicated that companies and educational institutions were in the preliminary stages of the advancement of the partnership. Those companies that were involved tended to be larger, more sophisticated, and the longer they were in the partnership the more inclined to be supportive. This level of participation tended to be a select number of companies, while the more numerous interactions tended to be limited in-depth participation. The more conventional commitment tended to be the company’s resources, time and expertise.
The study of just a finite number of pieces of federal legislation helped to broaden the researcher’s awareness of the multitude of different programs. These programs helped to foster specific to comprehensive initiatives, as well as assisting designated targeted special populations. In addition, discussion on the various student organizations such as DECA, FFA, and HOSA helped to identify targeted industry interests that were involved with education. These findings were crucial and kept the perspective that there was more to education reform than STW.

Another local finding suggested that Iowa Western Community College (IWCC) played a unique role in the facilitation of these partnerships. More specifically, IWCC administered the Carl Perkins grant for all 31 public school districts in Area XII. This was the only community college in the state of Iowa that made that claim (Local Expert P). This was a 15 plus year-old program that helped to maintain a funding stream for public education to partner with business. In addition, it gave IWCC a unique vantage point to be engaged in partnerships.

This data generated a couple of reasonable assumptions on the definition of a successful partnership. It used a combination of these resources given the time and a motivated leadership to lead to an active partnerships. It also raised the issue of the measurement of the quantity of activities, instead of the measurement of the appropriateness of the activities in causing change.

Field Research.

Each of the eight site visits faced multiple challenges as they attempted to address the new economy. This included the evolution of the local economy, which brought its own strain on the local tax base. The composition of its residents had become more
diverse and less connected to the traditional norms of behavior, thus making it more difficult to build consensus. Solid community career opportunities for the non-business owner were the exception, not the rule for recent graduates. Also, many of the social issues of the larger urban center no longer by-passed these communities. Consequently, the smaller community had fewer resources and a more demanding client base, which made delivery of services more difficult. The inequity in local resources raised the question, “what were reasonable expectations for a community to achieve?”

The three communities with the top cumulative rankings shared several unique characteristics which included that each had well-entrenched STW coordinators or point people that facilitated the connecting activity between education business. One example was the shared STW coordinator duties by a Missouri Valley High School teacher and the Executive Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce. A second example in Shenandoah, where the STW coordinator was physically located in the local economic development office, prior to the budget crunch of 1999. The third example in the community of Anita, the STW coordinator was a member of the chamber of commerce and had long been active in the community, in particular, an advocate for special education, prior to retirement. Some of the other districts may have had a portion of a designated person’s time dedicated to the partnership or were in the process of adding a STW coordinator. Glenwood, in the summer of 1998, lost one of its STW coordinators that had spearheaded the acquisition of multiple grants and another key player in 1999 who regularly interfaced with industry, which was a lone contrast to the rest of communities.

A theory could be developed from the findings, that good partnerships needed
good coordinators whose job descriptions were directed toward the connection of education and business. Therefore, an independent variable, would be the presence or lack of presence of such designated coordinators, which could influence the dependent variable, the outcome of the partnership? However, an explanation for the existence of these coordinators, in part, was that some grant funding must be allocated to pay the salaries of these staff positions. Since the budgets of most school districts were limited to traditional expenditures or mandates from a higher body of government, then in order to pay for these coordinators grant moneys became a perquisite. An alternative theory could suggest that the grant money to pay for the coordinators’ salary was a preceding independent variable to securing a coordinator? Then an extension of the second theory could imply, that the community secured the grant money to create a funding stream for coordinators, and their existence was a by-product of the process and not a cause for success?

Grant funding while not empirically the sole reason for the pursuit of a partnership, it could not easily be separated from the process. Consequently, it may be difficult to distinguish what were the independent and dependent variables of grant funding and the process to form and maintain a partnership. An important note, the mission of the funding governmental body to implement a certain set of activities, which may or may not be in agreement with the goals of the local education/business partnership that received the funds could cause conflict. These general findings suggested that educators tended to see the proceeds positively in the process, while business was generally mixed on the importance of the funds.

Students seemed too generally favor the opportunity for work-site learning. This
was justified, in part, because of student-focused organizations of DECA in Council Bluffs, HOSA in Missouri Valley as well as Council Bluffs, and FFA in Anita, Red Oak and Glenwood provided an outlet for this activity and a support system. Surveys of students in Missouri Valley, Anita and Shenandoah indicated that the majority of those surveyed did want more access to work-site learning. Finally, Lewis Central and Clarinda made plans to expand their offerings.

