

# **Boston-Harvard Leadership Development Initiative (LDI)**

## **Year Four Evaluation**

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San Francisco, CA

August 2001

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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Boston-Harvard Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) Year Four Evaluation**

### **Executive Summary**

The Boston-Harvard Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) is a five year program designed to build the leadership capacity of educators in the Boston Public Schools in order to enhance overall academic achievement for students. Begun in 1997, the LDI is a partnership of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Boston Public Schools, with funding and support from FleetBoston Financial Foundation and Harvard University.

ROCKMAN *ET AL*, an independent research firm conducted an evaluation of Year 4 of the LDI program during the 2000-01 academic year. The evaluation focused primarily on school participants who were members of their school's Year 4 LDI teams, and on Year 4 program activities. The evaluation conducted an initial assessment of the reach and impact of the LDI program on the twelve LDI schools and its participating school team members, and the extent to which LDI activities reinforce and enhance the whole school reform initiatives in the Boston Public Schools. The evaluation also assessed the degree to which the program contributed to the professional development of the Harvard graduate students serving as LDI consultants to the schools, as well as enhanced the faculty and programs of the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The data shows the LDI program to be one of value to teachers, administrators, GSE consultants, and Harvard faculty, putting educational theory into practice within the context of school reform. Though the motivation and objectives of each of these groups differed, all expressed the benefits of being part of a long-term project that provided a strong foundation for collaboration and exchange of ideas.

#### **Administrator Benefits:**

- Effectiveness – Overall, administrators noted improvements in their team leadership, communication, shared decision-making, interpersonal, and conflict resolution skills.
- School Community – Administrators noted an increased ability to work well with teachers and staff.

#### **Teacher Benefits:**

- Empowerment – Teachers expressed a heightened sense of control over change in their schools. Many teachers reported an increase in their understanding of school leadership and their role in implementing change.
- Professional Growth – Many teachers reported an enhanced use of instructional strategies, a sense of accomplishment when implementing best practices in their classrooms and an increased usage of theory to inform their teaching practices.

**School Site Benefits:**

- Focus on Critical Issues - Program events focused on critical issues in whole school reform and the BPS program.
- Six Essentials - LDI participants reported that their engagement in the program has facilitated improvements in the whole school reform program and the six essentials of BPS school reform.
- Professional Network – Both administrators and teachers valued the professional relationships fostered by school teams and felt that LDI increased their professional networks with colleagues at other schools.
- Focus on Instruction – A number of LDI participants reported a more positive and collegial climate focusing on instruction.
- Outcomes of Program Participation – Participants described how the LDI program strengthened the effectiveness of the instructional leadership team, helped schools interpret and plan action steps around state standardized testing, and stimulated site initiatives related to school change efforts.

**HGSE Consultant Benefits:**

- Training – Consultants emphasized the advantages of experiencing a program that allowed them to put theory into practice. This challenging, real-world context provided valuable experience and insight into integration and applied school change.
- Career Development – The experience gained in the schools provides consultants with the basis for further research and/or an impetus for working in schools as administrators or teachers.

**Harvard Faculty Benefits:**

- Research – LDI connects faculty and their research to practice, and serves as a reminder of the complexity and problems faced by teachers and administrators. Faculty asserted that this connection between theory and practice produced better-informed and more relevant research.
- HGSE Program Offering – Faculty noted the benefits of participation in LDI; HGSE students gain a real-world perspective on integration and applied social change. Students gain insight that assists many to further defining the direction of their career.

**Successful Design Features of the LDI Program:**

- Design and Implementation of Program - Key features and components of the program were valued by all program participants: multi-year commitment to schools, relevant and high quality program offerings, responsive and respectful relationship established with school participants, and informed yet independent perspective from outside the individual schools and school district offered by LDI project staff, consultants, and Harvard faculty.

## Introduction

In June 2000, the Boston-Harvard Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) hired ROCKMAN *ET AL*, an independent research and consulting firm that specializes in school reform, to conduct a program evaluation. The evaluation that ROCKMAN *ET AL* conducted during the 2000-01 academic year, Year 4 of the LDI, focused primarily on school participants who are members of their school's Year 4 LDI teams, and on Year 4 program activities. The evaluation conducted an initial assessment of the reach and impact of the LDI program on the twelve LDI schools and its participating school team members, and the extent to which LDI activities reinforce and enhance the whole school reform initiatives in the Boston Public Schools. The evaluation also assessed the degree to which LDI school participants found the LDI useful and valuable in their whole school reform and school leadership efforts, and identified program characteristics that were regarded as enhancing the program's value.

In addition to the focus on the school participants from the Boston Public Schools, the evaluation examined the value of the LDI program to the Harvard partner, the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The evaluation assessed the degree to which the program contributed to the professional development of the Harvard graduate students serving as LDI consultants to the schools, as well as enhanced the faculty and programs of the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## Description of Year 4 LDI Schools and School Participants

Year 4 Schools: A total of twelve Boston public schools participated in the LDI during Year 4. The twelve schools were quite diverse, spanning the full spectrum of K-12 grades (five elementary, three middle schools and four high schools), and ranging in size from 110 students to 1501 students. All but one of the schools had a high proportion of ethnic minorities (African American, Hispanic or Asian). Only one school had a white plurality

**Table 1: Description of Year 4 LDI Schools**  
(based on January 2000 *Teaching and Learning: Reports from our Schools, Boston Public Schools*)

School	# of students	Demographic Profile of student population
Quincy Elementary	900 students	65% Asian; 22% B; 9% White; 5% Hispanic
E. Mendell Elementary	245 students	58% Black; 38% Hispanic.; 4% White; .4% Asian.
Holmes Elementary	241 students	84% Black.; 11% Hispanic.; 5% White; .4% Asian.
E. Greenwood Elementary	524 students	71% Black; 14% White; 13% Hispanic; 1% Asian.
PA Shaw Elementary	359 students	93% Black.; 5% Hispanic; 0.8% White; 0.6% Asian.
ME Curley Middle School	753 students	57% Hispanic; 38% Black; 3% White; 2% Asian.
Dearborn Middle School	482 students	75% Black, 19% Hispanic; 4% White; 2% Asian
Timilty Middle School	624 students	52% Black.; 34% Hispanic; 9% White; 5% Asian.
Snowden International	373 Students	55% Black; 20% Hispanic; 13% White; 11% Asian.
Boston Latin Academy (7-12)	1501 students	44% White; 27% Black; 21% Asian; 8% Hispanic
Brighton HS	975 students	50% Black; 34% Hispanic; 9% Asian; 7% White
Another Course to College (11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> )	110 students	49% Black; 32% White; 12% Asian; 7% Hispanic

Ten of the schools formed the set of original LDI schools that have participated since the program’s inception in summer 1996. Two of the schools were added during Years 3 or 4, as LDI school participants assumed new principalships at these schools, and they requested that their schools be allowed to join the cadre of LDI schools. The Timilty Middle School was added in Year 3, while the PA Shaw School was added in Year 4.

In Year 4, a total of 71 administrators and teachers were involved as core members of their LDI teams. Teams ranged in size from two to ten members, with an average of five members per team. Most of the school teams are comprised of members with varying levels of history with the LDI. Almost one in three of all participants (29%) have been steadily involved in LDI for four years, while a third (33%) has been involved for two or three years. In light of the high staff turnovers of urban school districts that often pose problems for both professional development and school-based programs, this consistent membership and participation in LDI is particularly impressive.

***Table 2: Number of Years Year 4 Participants have been Core Members of LDI, by School***

<b>School</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>4 years</b>	<b>Total # of core members</b>
Quincy Elementary	6	2	0	2	10
E. Mendell Elementary	0	2	0	2	4
Holmes Elementary	3	1	0	3	7
E. Greenwood Elementary	1	1	1	2	5
PA Shaw Elementary (began LDI in Year 4)	10	NA	NA	NA	10
ME Curley Middle School	1	3	0	2	6
Dearborn Middle School	1	0	2	1	4
Timilty Middle School (began LDI in Year 3)	0	3	NA	NA	3
Snowden International	1	2	3	3	9
Boston Latin Academy	1	3	0	2	6
Brighton HS	2	1	0	2	5
Another Course to College	0	0	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 (37%)</b>	<b>18 (25%)</b>	<b>6 (8%)</b>	<b>21 (29%)</b>	<b>71</b>

**Methods:** The evaluation team, co-directed by Cynthia Char and Saul Rockman, embarked on a variety of data collection strategies this past year to gather information from school participants, Harvard graduate students serving as LDI consultants, and faculty members from the Harvard Graduate School of Education involved in the LDI. Table 2 presents the various data collection strategies used.

**Table 3: Data collection strategies and samples**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Written survey of Year 4 School Participants	38 respondents, representing all 12 schools
Structured interviews with LDI School Participants	15 individuals, representing 9 schools
Open-ended surveys from LDI Consultants	9 individuals, representing 7+ schools
Interviews with LDI consultants	7 individuals, representing 6+ schools
Interviews with Harvard Faculty members	5 individuals
Observations of LDI events and meetings of LDI teams	12 different program events, LDI team meetings at 3 different schools
Review of LDI monthly and yearly reports, and other written documents	Multiple authors, representing all 12 schools
School participants' written evaluations of program events	Multiple respondents, representing all 12 schools

## **I. LDI School Participant Perspectives**

**School Participant Survey and Sample:** A major focus of our data collection effort was a written survey administered to all Year 4 school participants. The survey was designed to examine the relevance of the LDI program to participants' whole school improvement efforts at each site, the possible impact of the LDI on their knowledge, understanding and job performance relating to instructional leadership and distributed leadership, and their assessment of the value of specific LDI program events and services.

Of the 71 Year 4 school participants, 38 participants completed the end-of-year survey administered in May 2001 (53% return rate). Of the 38 respondents, 24% were heads of school, 26% were other school administrators (e.g., assistant headmasters, director of instruction), and 50% were teachers. Regarding years of LDI participation, 39% had participated in LDI for all four years of the program, 5% for three years, 28% for two years, and 26% new to LDI this past year. Thus, the survey sample was generally comparable to the full sample of participants, although the respondents represented a slightly higher proportion of individuals with four years of participation, and slightly fewer participants who were new this past year.

Many of the participants were experienced educators, with both heads of schools and other administrators averaging over 21 years of experience in K-12 schools, and teachers averaging 17 years of K-12 experience. Most of the heads of schools and other school administrators had a significant amount of administrative experience, with roughly 16 years of experience, on average; teachers averaged about 17 years of teaching experience (Table 4). Administrators who were not heads of schools averaged a higher amount of teaching experience, compared with heads of schools (11.3 years vs. 8.1 years, respectively.)

**Table 4: Participants’ amount and kinds of professional experience in K-12 education**

Participants	# of years in K-12 education (average & range)	# of years of teaching experience (average & range)	# of years of administration experience (average & range)
Heads of School (n = 8)	23.2 years (12-31 years)	8.1 years (4-15 years)	16.7 years (6-27 years)
Other Administrators (n = 13)	21.5 years (8-36 years)	11.3 years (2-22 years)	15.9 years (3-33 years)
Teachers (n = 17)	16.9 years (2-33 years)	17.1 years (2-33 years)	0 years (0 years)

An analysis of the LDI participants’ tenure at their current school revealed that the heads of school, as compared with non-heads and teachers, averaged the shortest amount of time at their current school, with an average of 5.6 years (Table 5). 55% of the heads had been at their current schools for three years or fewer. Of note, of the ten original schools who began with the LDI program four years ago in the Summer of 1996, only five have the same head of school as was in place during Year 1. Both administrators who were not heads of schools and teachers had generally been at their schools much longer than the heads of schools, averaging 11.7 years and 10.8 years, respectively.

**Table 5: Participants’ number of years at current school**

Participants	Average	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	11-20 years	21-33 years
Heads of School (n = 9)	5.6 years (1-17 yrs.)	55%	11%	22%	11%	0%
Other Administrators (n = 12)	11.7 years (1-33 yrs.)	17%	17%	25%	25%	17%
Teachers (n = 17)	10.8 years (2-26 yrs.)	29%	23%	12%	18%	18%

Thus, the LDIs shared leadership model, which encourages school leadership to reside not only with the head of school but extend to other administrators and faculty members in the school, helps provide further stability and continuity of leadership to help offset the programmatic uncertainties and disruptions that often accompanies a change in the top administrative positions.

### **Participants’ Reasons for Participating in LDI**

In the written survey, Year 4 participants were asked to select reasons for choosing to become involved in the LDI project from a list of six possible choices. Respondents could choose as many responses that they felt personally applied.

First and foremost, participants viewed the LDI as offering an opportunity for individual professional development, with 82% identifying this as a reason for participation. (Table 6) This was particularly true for the administrators who were not heads of school, and the teachers. Many participants also were drawn to the LDI through its provision of a professional

development opportunity than they viewed as different from what they typically experienced through the Boston Public Schools.

**Table 6: What were your particular reasons for choosing to become involved in the LDI project?**

Reason	All Respondents (n = 39)	Heads of School (n = 9)	Other School Administrators (n = 11)	Teachers (n = 19)
Saw as an opportunity for individual professional development	82%	67%	91%	84%
Saw program as providing something different from BPS professional development offerings	79%	89%	73%	79%
Saw as an opportunity to work with colleagues at your school	69%	78%	82%	58%
Thought program would help you solve a problem you had at your school	46%	67%	36%	42%
Headmaster/principal said/suggested you should	46% (of non-school heads)	NA	55%	42%
Other	23%	55%	18%	10%

Most participants (69%) also indicated that they were motivated to participate in the LDI to enable them work with colleagues at their school. This was particularly true for the administrators who were not heads of school, who often had school-wide responsibilities (by being the assistant principal, director of instruction, or the head of an academy) but may have relatively few opportunities to work closely with others in an on-going basis.

Almost half of the participants (46%) indicated that they felt the LDI would help them solve a problem they had at their school. Heads of school were most likely to indicate this view, as well as indicate an “other” response that involved the needs and agendas they had for their school:

- Provide quality time for the ILT to meet.*
- Assistance in bringing team of teachers together.*
- Help some faculty have opportunity to be reflective practitioners.*
- Support for school-wide program.*
- Provide opportunity to validate my vision about school leadership and how to share leadership with others.*

Finally, about half (46%) of the teachers and non-heads of school administrators indicated that a reason for participation concerned being asked or invited to participate by their principal or head of school.

The ways in which the LDI appears to address professional development needs of the participants was also underscored by responses to another survey item which asked whether school participants had received any training relating to school leadership prior to, or in addition to the LDI. Almost half (44%) indicated that they had received no prior training relating to school leadership (Table 7). Not surprisingly, a high proportion of those who had received such

training were the heads of school (100% of all heads), or those who were other school administrators (73% of other administrators). For 74% of the teachers, and 27% of the non-school head administrators, LDI represented their first or sole formal training relating to school leadership.

**Table 7: Previous Leadership Training and Current Leadership Responsibilities**

<b>Leadership Training and Experience</b>	<b>All Respondents (n = 39)</b>	<b>Heads of School (n = 9)</b>	<b>Other School Administrators (n = 11)</b>	<b>Teachers (n = 19)</b>
Received training in school leadership, prior to LDI	56%	100%	73%	26%
Involved in positions, committees, tasks or activities at your school in which you are asked to exercise a school leadership role	92%	100%	100%	84%

At the same time, the vast majority of all the LDI participants were being asked to assume some leadership responsibilities in their schools this past year. This was true of not only the heads of school and other school administrators, but for the teachers as well. 84% of the teachers indicated that during this past school year they were asked to assume leadership roles, ranging from serving as a member of the school’s Instructional Leadership team, facilitating study groups on looking at student work and literacy, being a “teacher in charge,” serving on the school-site council, or involved in their school’s Whole School Improvement Plan and In-Depth Review. Thus, the LDI appears to address some of the leadership demands that are placed upon the school participants back at their schools. Viewed another way, the participants appear to have ample opportunities in the day-to-day operations of their schools in which to directly apply the skills and knowledge addressed in the LDI, as will be described more fully in the sections below.