High schools appeared to be the most active level of the school district with the possible exception of the Lewis Central and Red Oak school districts. This was consistent with much of the national literature. Both Lewis Central and Red Oak school districts were exceptions because two levels of the district equally involved in partnerships.

There appeared to be a connection between a meaningful minimum mass of commerce and the ability to build partnerships with the school district. Close proximity, relative ease of access to the other party, and other affinity factors influenced the scope of the nature and the strategic direction of the partnership. However, all eight school districts illustrated the willingness to go outside of its legal geographic boundaries to secure business partners.

Education, in general, felt that business was more involved in the curriculum development than business felt it was involved. Education was more likely to state that the partnership had received favorable publicity and placed a higher premium on it, than did business representatives.

Education was generally perceived as the pursuer or facilitator in the partnership in Glenwood, Anita, and Missouri Valley. While business was more the initiator in Red
Oak and Clarinda. The remaining three communities appeared to have equitable participation by both parties or the pursuer was not identified. This split in the sample on who was the catalyst ran contrary to the national literature, which suggested that education was more aggressive.

While the business community was interested in being a good corporate citizen, most were interested in the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the workforce through the partnership. This finding was consistent with the national studies. A small minority of companies primarily from Shenandoah and Glenwood also saw the partnership as a potential growth in the customer base. In particular, Council Bluffs and Lewis Central business felt the partnership might provide a side benefit of improved public relations.

Outcome measurements from the partnership, in some districts, were consistent with some of the district's school improvement goals. However, the general lack of attention to the measurement of the partnership’s output was consistent with the national literature. A plausible explanation could be, in part, due to the newness of the program or the lack of agreement of what the outcome should be.

Finally, the concern for social issues, while not expressed implicitly was an underlying concern of many districts. It could range the gambit of substance abuse, the division that age dispersion among the residents caused, the side effects of economic growth or the changed complexities of the district that required the governing institutions to rethink strategies on solving these issues.
Expert Comparison.

The composite average score of 2.1 of the field research was very similar to the expert's average score of 2.3. These scores seemed to be consistent with too slightly higher than the foundation article's findings. This suggested that level 1 partnerships were the most popular and that level two partnership provided some impact. While the previously mentioned 14 criteria were not perfect in their scoring, this was an attempt to place some quantitative substance to the qualitative data. This was not a violation of the mission of the study, rather it was meant to be a supplement to the research effort, and laid the groundwork for future hypotheses.

The data suggested that none of the districts had an overall level four ranking. However, five of the eight districts had at least one criterion that was at the level 4. The level 4 ranking was perceived to be the ideal ranking, but tended to be found at larger political bodies according to the foundation article. As mentioned earlier, five of the eight districts scored at level 3 for work-based learning. This was based upon the assumption that work-based learning was helpful and was appropriate for all socio-economic groups, and cut across size of community and access to the critical mass of commerce. Interestingly, the two smallest districts had 2 of the 3 highest composite scores compared to the largest districts.

Additional analysis found that the criteria (B) depth of the partnership, (C) connecting/linking activities, and (E) measurable all achieved a level 1 correlation for the communities of Red Oak, Glenwood, Lewis Central, Clarinda, and Council Bluffs. More specifically, when compared to (B) depth, and (C) connecting activities were alike in seven of the eight communities, which illustrated these criteria at level 1. Conversely,
(E) measurable, (H) work-based learning, (I) grant funds, and (L) changed occurred were either at level 3 or 4 for the communities of Missouri Valley, Anita, and Shenandoah.

There appeared to be a high correlation between the scores of (F) block scheduling and (M) number of students involved for most of the eight communities. Contrasting, there appeared to be no correlation between (A) historical, and (K) sustainability of the partnership. In addition, there appeared to be little correlation between (I) grant funding, and (K) sustainability.

The least amount of dispersion between the scores for all eight communities was found for the criteria of (A) historical, (H) work-based learning, and (L) change occurred. Contrasting, the greatest range of scores among all eight communities was found for the criteria (D) number of partnerships, and (N) innovation.

Limitations.

Qualitative research was a newer and less formal approach than the quantitative research. Because of its adherence to build a case of formal statistically sound data, the quantitative approach was perceived as the superior option. Therefore, the qualitative research was considered to be suspect whether to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Since this was an exploratory research effort, which attempted to identify what was present. The question became what were the important variables? The outcome could be an exercise in futility with no visible outcome or possible misidentification of the critical variables.

Field research as a research tool gathered in-depth information. A drawback included a lack of a consistent method in that asked questions and recorded responses. There was a natural tendency for the interviewer to go through somewhat of learning
curve. While the learning curve was a natural evolutionary refinement to the collection of data, it could cause bias and loss of objectivity in the process. Tactics in the field originally included the use of recording responses with a tape recorder. However, after mixed resistance to the technology it was concluded to continue without the presence of the recorder. Some site visits included the usage of second person to record information.

The field research approach was chosen because of the potential in the retrieval of data. However, the logistics of field research did limit the selection of plausible sites due to geographic, time, and expense constraints. The initial contact person in each community was generally an individual that the researcher had previously known in a professional capacity. This person was thought to be an influential person connected to the implementation of STW. This contact person identified other relevant people whom participated in the partnerships. While this port of entry into the communities did build a suitable portfolio of contacts, it laid the foundation for two possible limitations. One, did it create a sample pool of respondents who were predisposed in favor of the STW model? The research process reviewed a contemporary examination of business/education patterns of involvement; it could have overlooked individuals who had a long history with previous partnerships. Two, could expansion beyond the people who were not in the first sample of interviewees provide additional insight into the study?

Conventional wisdom in data collection implied two concerns about the non-respondent population. One, people who have participated in the current partnership, but were not included in the sample may have provided additional insights. Two, another non-respondent population included those business representatives and educators who do not participate in partnerships may also provide an interesting perspective. Should there
have been more effort in making sure that all levels of a school district be included in the study sample? It was quite possible that, if other people or additional personnel had been interviewed the scores for the respective communities may have been higher or lower. Additional time or extra interviewers would have addressed this latter issue.

More questions could have been asked relative to subject areas to help determine the full extent of the partnerships. In retrospect, what questions were not asked may have been a critical consideration. While the researcher had been employed in both fields, there was a lack of formal training in the field of education. Consequently, many potential questions were not asked. In particular, what were the barriers to the implementation of ideas? What were the measurements of success? What activities voluntary or involuntary by students and educators made a difference?

More recruitment of communities that were thought to be a part of the fourth level would have added more balance to the communities studied. Possibly, Elk Horn and Atlantic could have been included. The former community did not have a well-defined port of entry and due to logistical scheduling conflicts the latter community was not included in this study.

While the educational respondents gave useful insight into their own experiences, it may have been too much to ask them to rate other levels of their district. Future recommendations would be for representatives from each level of the school district to be surveyed.

There were additional threats to the validity of the study. For example the maturation of the collected data was of concern. It took two years and parts of two academic years to complete the field study. This prior concern was addressed in a
February 2000, update with local experts on the respective communities were interviewed. Respondent bias was also of concern. Justification, did the respondents give the answers they thought the researcher wanted to hear? Was there respondent bias when some communities had two people asking the questions, as opposed to having one person conduct the interview?

Finally, the fourteen criteria were assumed to be of equal and relevant importance in helping to rank the communities. Therefore, communities were sought that were perceived to have sound methods, that improved the process and identified pertinent characteristics, and that at least two schools would fit into each of the four levels.

**Integrated conclusion.**

1. What was the current status of business/education partnerships in Area XIII and southwest Iowa?

The composite score of the eight sites average was 2.1 score, which could be interpreted as slightly higher than the norm of the foundation article. So on average it could be argued that the eight sites average was above the national average. Also at level 2, that the most meaningful change occurred. Contrasting that with no districts with a score at level 4, which suggested there were good examples of partnerships, but none at the highest level. National research implied that the state of Iowa, in the aggregate, was doing better on the whole than compared to the rest of the country (National School-To-Work Opportunities Office, 1997).

2. Did business/education partnerships produce a measurable outcome?

Change, in a measurable sense, was a subjective test. That was not meant to be a confusing statement, but rather it was a testimony to the difficulty to define this
subject. One, the measurement methods appeared not to be in place at the community level. While practitioners would argue that measurement was in place, it did not appear to address the mission of the partnership. Instead it seemed to be more focused on recording activity. Consequently, an increase in activity was recorded. However, the researcher failed to quantify how many students were actually involved. Two, it was early in the process, therefore, not enough time had elapsed for change to take place. Some pundits suggested that it took five years to make a system change (Missouri Valley interviewee) and (Local Expert S). Three, there did not appear to be agreement on what was to be accomplished.