### **Program Impact on Individual Participants and LDI Schools**

#### **A. Number of schools and individuals reached through LDI during Year 4**

One of the central components of the LDI was a rich array of professional development events, workshops and seminars offered to the 12 LDI schools and the broader educational community. Through these offerings, the LDI program can be seen as affecting three different sets of schools and individual participants:

- Core members of the LDI teams from each of the twelve participating LDI schools;
- Teachers, administrators, and other school staff from the LDI schools who are not core team members of the LDI, and
- Teachers and administrators in non-LDI schools in Boston, as well as in other school districts, who attend the LDI Fleet Forums.

During Year 4, 71 administrators and teachers were involved as core members of their LDI teams. An additional 56 administrators and teachers from these LDI schools participated in one or more of the twelve main Year 4 LDI sessions, seminars, and forums open to all LDI school team members. (The numbers are based on voluntary sign-in sheets for the events, which is

likely to underestimate the number of individuals actually attending the events.) Thus, there were at least a total of 126 administrators and teachers from the twelve LDI schools engaged in professional development activities open to all Year 4 LDI project participants.

Many LDI team members participated actively and frequently in the high quality program offerings. For example, of the twelve LDI events held between June 2000 and April 2001, twelve individuals (including four Heads of School) attended between six and nine of the different events, while an additional nine (including two Heads of School) attended four or five of the events.

To further strengthen the continuity of program focus and extend its impact, three of the events consisted of multiple sessions and involved anywhere from four to six different days. Fifty-five individuals, representing all twelve LDI schools, attended the four-day Summer Institute. The two literacy seminars consisted of four-to-six classes each, were attended by twenty different individuals (including three Heads of School) representing eight LDI schools. The considerable amount of time these educators devoted to the LDI professional development events is even more striking when considering the extensive time demands already placed on these teachers and administrators. In other studies of school reform in Boston that our evaluation team has conducted (see, for instance, *Getting Past Getting Started: MetroLINC Year 2 Evaluation* at <http://rockman.com/projects/challenge/boston/metrolink99.pdf>), a concern frequently expressed by educators is the lack of time to devote to professional development activities or new educational projects, particularly those held outside of the school building. Thus, the amount of time and energy that the school participants devoted to the LDI program events is both substantial and quite impressive.

The number of school faculty and administrators reached through the LDI during Year 4 is in fact higher than 126, when factoring in the various school-based presentations, workshops and retreats that LDI curriculum consultants and Harvard faculty and consultants were asked to offer at individual LDI schools. Nine of the twelve LDI schools specifically requested and arranged for such visits to be made to their schools during Year 4. For example, Professor Richard Elmore was asked by the head of the Quincy school to address the entire faculty at the opening day of school. Three schools asked for LDI support and guidance in organizing an all-day team or faculty retreat. On a broader scale, curriculum consultants Ethan Minz and John Yun presented 15 different sessions on various aspects of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) throughout the course of the year, visiting seven of the LDI schools. Some of these sessions were specifically targeting audiences of students and parents as well.

In some respects, since the LDI directly involves key school administrators and ILT team members responsible for many of the instructional decisions and policies at the school-building level, the LDI's potential impact can also be seen to include, over time, the students at the twelve LDI schools. Using figures from the *BPS Teaching and Learning: Reports from Our Schools* (January 2000), a total of 7077 students attended the twelve LDI schools. A very high proportion of these students are ethnic minorities (African American, Hispanic and Asian).

Finally, in addition to the specific targeting of professional development within the twelve LDI schools, the two Fleet Forums held each year are designed to encourage public discussions about educational issues and policies essential to improving overall academic achievement. Invitations are sent to all BPS employees, and the two Fleet Forums held in Year 4 brought together over 500 educators. These educators represented at least 66 different BPS schools and programs: 11 LDI schools and 55 non-LDI schools and BPS programs in Boston. These schools engaged a panoply of the regional K-12 educational community: 38 elementary schools, eleven middle schools, 16 high schools, and one K-12 program. The forums also drew representatives from 26 other organizations from Boston and around the state: eight schools from other Massachusetts districts, 14 different educational groups and organizations in Boston, two universities, and two businesses. Thus, the two forums held in Year 4 alone attracted educators from at least 102 different schools and organizations to a powerful educational experience.

### **B. Alignment of LDI Program with Core Priorities of Boston Public School Whole School Change and Other District Initiatives**

The LDI events offered during Year 4 consistently addressed key educational concerns of the Boston Public School’s Whole School Change Plan and related district initiatives. An emphasis of this year’s program was “instructional practices concerning students’ literacy,” a major initiative in the Boston school district. Seven of the twelve LDI events – two individual sessions: “Reading, Writing and Speaking Across the Curriculum” by H. Jacobs and “Reading Comprehension” by Hemphill; two seminars: “Teaching Reading and Writing” by V. Jacobs and “Genres of Literature” by Hoffman; and the Spring Fleet forum – were designed to enhance teachers’ and administrators’ understanding of students’ literacy. More than 250 educators attended these student literacy-oriented events. A number of participants expressed the value of these literacy events, and the positive ways in which they felt it affected themselves and their schools:

*I attended V. Jacobs, Seidel and Hemphill. Their work affected my professional development literacy and LASW (Looking at Student Work) efforts.*

*- High School Literacy Specialist*

*Increased literacy background assists me in supporting teacher efforts.*

*- High School Principal*

*LDI helps me to be renewed. The many sessioned writing workshops in the winter/spring of '00 let me examine my practice*

*- Elementary School Principal*

Analysis of the Year 4 spring surveys reveal that participants regarded the LDI program as helping their schools make considerable progress towards the BPS Whole School Improvement Plan, and its six essentials (listed below in Table 8) . For five of the six essentials, almost all participants felt that the LDI had helped them “some” or “very much” in their progress in the BPS School Change plan (Table 8).

**Table 8: To what degree has the LDI program helped your school make progress towards the BPS Whole School Improvement Plan?**

Six Essentials of BPS Whole School Improvement Plan	Average Rating*
BPS School Change Plan in general (overall assessment of progress toward all six essentials)	2.6
School wide instructional focus	2.6
Looking at student work & data	2.4
Professional development plan	2.4
Learn and use best teaching practices	2.4
Align resources with instructional focus	2.5
Involvement of parents and community	2.0

(\* 0 = not at all; 1 = a little; 2 = some; 3 = very much)

Only one essential involvement of parents and community, received a slightly lower rating, perhaps reflecting the fact that it was not a central topic of the Year 4 program offerings.

In addition, 55% of the participants indicated that the LDI professional development experiences had enhanced their ability “a lot” in their dealings with BPS district priorities, initiatives and procedures.

Administrators and teachers alike expressed these gains towards the Whole School Improvement Plan when they described what the impact of the LDI had been on themselves and on their schools.