3. What external forces caused education/business partnerships to happen?

The strong presence of grant money suggested that this variable be interwoven in the process. For example, this pointed to the deep, integrated grant system beyond STW, where Perkins, Tech Prep, and Work Start were already used throughout southwest Iowa. However, as previously stated it was difficult to determine if it was a cause or an effect.

Beyond the researcher's original hypotheses of the impact of external funding there were several spheres of influence. There appeared to be a necessity for a minimum mass of commerce present in the community for the partnership to work. If there was not sufficient commerce present in the community, then it required leadership to cultivate what was within the political boundaries and realize the potential beyond those legal guidelines. Both the Clarinda Association of Business and Industry study and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce study illustrated the relative small number of active businesses that participated in the partnerships. The follow up with local experts helped to point out a few examples where the change in community leadership either helped or
hurt the success of the partnership. In addition, the presence of a coordinator designated to the cause was helpful. This helped to reinforce the importance of strong local leaders. Historical longevity according to the national literature was important, but was not substantiated in the research. Finally, the labor shortage influenced business to seek out new ways to find employees and, the partnership with education seemed to be the solution. This was consistent with the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (1997) report, and much of the national literature.

Local Expert P indicated that there were three basic variables that make a partnership work. Philosophically the administration must buy into this mission. They would determine whether resources were in place to facilitate this process. Two, traditional vocational teacher involvement in the integration of curriculum would need to be expanded to the arts and science teachers to achieve the concept of all students. Third, the coordinator must be in place and motivated to make things happen. Leadership by doing would build the trust of the other people at the school building. So when the coordinator could not be directly engaged in the activity, other people could move the activity forward in their absence.

This researcher theorized that there was a six-part evolution to build and to grow a partnership. One, there must be constructive conversations between the entities. If there was no meaningful development of the dialogue, then trust could not be cultivated and no mission statement would evolve as a common point of agreement. Two, availability of funding must be present. There was a demonstrated historical pattern of seed money from the government as a catalyst. School district budgets were tight and a potential political tug-of-war. Normally, business did not want to invest in something that might
not have a positive return on its investment. So, therefore, outside money was a necessary perquisite. Third, planning and coordinating would only take place in the third level of the partnership with solid leadership. Repeatedly, it was stated that in order for meaningful change to take place it would take three to five years (Missouri Valley interviewee and Local Expert S). Consequently, consistent leadership must shepherd in this system of change and manage it till its conclusion. Four, in order to effect change there must be activities that followed the STW model of linking business and education. In addition, there must be a format that allowed for integration of new curriculum beyond the classroom walls. Five, meaningful measurement for student success was critical. It should be easily understood, and focused on measured changes in outcomes, not on the volume of activities. While the latter could be important, there must be objective agreement what the partnership was to achieve in order to have creditability. The sixth and final element was reinforcement. Without reinforcement the partnership was not sustainable. This reinforcement could take the form of positive media coverage, teacher and business representative performance evaluations, parental commitment to make these activities a requirement of student graduation.

Recommendations.

Additional communities that should be included in the next study are Walnut, Avoca, Riverside, Elkhorn, and Atlantic. All of these communities had positive activities and merit future review. Various logistic constraints did not allow for their selection. Also, a review of the eight studied sites in five years would help to validate the 14 characteristics of a partnership.
Could swings in the economic cycle influence participation in partnerships? It appeared that business, in part, was motivated in the 1990s to partner with education because of the labor shortage. A review of history demonstrated that American government had repeatedly attempted to address issues of the marketplace with changes in the delivery of educational services. Then, it could be theorized there was a correlation between economic cycles and the likelihood of the formation of partnerships.

Leadership, designated personnel to coordinate activities, and funding were expressed as important to the process. A follow up study may be warranted to discover more about funding and its role in the process. In addition, what kind of structures needed to be in place in the school building to ensure that a partnership would work? This could include the role of administrators, teachers, and counselors? Could vocational training or the specialization of these three-occupation groups influence the success of the partnership?

Career majors, a key component of the STW movement, appeared to lack proper representation in this study. A review of its status might be worthy further examination.