*Teachers are far more focused on instructional strategies and sharing those strategies with colleagues.*

*- High School Administrator*

*Teachers are more cognizant of the use of data to inform instruction, resulting from LDI consultants Yun, Mintz & Cancell.*

*- High School Administrator*

*Trip to NY inspired new thinking and implementation of new best practices.*

*- Elementary School Teacher*

In addition to reinforcing the Six Essentials through the LDI program offerings, many of the LDI consultants worked closely with school participants on school-based tasks and efforts central to district initiatives, such as supporting teams’ efforts in the In-Depth Review process, developing a school’s Whole School Improvement Plan, and increasing students’ understanding and performance on the MCAS. Three of the LDI consultants were also asked to expand their role in the schools, with two assuming an additional role as the school’s change coach, and one becoming the school’s literacy coach. In year 4, there was greater coordination of the work of the LDI consultants and other literacy and change coaches, thereby yielding greater benefits to

the school by the synergy of the several school-site consultants. In one of the LDI schools, a major task assigned to the LDI consultant was overseeing the coordination of the school’s various literacy, whole school change and other consultants, to ensure more coordinated and effective efforts.

**C. Assessment of LDI Impact on Individual Participants**

Year 4 participants assessed the degree to which they felt the LDI had a positive impact on their professional development as a school leader. The vast majority of participants indicated they felt the LDI had a positive impact on their professional development as a school leader (95% agreed to strongly agree) (Table 9).

**Table 9: Participants’ Assessment of LDI Impact on Own Professional Development as School Leader**

	1 (strongly disagree)	2	3 (disagree)	4	5 (agree)	6	7 (strongly agree)
The LDI has had a positive impact on my professional development as a school leader. n = 39	0%	0%	5%	0%	8%	33%	54%

When asked to cite evidence of LDI’s impact upon their own behavior and the ways they do their jobs, the various Heads of School and administrators described a number of different areas of their own professional development as a school leader. A number felt that the LDI had improved their effectiveness of being a team leader, of working with faculty and staff, and having improved interpersonal skills to run department meetings more effectively as well as resolve confrontational situations.

Teacher participants described how the LDI had enhanced their whole perspective on schools, their own roles as teachers, and a renewed commitment to themselves as learners:

*I think by attending these LDI sessions it has just created for me a whole new world, a whole other spectrum; it exists and how it impacts us on the school level is just very very different. It takes me out of “this is my classroom and this is what I need to do” ...into “here we are as a school and what do we need to do as a school to move.” I think I’m an entirely different person. Anybody would with new knowledge.*

*[Through the various LDI offerings] I could get a stronger sense of being a professional in the education field and be more aware of many of the reform initiatives which were going on not only locally, but also nationally...It helped me as a professional not to be so parochial.*

*I loved learning. Attending the LDI gave me the motivation to go back to school and get my masters.*

Of note, 55% of the participants indicated that the LDI had provided professional development experiences that had enabled them to take on new job responsibilities. A number of teachers spoke about how the LDI enabled them to gain a much broader perspective of themselves and their school and the important role that they play beyond their individual classrooms, which compelled them to assume more responsibility and leadership positions in their schools.

*I now see myself as a vital part (person) in the everyday functioning of our school. When we make decisions it affects the entire school family.*

*LDI has helped me look at my skills beyond my area of expertise of speech-language pathology and see how these skills can and have been developed to benefit leadership for the school community.*

*I share information, try to explain policy in a non-threatening way, set an example by cooperating with the administrator, take responsibility at weekly P&D when principal is away and facilitate professional development hours when asked.*

*[It gave me] a strong support network and inspired me to commit to the ILT.*

*I have more confidence in myself. I can stand in front of a group and facilitate workshop, etc.*

Several individuals were proud of the professional growth they have experienced; yet honestly acknowledged the need for further development, as individuals and as members of leadership teams:

*Because I have only been a member for a year I am only beginning to realize the change in my “classroom thinking” to a more “leadership, broader” thinking.*

*- Teacher*

*I am more aware of different styles & approaches in dealing with a wide range of people. I still need to understand the validity of everyone being involved in decision-making.*

*- Teacher*

*I think the most valuable thing was having the retreat...we really consolidated a lot of ideas and understanding. I would say that the whole team was on the same page of where we need to go. But that does not mean that people have the skills to move it because that takes another level. But they know that that's where we are going and that it is the right thing to do.*

*- Principal*

Participants also indicated that they felt they had experienced significant professional growth in a number of different areas of school leadership and educational reform that were addressed by the LDI. Using a 5 point rating scale (none; a little; some; a lot; not applicable), participants indicated high levels of professional growth in both knowledge and understanding, and changes

in job behavior across a number of areas of shared leadership, instructional leadership, interpersonal and communication skills (Table 10). More moderate levels of growth were reported concerning curriculum planning and coordination.

**Table 10: Areas of high professional growth in knowledge and job performance through LDI**

<b>Educational Area</b>	<b>Areas of knowledge and understanding that have changed “a lot” through LDI</b>	<b>Areas of actual job behavior that have changed “a lot” due to LDI</b>
Shared Leadership	Shared/distributed leadership 76%*	Sharing and distributing leadership 64%*
	School as inter-connected organization 70%*	Recognizes the whole school as inter-connected organization 66%*
Instructional Leader	Being an instructional leader 73%*	Exercising a greater presence in my school as an instructional leader 54%*
	Focus on instructional practice 69%*	Increasing my focus on instructional practice 63%*
	Analysis of student data and student work to inform instructional practices 50%*	Using student data and student work to inform instructional practices 56%*
Interpersonal & communication skills	Running of meetings 65%*	Running meetings more effectively 56%*
	Facilitating the work of others 53%*	Facilitating the work of others 46%*
	Effective written and oral communication 32%*	Communicating more effectively in written and oral communication 41%*
Curriculum Planning and Coordination	Literacy practices across the curriculum and other grades 39%*	Implementing literacy practices across the curriculum and other grades 34%*
	Curriculum planning across the grades 27%*	Planning curriculum across the grades 21%*

*(% of participants indicating “a lot” of professional growth)*

A little more than half of the participants also described high levels of professional growth in their job performance in three additional areas of shared and effective leadership. These areas concerned strengthening their effectiveness in communicating with school faculty, in sharing decision-making, and their ability to turn plans and ideas into implemented actions and policies.

For the most part, participants’ ratings of knowledge versus job behavior were generally comparable. The main area for which there was some discrepancy concerned school leadership, where about three-fourths of the participants felt that they had acquired high levels of understanding of school leadership, while only a little more than half felt that they had changed the way in which they did their job. As one administrator expressed, “I believe our knowledge has increased tremendously, but our actions don’t [always] reflect this. We operate based on bad habits (e.g., top-down approaches, rapid decision-making with little follow through.)” Responses were quite similar from both administrators and teachers. This finding underscores the rather complex and broad challenges entailed in exercising educational leadership, the ways in which understanding does not always transfer into changed behavior, and the constraints (e.g., skills, time, energy, or dominant culture of the district) which may not be conducive to changed behavior, albeit desired by the individual.

#### D. Assessment of LDI Impact on Schools

In addition to the impact of the LDI on individual’s professional development, the vast majority of participants also indicated that the LDI has had a positive impact on their school and its staff (87% agreed to strongly agreed) (Table 11).

*Table 11: Participants’ Assessment of LDI Impact on School and Staff*

	1 (strongly disagree)	2	3 (disagree)	4	5 (agree)	6	7 (strongly agree)
The LDI has had a positive impact on my school and its staff n= 39	0%	10%	0%	2%	10%	26%	51%

Participants described the LDI’s impact on schools as occurring in four major areas: strengthened the effectiveness of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), helped schools interpret and plan action steps around the MCAS, served as professional development resource for school faculty, and served as a stimulus for site initiatives related to school change efforts.

• **Strengthened the Effectiveness of the Instructional Leadership Team.** Participants’ descriptions of the impact of the LDI on their schools and staff echoed some of the personal gains people cited as impacts of the LDI on themselves as individuals. One of the main areas of impact that was described pertained to how the LDI assisted in bringing staff together to work as a team, kept the team focused, improved the functioning of the LDI schools’ Instructional Leadership teams, and supported the leadership roles of teachers.

*The ILT is more cohesive, takes on leadership role more seriously.*

*- Elementary School Principal*

*Our ILT team is well organized; we do great LASW sessions, walkthroughs, visitations to other classrooms/other schools.*

*- Elementary School Principal*

*We have a strong team of 7 people that are committed to meeting twice a month. We have planned for the year and have implemented these plans successfully...*

*- Elementary School Principal*

*[Impact can be seen in] ILT structure/organization; breadth of knowledge of its members; grade level meetings run more smoothly; greater overall understanding of what’s happening school-wide.*

*- Teacher*

*We are more organized, forceful in our work; more comfortable as a team.*

*- Teacher*

The connection between the membership and work of the LDI team and the ILT team seemed a critical one to maximize the potential impact of the LDI on schools. For a number of schools, the

ILT served as the main organizational vehicle for LDI team members to share with their colleagues information they have gained in LDI sessions, as well as apply techniques, knowledge and strategies into actions, plans and policies in their schools.

A few teachers who were involved in the LDI but were not members of their school's ILT team did not see as strong connections between the LDI and its impact on their school.

*It is unclear to me how the LDI effects school change. There are so many small groups at the school that deal with school-based change.*

- Teacher

*I don't see a connection between the two. Possibly the ILT meetings make the connection but I wouldn't know.*

- Teacher

Thus, it appears that being a member of the ILT, and present when school-wide practices and decisions are discussed, often with the LDI consultant present, helps reinforce the connection between the LDI offerings and the way in which it can be translated into practices in their school.

• **Helped Schools Interpret and Plan Action Steps Around the MCAS.** A second primary area of LDI impact on the schools centered on work concerning the MCAS. A major focus of the LDI curriculum consultants was helping LDI team members and schools understand how they might utilize their schools' MCAS scores to inform classroom instruction, and enhance students' test-taking skills. Seven of the LDI schools (Shaw, Curley, Snowden, Holmes, Boston Latin Academy, Dearborn, Greenwood) requested that the curriculum consultants visit their schools to lead workshops for their faculty; four of the seven schools requested multiple visits during Year 4, during which the curriculum consultants addressed a variety of different audiences of faculty, parents and students, different departments within a high school (English, mathematics, science and history). A number of the participants spoke about the value of these MCAS sessions and the ways in which it helped them better prepare for the types of student achievement measured through the MCAS.

*MCAS training provided by LDI to our staff led our teachers to embed strategies in their daily classroom practices.*

- Middle School Principal

*There is definitely evidence of change at [the middle school where I've been working.]...Since the LDI presentations on MCAS, they have a different view of the test. In the first place they see it as a whole school issue, not just one for the eighth grade. Teachers know they can do some things to help students improve. For example, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade began giving writing prompts in class after the first MCAS workshop presented evidence that students needed to focus on writing more in the essay and open response questions...The improved score in English/language arts is a testament to the work that was focused on MCAS presentation.*

- LDI Consultant

• **Served as a Professional Development Resource for School Faculty.** Another basic indicator of impact that individuals discussed involved the number of teachers and administrators participating in LDI events, and the ways in which information is disseminated and applied to daily events at the school:

*Teachers have begun to take part in workshops who in the past felt it had little value to their growth.*

- Administrator

*I have attended every workshop and shared what I have learned w/ my fellow teachers. So many teachers, sometimes 20, have attended the LDI workshops.*

- Teacher

*The Literacy specialist conducts meetings according to a protocol we learned through the interactive Institute...*

- Administrator

*We are becoming an even stronger team, working on the same page. The team is enhanced; it's been given a common vocabulary, experience that we can use to build in our administration and planning of the schools. It has given us tools.*

- Elementary School Principal

▪ **Served as a Stimulus for Site Initiatives related to School Change Efforts.** Other participants spoke about the ways in which the LDI has led to changes in the kinds of thinking and conversations staff engaged in, improved staff morale, while others pointed to particular changes in teachers' classroom practice as evidence of the impact of the LDI:

*Teachers have been actively involved in meetings, providing input for school wide plans, with strategies learned at workshops and classes.*

- Administrator

*The conversation among staff has changed its focus to more around teaching and learning.*

- Middle School Principal

*Raised the level of dialogue and expectation.*

- Middle School Administrator

*Teachers more open to self and peer assessment.*

- High School Head

*Yes, the LDI has had an impact on our school. This change can be observed in the classroom/morning meeting, browsing boxes, availability of leveled books, and peer coaching.*

- Teacher

*Through our previous LDI training & workshop we have been able to tap in to many staff members talents. We have a Looking at Student Work focus group, a literacy committee across grades K-5. And an exceptional working (fully stocked) bookroom managed by teachers.*

*- Teacher*

## **Evaluation of LDI Program Components**

Our evaluation indicated that the LDI program has been well designed and implemented, with participants regarding the program as engaging and professionally rewarding. Participants consistently spoke highly of the value of a number of key features and components of the program.

**Multi-Year Commitment: Educational Continuity and Sustained Professional Development.** The five-year commitment from schools to the LDI program acknowledges the serious focus and devoted effort required in school change – that school change is a slow and difficult process that requires dedication and perseverance, recognizes the challenge of leadership development, and the importance of sustained support.

Of the ten schools originally involved since the LDI first began in the Summer of 1996, only five have the same head of school as was in place during Year 1. Four of the schools have had two principals during the past four years, while one has had three principals during that period. Of note, all five original principals have continued to fulfill their multi-year commitment to the LDI, while new principals assuming leadership roles in the other five LDI schools have recognized the value of the LDI and their schools continue to be involved in the LDI. This past June, just days prior to the 2001 Summer Institute, one school had just been informed of a change of administration, and will be having a third head of school assume leadership as Year 5 of the LDI begins. This new head has agreed to continue with the LDI this year.

Furthermore, two administrators who were LDI participants who later became principals at new schools requested that their schools be permitted to join as new LDI schools. As noted earlier, close to two-thirds (63%) of the current Year 4 school participants have at least one previous year with the LDI, with close to a third (29%) having participated for all four years of the program. This widespread and sustained commitment to LDI from administrators and teachers offers impressive testimony to the program's value and relevance to the educational needs and priorities of these BPS schools.

Similarly, the multi-year commitment requested from LDI consultants benefits both BPS schools and the graduate students. The commitment counters schools' typical fleeting encounters with outside consultants and graduate students and allows them to more fully benefit from a longer term relationship. The weekly commitment also provides time for the graduate students to build a relationship with a school and its team, and affords a true and realistic picture of the challenging and often arduous process of school change.

As with the numerous school participants who have committed multiple years to the LDI, there has been impressive dedication demonstrated by the graduate students serving as LDI consultants to the schools. Of the twelve Year 4 consultants, one consultant has been involved for four years (serving in the same school throughout this period), four consultants involved for three years (two serving in their same schools for three years), and two consultants involved for two years. Five new graduate students joined the LDI consultant ranks for Year 4. Many of the heads of school spoke about the important role played by the LDI consultants, through their regular presence at the school, often extending across multiple years.

For example, the one LDI consultant who has served as a consultant to the same school for all four years was seen as invaluable by a new head in that school. There was a change in administration at this school just prior to the beginning of Year 4 (Summer 2000), and the new head of school described the LDI consultant's continuity and presence in the school as being "of great value."

*I walked into [the school and had to learn] the climate, the culture – at the end of the MCAS, the IDR (In-Depth Review)... She [the LDI consultant] had the history of what we were going through and had been a part of that. She was very supportive – we went through sort of a healing process to have her there. We could value what the staff was doing, and begin to rebuild.*

*- Middle School Principal*

**Relevant and High Quality Offerings.** School participants viewed the LDI program as addressing central ideas of school change and school leadership (e.g., envisioning instructional strategies, introducing and managing change, instructional and curricular focus across the grades; use of student data). Individual events offered during Year 4 were rated uniformly high in written evaluations (Table 12). Participants rated each event along a four-point scale, with a maximum rating of 3 to indicate "very valuable."