The question of how many or what percentage of the students was involved in learning activities merited more discussion. The STW baseline survey (1995) was a good foundation of data for this pursuit. The report implied that in early 1995, many school districts in Area XIII were involved in various programs. However, at first review, the aggregate number of participating students did not seem as equally impressive. This may indicate that these programs in 1995, were in the early stage of implementation or were not universally accessible to students, or it was difficult to measure who was involved. Another supposed benefit to having a coordinator was the
development of richer and more appropriate internship options, than if the student discovered his/her own work based learning experience. The LaGuardia College studies supported this statement.

Finally, a study on measurement of partnerships was worthy of pursuit. State of Iowa funding for STW had ended for local communities, and this would be a relevant time to review this program. More specifically, in measuring if students were beneficiaries of STW activities? Also, measuring results and comparing the volume of activities to see if there was a correlation in student outcomes. Another measurement could explore the appropriateness of the activity for the student, and did it enhance student learning?
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A
APPENDIX B
### S.P.A.C.E.

Programs in Operation FY98 (82 total programs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Sites</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>Council Bluffs, Essex, Farragut, Hamburg, Shenandoah, Sidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Construction</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Maintenance</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE-HS</td>
<td>Council Bluffs, Elk Horn-Kimballton, Essex, Farragut, Hamburg, Sidney, Underwood, West Harrison, Woodbine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE-JTPA</td>
<td>Anita, Atlantic, AHST, Boyer Valley, Fremont-Mills, Griswold, Shenandoah, Treynor, Tri-Center, Underwood, West Harrison, Glenwood, Lewis Central, Logan-Magnolia, Malvern, Nishna Valley, Riverside, Shenandoah, South Page, Treynor, Tri-Center, Walnut</td>
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<td>Child Care</td>
<td>Council Bluffs, Elk Horn-Kimballton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Aided Drafting</td>
<td>AHST, Fremont-Mills, Griswold, Shenandoah, Treynor, Tri-Center, Underwood, West Harrison, Glenwood, Treynor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Bus. Applications</td>
<td>Council Bluffs, Elk Horn-Kimballton, Essex, Farragut, Hamburg, Malvern, Riverside, South Page, Treynor, Tri-Center, Walnut, Woodbine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Study</td>
<td>Elk Horn-Kimballton, Hamburg, Woodbine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service</td>
<td>Boyer Valley, Council Bluffs, Shenandoah, Walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Careers</td>
<td>Council Bluffs, Hamburg, Missouri Valley, Nishna Valley, West Harrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Engineering</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Shop</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Office</td>
<td>Glenwood, Treynor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Technology</td>
<td>Anita, AHST, Council Bluffs, Farragut, Glenwood, Missouri Valley, Riverside, Sidney, Tri-Center, Underwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television/Radio Production</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>Council Bluffs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
Very Rough Draft of Field Questionnaire

(The following is the four major sections that could be addressed in the field visits. They relate to the four areas of the thesis on business/education partnership study. I appreciate your feedback.)

I. Status of Partnerships
   a. This would be a description of the current partnership.
   b. Indicators of a partnership
   c. Activities
   d. What is the future of the partnership?

II. What do they want the partnership to accomplish?

III. Forces external & internal that create, maintain & foster the partnership
     What motivates the partners to be involved?

IV. Historical perspective on the interaction between business and education please state
     Any previous programs that you are aware?
Actual Research Instrument

A. Demographic Profile of interviewee:

- Name

- Current Job Title

- Characteristics of the interviewee’s Employer:
  Name & address
  a. size
  b. strengths
  c. weakness
  d. Why is your organization involved in these partnerships?

- Number of years employed in this field

- Prior experience unrelated to current employment

- Other affiliations or civic groups that the interviewee belongs to

- Interviewee’s perception of his/her community
  a. Strength/opportunities
  b. Weakness/challenges
  c. What communities influence your city?
Section I. **Status of partnerships**

a. Describe your business/education partnership? What is its mission/purpose?  
**KEY QUESTION:**

b. What organizations are involved? What people & by job title are critical to the process? (Section B: will help to ensure I have targeted the correct groups.)

1. What level of the school district is most involved? Longest duration? Why?

   a. Does your school district practice block scheduling?

2. What kinds of businesses are most likely to be involved?
   A. Shared Common Characteristics

   B. Geographic Distance

3. Could you name other communities that have prominent business/education? activities? What good things are they doing?
c. How would you describe the "activities" of your partnership?