**Table 12: Participants' Assessments of the Professional Value of Year 4 LDI Program Offerings**

<b>LDI Program Offerings</b>	<b>Participants' Assessment of Event (0 = not valuable; 1 = somewhat valuable; 2 = valuable; 3 = very valuable)</b>
<b>Large LDI Events</b>	
2000 Summer Institute (n = 30)	2.70
Opening Brunch (n = 20)	2.40
Fall Fleet Forum w/ Pedro Noguera (n = 20)	2.30
Spring Fleet Forum w/ Ellin Keene (n = 15)	2.40
<b>Large Group Presentations</b>	
H. Jacobs: Reading & Writing & Speaking Across the Curriculum (n = 13)	2.46
Seidel on Looking at Student Work (n = 17)	2.29
Stone & Todd on Difficult Conversations (n = 14)	2.43
DeLauri on Grant Writing (n = 8)	2.00
Hempill on Reading Comprehension (n = 4)	2.75
<b>Seminars &amp; School Site Visits</b>	
Hoffman Seminar on Genres of Literature (n = 6)	2.83
V. Jacobs Seminar on Reading and Writing (n = 6)	2.83
Site Visit to Boston Arts Academy (n = 4)	3.00

People valued the research expertise and high knowledgeable perspectives of presenters, the rich and varied offerings of the topics and sessions, the variety of formats (e.g., single session/multiple sessions; large public forums/large group presentations/small group seminars) and relevance to the issues of their school. Participants also appreciated being treated as professionals, given the option to pick and choose amongst program offerings to select those which were most relevant to themselves and their schools, and which could be most feasibly incorporated within their work week.

In reviewing LDI events from Year 4 as well as from previous years, participants described the value of the program's offering of both off-site and on-site events. School team members talked about feeling professional renewed when leaving their own school, removed from the day-to-day job demands, and coming to Harvard to engage in informative presentations in classes, and to interact with colleagues from their school and other LDI schools. Site visits to several "best practices" schools in New York and Massachusetts were also described as inspiring and as concretely portraying how school change can happen and how it might look. At the same time,

participants valued having LDI consultants come to their own school: working closely with their team, getting to know their faculty and students, and interacting with faculty and students.

**Informed Yet Independent Perspective.** LDI consultants and program staff are removed from both day-to-day school politics and longer-range district policies. Consequently, they offered independent perspectives and support that was much appreciated. School participants valued the opportunity to work with someone outside of the school system who was informed, neutral, without school or district alliances, and could be trusted to keep confidences. They regarded consultants and project staff as people who could ask them the hard questions that were designed to help them move on. School participants also appreciated learning from and working with the Harvard faculty, whose research and insights were often enlightening as well as inspiring.

As shown in Table 13, participants highly valued the contact and communication they had with LDI project director, their school’s consultant, curriculum consultants, and Harvard faculty and other professional consultants.

*Table 13: Participants’ Assessments of the Professional Value of LDI Consultation and Support*

Type of LDI Consultation & Support	Participants’ Assessment of LDI Consultation & Support (0 = not valuable; 1 = somewhat valuable; 2 = valuable; 3 = very valuable)
Contact/communication w/ your team’s LDI consultant (n = 32)	2.62
Contact/communication w/ LDI project director (n = 32)	2.66
Visits from curriculum consultants to your school (n = 31)	2.74
Visits from Harvard faculty & consultants to your school (n = 20)	2.65
Contact/communication w/ Harvard LDI faculty (n = 23)	2.69
Contact/communication w/ outside consultants (n = 16)	2.81

**Value of LDI Consultancy.** School participants regarded their LDI consultant as an integral part of their LDI experience. Working with a consultant over several years gave the school team time to develop its ideas and actions. Often, the team viewed their LDI as central to facilitating the group process, serving as a sounding board for the principal, and assuming responsibilities critical to promoting whole school change.

As shown in Table 14, school participants viewed the LDI consultants as valuable in a wide variety of capacities.

**Table 14: Participants' Assessment of LDI Consultants' Value to LDI Team and School**

<b>Support Provided by LDI Consultant to LDI Team and School</b>	<b>Participants' Assessment of Consultants' Value to LDI Team and School (0 = not valuable; 1 = somewhat valuable; 2 = valuable; 3 = very valuable)</b>
Supporting BPS Whole School Change Plan at my school (n = 31)	2.81
Helping to facilitate group meetings (n = 30)	2.57
Serving as a sounding board and "critical friend" for our LDI work (n = 31)	2.55
Directly carrying out important tasks in our schools relating to whole school change (n = 31)	2.42
Helping make the connection between LDI sessions & school site planning & implementation (n = 31)	2.35
Helping our LDI team work better as a group (n = 28)	2.32
Encouraging LDI members to exercise greater school leadership (n = 29)	2.31
Bringing resources to our schools (n = 26)	2.27
Contributing to the professional development of our LDI team members (n = 28)	2.25
Lightening our workload so we can better focus on instructional practice & whole school change (n = 27)	2.11
Helping write grants for additional external support (n = 20)	1.95

At the same time, most LDI consultants were able to play an active role in supporting teams grappling with school change efforts, and were provided with a first hand experience that surpassed what they could acquire through coursework, readings, and research assistantships. The LDI program afforded them unique opportunities to fit theory with practice and explore distributed leadership, standards-based reform, and large-scale instructional improvement. Both consultants and practitioners could test ideas by implementing them in schools.

**Value of the LDI School Network.** Another facet of the professional support offered through the LDI lies in the relationships fostered between the different participants from various LDI schools. The LDI events typically offered ample time at the beginning of sessions for participants to arrive, and talk with one another – either with colleagues from one's own school, or from other LDI schools. Observing these discussions, one cannot help but note the widespread, friendly exchanges of information, advice and support.

Over half of the participants (54%) indicated on their surveys that they engaged in contact and communication with team members from other LDI schools, and found such contact valuable. Similarly, about half (51%) indicated that the LDI had, in terms of actual behavior and ways they did their job, increased their professional networking with colleagues at other schools.

The positive collegueship existing between LDI school members was evident during the Summer Institute held in June 2001, where many participants warmly greeted each other and exchanged news and information. One school team who had been informed days before of major administrative changes at their school received many expressions of support from other schools, some of whom had undergone similar difficult transitions in recent years. During the Institute, two of the middle schools also expressed their intentions to work more closely with each other in the coming year, with one assuming a more mentoring relationship to the other.

The value and impact of the LDI, coupled with the progress and challenges facing the LDI schools at the end of Year 4 can be summarized by an eloquent address made by one of the LDI school administrators at the Summer 2001 Institute this past June. In her discussion of the impact of the LDI and ideas for LDI participation and support in the coming year, this middle school administrator addressed her fellow LDI school colleagues with the following:

*In what ways has the LDI impacted [my school]? First and foremost, the LDI has provided its members with an array of relevant, rewarding opportunities. The resources, insights and directions we've gained that have been provided through such provocative professional development have been invaluable. With regard to resources, we took full advantage of our LDI consultant. He has made available to us time, attention, and guidance during our IDR. His excellent facilitation skills, strong sense of purpose, and deep knowledge of the IDR process helped us get through this high stakes evaluation while meeting the daily demands of the school community....In addition to the exceptional human resources found in [our consultant], we also benefited from the LDI-sponsored sessions, ranging from the past summer institutes, to looking at student work, Fleet Forums with Pedro Noguera and Ellin Keene and MCAS testing. We have learned heaps, and in turn have had stimulating conversations and ideas about shared leadership, literature across the curriculum, the achievement gap, assessment, and much more. As we anticipate the 2001-02 school year, we are grappling with how to best to meet the immediate needs and challenges of our school, in relation to what we've learned are proven practices and sound theory. Currently, we have more good intentions and questions than specific implementations to highlight.*

*How will we follow up with the knowledge and skill sets we've gained through our involvement with the LDI [in the coming year]? Perhaps a good place to start is to retain a consultant as monitor, to insure that our work moves forward in a consistent way. Perhaps less will be more as far as future LDI opportunities per academic year, with two to three workshops per academic year. School-based reflection sessions might be appropriate as we weave our work with LDI more tightly into the everyday fabric of teaching and learning at [our school.] We thank you in advance, for giving us more guidance in building capacity in ways that are meaningful and connected to our specific work experiences.*

## II. LDI Consultant Perspectives

One of the program's unique components is the LDI consultant who worked closely with LDI schools as staff strives to apply what they have learned through LDI to the workings of their schools. Thus, in addition to information gathered from various LDI school participants, we also set out to examine the views and experiences from the students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education who were current or former LDI consultants. We designed a written questionnaire to elicit their perspectives on the value and impact of the LDI program on their schools and on themselves as young professionals in training. The sample consisted of a core set of LDI consultants most of whom had participated for at least two years in the program, during Years 2-4.