1. Indicators of Educational involvement?

2. Indicators of Business involvement

3. Indicators of Organized Labor involvement

4. Indicators of Parent involvement

5. Indicators of Student involvement

d. Planned or desired future activities of the partnership

Section II. What do they want the partnership to accomplish? Discuss methods of assessment?

"Measurable" outcomes of the partnership: Must demonstrate improvement or change from previous situation. How do you measure success?

a. What do the businesses get from the partnership?

1. Have you received favorable Publicity from the partnership?

2. Are there tax advantages to the partnership?

3. Do you find the employees better prepared to work?
4. Does this partnership allow influence over policy setting of educators?
   (curriculum development?)

6. Does the company gain more customers?

b. What do the educators gain?
   1. Received favorable publicity from the partnership?
   
2. How has this partnership influenced your access to government funding?

3. What resources have the partners contributed to the partnership?

4. Improved high school graduation rates after the partnership?
   a. What was your high school graduation rates prior to the partnership?
   b. More students attending post secondary education? (Or choosing a better fit?)

5. Created new programs/curriculum

6. A new philosophy in teaching?

   c. What do the students gain?
      1. Do the graduating students obtain better employment?
      
2. Is there an increase in students attending post secondary education?

3. Did the student gain a work-site learning experience?

4. How do the students improve their overall learning because of this experience?

5. Other
d. What does Organized Labor gain?

1. Received favorable publicity from the partnership?

2. Increased access to influencing curriculum development?

3. Increased & enhanced employment opportunities for its membership?

4. Other

d. What does your local community (society) gain?

Section III. Identify additional forces external and internal that could influence the development, maintenance & foster the partnerships.

a. What “other or new” personalities are key to this partnership?
   Or stated what would happen if these people were no longer involved?
   (Who & what will continue the partnership after the funding (grant $) is gone?

b. Are there local environmental issues that caused this partnership?

1. Does the shortage of quality & quantity of labor encourage people to work together?

2. Does the attraction of commercial development influence these partnerships?

3. Does media attention foster & maintain these partnerships?

4. Do social issues like crime or substance abuse influence the creation of partnerships?

5. What is the historical relationship between business & education?
c. Did the infusion of government funding influence participation?

1. If so, whom did it cause to act... To Whom?

2. What are the sources of government funding?

Business?

Education?

Another group?

Section IV. Organizations in opposition

1. Please name people & organizations that are opposed to these particular business/education partnerships?

2. What is it (program/activity) they are opposed to?

3. Why?

Section V. What concluding comments do you have about your partnership and/or partnerships in general?
To: Local Expert H

From: Merrill

Subj: School Districts to visit for my Thesis
      Topic: The current status of Business/Education Partnerships in Southwest Iowa

Date: January 5, 1998

You may remember that I spoke with you this past Fall about school districts and communities that may be good candidates to do field interviews. Attached you will find my interpretation of our discussion. What I am trying to identify is the varying levels of business and education partnerships at the local level. I would welcome your thoughts, on whether I have these communities correctly categorized. They are targeted by low involvement (level 1) through high involvement (level 4).

I plan to begin my field visits with the major educational contact in each community. Then I will attempt to contact other relevant community spokespeople.

In addition, I would like to run a pilot study in a community that I have not mentioned just to work out any potential problems in the research instrument. If you have any suggestions on what might be a good ideal candidate for a test community, I would also welcome that information.

I will contact you to see what are your recommendations. Thanks in advance for your input.
APPENDIX E
Potential list of contact people involved in business/education partners:

A. Business/Industry

1. Name ____________________________ 
   Co. Name __________________________
   Address ____________________________
   Phone ______________________________

2. Name ____________________________
   Co. Name __________________________
   Address ____________________________
   Phone ______________________________

B. Education

1. Name ____________________________
   School _____________________________
   Address ____________________________
   Phone ______________________________

2. Name ____________________________
   School _____________________________
   Address ____________________________
   Phone ______________________________

B. Organized Labor

Name ________________________________
Labor Union __________________________
Address ______________________________
Phone ________________________________
C. Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Address</th>
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D. Civic Leaders/Parents

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Daytime address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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E. Other Key Participants

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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APPENDIX F
February 14, 1998

West Harrison Public School District
Route 1
Box 209F
Mondamin, IA 51557

Dear:

I wanted to follow up on our previous phone conversation. Enclosed you will see a copy of the working draft of my field research instrument. I am looking forward to visiting with you by phone on Monday, February 23 at 10:00 A.M. It is my hope that we will discuss some of the elements of the survey that do apply to West Harrison, as well as gaining your overall insight into how education/business partnerships could work.