Thirteen LDI consultants (seven current consultants active in Year 4 and six former consultants) were sent the questionnaires via e-mail; completed questionnaires were submitted from nine consultants (six current and three former consultants.) Of the nine respondents, one had participated for one year, four had participated for two years, three for three years, and one for all four years of the program. Thus collectively, the respondents represented 22 "person years" with the program. In addition to information gleaned from these questionnaires, a member of the research team also attended the Summer Institute and observed consultants working with their school teams, observed one of the regularly held LDI consultant meetings with Director Kemp, and conducted site visits to three LDI schools to observe LDI consultants participating in administrative team and Instructional Leadership team meetings or conducting information sessions with faculty.

In their responses, consultants wrote compellingly and at length about the profound value of the LDI program, both for their schools and for themselves. The major themes and points, regarding the impact of the LDI on their schools, the value of LDI events and opportunities, and the features and characteristics that made the program so successful, are summarized below.

**Impact of the LDI on the Schools.** All of the consultants felt that the LDI has had a positive impact on the schools and individuals participating in the program. Their responses corroborated many of the school participants' views, describing a wide variety of ways in which the program had positively influenced the schools. Improvements ranged from participants assuming a more knowledgeable and active approach to their schools' issues and problems, be it literacy or the MCAS, to a more positive and collegial climate focusing on instruction.

*I see evidence that members of the LDI who have been part of the program for two or more years have grown professionally as a result of their participation. This was clearly manifest in the behavior of participants at last June's Summer Institute (2001). Teachers and administrators were far more interactive, outspoken, diligent, focused, and proactive than they had been in previous years. A spirit of collaboration pervaded the institute, and people seem to have carried that energy back to their schools.*

*- Consultant with LDI Middle School and LDI High School*

*LDI has made a substantial difference...The school has been able to focus more of its attention and resources on instruction and literacy. ...People have a clear understanding of the problems and issues facing urban education, they have an informed understanding of standards-based reform, and ways to attack the achievement gap as a result of LDI experiences.*

*- Consultant with LDI High School*

*Looking at all the schools we've worked with, there definitely seems to be a greater understanding of the MCAS test, some of the complexities of data and data analysis, and a greater willingness this year to actively do this work of analyzing the MCAS and preparing students for this test.*

*- Curriculum Consultant with All LDI Schools*

*People seem to be better able to work collegially, listen to each other, and learn together.*

*- Consultant with LDI Middle School*

*Conversations in the teachers' lunch room went from teachers complaining about students out of frustration with a lack of improvement to borrowing books, sharing ideas, and demonstrating techniques to each other.*

*- LDI Consultant with LDI Middle School*

**Value of LDI Events and Opportunities.** Many of the same LDI events that school participants mentioned as most valuable were also cited by consultants as being especially illuminating. Furthermore, consultants' co-participation in LDI events enabled them to actively encourage school participants to recall past events to form new ways of thinking about, and approaching problems in their schools. The site visits to the District 2 schools in New York were mentioned by several consultants as key moments for both themselves and their school colleagues:

*The learning experiences that have been most useful to me are the site visits we have made, beginning with the trip to New York City's District 2 during the 1998-99 school year. This visit in particular provided powerful insights into a system in the advanced stages of reform, thus offering a model against which to measure Boston's progress. It also allowed participants to see that it is possible to turn good ideas into a positive reality, which strikes me as the essential aspiration of the LDI.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*The site visit to the Manhattan New School was an important one for me. It allowed me to see and hear teachers exercising leadership in their classroom and through a range of activities they pursue outside of the school day...As much as possible, I try to remind the teachers I work with of observations they have made and discussed previously to keep them linked to positive situations and other possibilities for approaching problems. For example, teachers complained about how noisy their students are. I asked them to think about the noise level at the Manhattan New School. They felt that while some classrooms seemed noisy to them, they could see that the children were working. I then asked them to think about what they thought the teacher(s) might have done to create this other kind*

*of noise. Some people were able then to move away from complaining to thinking about what kind of work and structures helped to generate a noise that could be appreciated because it meant kids were busy learning.*

*- 3-Year Consultant*

Consultants also appreciated the opportunity to talk with officials from the Boston Public School and state education personnel, who offered insight into the thinking of the state and the district on current issues in education in BPS and a chance to question and more fully understand their intentions and actions.

Most of all, consultants described the day-to-day working with their LDI schools as the most powerful part of their learning experience. The immediacy of the consulting experiences compelled them to integrate and apply what they were learning about whole school change and distributed leadership in the real work of improving urban schools. The program provided an opportunity for students not only to test theory with practice, but also gave them a realistic sense of the complex and slow process of school change. It also afforded a first hand experience of what it is like to serve as a consultant working with a school to affect change. Several spoke about how the LDI provided them with experience and insights that extended well beyond that offered through coursework, research and teaching assistantships, and internships, knowledge they saw as valuable to a variety of future career paths.

*My work with the LDI has been the best opportunity I have had to fit theory with practice, specifically with respect to “distributed leadership,” standards-based reform, and large-scale instructional improvement. Not only does the LDI provide resources that educate participants about new research, but it also offers the support that enables consultants and practitioners to test ideas by implementing them in actual schools.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*The LDI has been the most beneficial activity [for me] at Harvard. I want to help schools improve. [Through my other experiences at Harvard] I have learned how to conduct research and how to grade papers and teach college courses. While these skills are nice, they do not directly help schools improve. I did not know as much about the craft of on-going consultation. I certainly did not know much about leadership development. I think that I have a much more clear understanding as a result of my affiliation with the LDI.*

*- 3-Year Consultant*

*I have received a great deal of experience working with schools as an outside consultant, which is very different from being a teacher, or presenting as an outside researcher. The negotiations and commitment necessary to be successful cannot be gained without these types of experiences*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*In contrast to taking courses, LDI work is real work. It is a good balance for people who walk the line (or are deciding) between teaching and research. It is a good balance to*

*things learned in theoretical classes. It is a good for people who come here and miss being in schools.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*For me the value of working with the LDI is that it combines theory with practice (or allows us to test theory through practice.) As a consultant, I have the opportunity to work directly within a school and to learn from an experience that can only be hinted at in coursework or even much educational research. I came to HGSE with planning to work with schools and practitioners after my Ed.D.... In the LDI, I can gain experience doing what I hope to be doing in the future and insights on what life is like for people who work in schools. This can only be an asset, whether I teach in an education program or work outside academia.*

*- 4-Year Consultant.*

**Program Features and Characteristics Enhancing its Value to Consultants.** In addition to the types of opportunities afforded through the LDI, consultants spoke about other aspects of the program that made it successful.

Leadership provided by Project Director: First and foremost, consultants spoke very highly of project director, Kemp. She was regarded as a role model who was a wise, sensitive and respectful advisor to schools, and served as a valuable mentor to the graduate students.