As you stated earlier, West Harrison does not have access to some of the elements that foster and maintain these partnerships. I welcome your comments on what are some of the barriers in your community. I am also interested in what existing committees, groups or citizens that are supportive of education in your school district.

Again, thank you for your time and expertise. I will be in touch on Monday, February 23.

Sincerely,

M. Merrill Johnson
716 Hazel Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
(712) 325-1929

Enclosure: Working draft of research instrument
Envelope
APPENDIX G
February 8, 1998

School-To-Career Coordinator
Abraham Lincoln High School
1205 Bonham Avenue
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Dear:

RE: Possible meeting on Business/Education partnerships

I am currently working on my thesis to complete the Specialists Degree in Adult Education through Drake University. The thesis topic addresses the contemporary state of Education/Business Partnerships in Southwest Iowa. Upon completing my secondary research on activity at the National and State levels, I am now directing my efforts to measure the interaction at the local level.

Having worked with you in the past on School-To-Career issues, I know you to be very familiar with the subject of building strong local partnerships. (I am currently employed at Iowa Western Community College as the Director of Career Employment and Development. Previously, I worked for the college in the School-To-Work area.) I would greatly appreciate your consideration in assisting me on this research project in two areas.

One, I would like to set up an interview with you on business/education partnerships. The format would be a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. In order to ensure that I correctly record your comments, I would like your permission to tape-record our interview. If this meets with your approval, I will send you an advance copy of the questions to help familiarize you with the content. Two, in order to better cultivate the appropriate community leaders in these partnerships; I would greatly appreciate your recommendations of other relevant people from education and industry that I should include in this interview process. It is critical that all participating sectors of the economy be included in this study.
To assist me with identifying key players in the various Council Bluffs Business/Education partnerships please complete the enclosed forms and return them to me in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

I will be contacting you to seek your permission to start this field research. Thank you in advance for your help. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Regards,

M. Merrill Johnson  
716 Hazel Street  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503  
(712) 325-3394 Iowa Western Community College  
(712) 325-1929 Home  
MERRILLMPA@aol.com E-mail Address

Cc.  
Associate Dean, Iowa Western Community College  
School-To-Work Coordinator, Iowa Western Community College  
Chuck Greenwood, Ph.D., Adult Education, Drake University

Enclosures: Business/Education Forms  
Return Envelope
Suggested Interview Schedule
Missouri Valley
For
Tuesday, December 15, 1998

Kathy Purcell... Noon
Missouri Valley Chamber of Commerce

Mike Kenealy... 1:30 PM
First National Bank of Missouri Valley

Gary Thune...... 3:00 PM
Vulcan Industries

Again, I appreciate your willingness to assist me in this research. All individual responses will be collected and reported as a community's aggregate overview of the current status of its business/education relations.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at (800) 432-5852 Ext. 394

Thanks, Merrill Johnson
APPENDIX I
December 12, 1998

Council Bluffs Community Schools
12 Scott Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503-0729

Dear:

Your input is critical for this research project.

I appreciate your willingness to meet with me on Friday, December 18, 1998 at 9:00 AM. I anticipate that the survey will take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

If possible I would appreciate any background information you may have on the school district and its business/education partnerships.

In summary, I am working on my thesis that is attempting to survey the contemporary status of education/business partnerships in Southwest Iowa. Your insight will help explain the local partnerships in your community. I have enclosed a working draft of the research instrument to help prepare you for our interview. The exact questions should follow a format similar to this survey.

Please complete the demographic profile page on your professional career. I will pick up that information on the day of my visit.

Again, thanks for your assistance as I work towards finishing my thesis, and realizing my Specialist Degree in Adult Education at Drake University. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Regards,

M. Merrill Johnson
716 Hazel Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
(712) 325-1929 Home
(800) 432-5852 ext. 394 Work
MERRILLMPA@aol.com E-mail

Enclosures: Working Draft of Survey
Professional Demographic Profile

cc. IWCC School-To-Work Coordinator
    Dr. Chuck Greenwood, Thesis Advisor, Drake University