*Peggy Kemp is an incredible resource for consultants and other LDI members. She always offers intelligent and well-reasoned advice.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*Watching how [the LDI Director] deals with problems has been a real asset to me in guiding how I work with individuals, teachers, and the central office at BPS. Her way of getting her point across while being sensitive to the different issues and pressures that each person has working on them is a skill that takes time to develop.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*All of the administrators and teachers who participated in LDI whom I have talked with expressed that they feel honored and respected by the LDI. Let me emphasize that such sentiment is varied when discussing their reactions to other external consultants. LDI is especially good at working with teachers and administrators because of its deep respect for their work. I argue that LDI is successful because of this fundamental assumption. I would also add that Peggy Kemp models this philosophy flawlessly and would not accept any less from any of the LDI consultants.*

*- 3-Year Consultant*

*[The LDI Director] hands-down has been the most useful resource at Harvard for me not only in terms of the LDI but also in terms of thinking of my own professional development. She challenged me, mentored me, and pushed me to keep doing more...When I appeared on her doorstep spitting nails in frustration, she patched me up,*

*rearmed me and sent me back out the door. When I was jubilant over a millimeter of progress, she shared my joy.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

Similar to the ways school participants had spoken of how the program seemed customized to their school's needs, one student expressed how the program fully embraced her strengths as well as her weaknesses, and provided a fundamental support and inspiration for her own professional growth.

*[One of the strengths of the program was] that my work was tailored not only to the [school I worked with] but also to me. I have never before or since at Harvard felt that I was seen and appreciated for who I am in all my talents and flaws. I had the opportunity as a researcher to try out ways to bring research, my own and others, to school leaders, teachers and students. I was challenged to think through how to extend this into a professional position for myself. When I felt defeated, Peggy Kemp and my colleagues pumped me with ideas to take back out the door, when I rested too long on a plateau, the team pointed out the need to map the next phase of the ascent. I worked at this job with my heart as well as my mind...It was always exciting, useful work.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

**A Community of Young Colleagues.** Consultants also spoke about the value of being a member of the larger group of consultants, and the value of learning from their peers who were also grappling with and striving to achieve change in their schools.

*I believe that the LDI meetings where we discussed problems faced by other consultants was very helpful in outlining the myriad problems that come with working in schools, and for examining the dynamics between consultant and school which lead to the difficulties.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*As astonishing as this may sound, the LDI was truly a place of intellectual community that I have sorely missed in the competitive, under-resourced environment of the Graduate School of Education. I loved and learned from the opportunity to think self-critically as a group, to challenge each other, support each other, and keep our humility intact. I also learned from watching some incredibly ballsy graduate students put politely-stated challenges to people who held power over them, and cajole those with less power into an insight. I think the group was also invaluable... I was always exhausted at the end of a meeting and particularly the annual retreat, which I found invaluable. My brain was always stretched and I would lay awake for weeks with the possibilities.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

Several consultants mentioned that they wished that they had been able to work more in teams, or to observe others in action.

*I believe that I would be more effective if I could meet more with my colleagues and if we could work as a team. There are many times when I think that a team approach would*

*help. I have learned a lot listening to my colleagues discuss their experiences in their schools. I would also like to have the chance to observe other people's styles of consulting. I know that it was helpful as a teacher to see other models of instruction and I see no reason why it would not be helpful to see other examples of consulting practice other than my own.*

*- 3-Year Consultant*

**Other Support.** Consultants also mentioned other structural features that made the consultancy particularly valuable. One consultant spoke about how its paid nature set it apart from internships, and instilled in consultants a greater sense of responsibility and commitment, as well as resulted in schools being more likely to view the consultants as having expertise and something to offer. At the same time, a number of consultants (as well as HGSE faculty we interviewed) mentioned the discrepancy between the amount they received as LDI consultants, and the curriculum and change coaches hired by BPS, and the desire to have the amounts more comparable. One student suggested the option of having students receive slight increases in pay with each ensuing semester, in order to ensure continuity and offset the tendency of more experienced consultants leaving to become BPS coaches. He also suggested the possibility of having the LDI work in conjunction with a weekly seminar resulting in course credit.

Consultants also spoke positively about the support they received from the LDI Project Staff in providing materials, office space and services. One student suggested the possibility of having laptop computers available, so that they could make efficient use of their time while at schools.

**Multi-Year Commitment.** A core requirement of the LDI consultancy is students' commitment to work with LDI for more than one year. The multi-year commitment afforded consultants a true and realistic picture of the challenges of school change and leadership development. Several students expressed how this multi-year commitment was a key aspect of what made the LDI a powerful learning experience for them

*I think the most valuable part of the job is the continued work with schools over time. I have gotten to know people in these schools, their priorities, their styles. There is the constant challenge of producing work that is useful and relevant for them, and treating each school as both an individual entity and part of the BPS system. This work feels like real work, connected to the everyday work of teachers and students, while other opportunities as a graduate student are more removed from the life of schools and are not sustained over time.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

*The program is valuable precisely because it requires long-term commitments that yield progressive learning over time. In some ways, I feel my colleagues who dropped out of the program have missed out on the most profound lesson that the LDI has offered. Only by sticking with the program can one truly appreciate how much of an accomplishment it is to stimulate and sustain growth in a system that, historically, has been resistant to change. Of course, progress is painstaking at times, and the proper path is often hard to illuminate, but the challenges are worth tackling because they have real consequences –*

*as opposed to sticking close to the university, where the work rarely intersects the actual experiences of students and teachers.*

*- 3-Year Consultant*

*One major benefit is seeing how reform actually works in schools. By reading or taking classes or performing a few interviews you don't get a sense of how long and how short two years in a school can be. Those two years can span the careers of several teachers, and yet be insufficient to successfully integrate a new reading program. Change takes time, and without this type of long term involvement there is no way of understanding the day-to-day struggles that go on in a school trying to improve, or even trying to not lose ground.*

*- 2- Year Consultant*

As importantly, the multi-year commitment countered the common turnover from outsiders that schools often experience. One student expressed how this multi-year commitment was necessary in order to be respectful of schools, and enabled group members to build trust and relationships that were necessary pre-requisites for the school change process.

*I decided to work with the LDI because in comparison to some other school-based programs, it did require that a consultant remain for at least a year and a half. I have been a public school teacher for many years. I have been in and observed numerous situations where organizations or individuals have come into schools, started to work and then for various reasons left just as people, especially children, in the school began to feel some sense of connection to the people and/or the work being carried out. I determined that if I was going to go into a school, I was going to stay as long as I possibly could (if I was being of use to the school). The LDI program seems to value this way of thinking about how outsiders need to relate to schools.*

*By staying for an extended period of time with a school, generally, one is able to develop relationships that allow a person to get a little deeper into the culture of the school. This helps one to make sense of behaviors and language in order that questions can be asked to provoke reflection and thought. Various people trying to consider these questions (and develop others) are, for me, the beginning of initiating a process of change.*

*- 3-Year Consultant*

**Importance of Continuing the LDI.** The value of the LDI for public schools and for Harvard, and the critical importance of the program to continue was a conviction held by a number of graduate students working as LDI consultants:

*I think the LDI provides an excellent opportunity for public schools to gain access to useful and necessary resources to help them as they struggle with school reform to improve professional practice and student learning. I think the fact that the Initiative values and understands the importance of developing relationships over time that can support schools and the individual within them is commendable. I hope that the Boston-*

*Harvard Leadership initiative is able to find funding to continue work that I see as beneficial to the public schools and the university.*

*- 3-Year Consultant*

*I think that the LDI has been a very useful project for us as graduate students but also for the BPS (Boston Public Schools) as well. I think that after these five years are up something needs to replace it simply because these schools could use the help that we provide. It's not that the schools are incapable, but more that the demands are simply overwhelming, and they support that they receive from the district is insufficient to meet those demands.*

*- 2-Year Consultant*

### **III. Harvard Faculty Perspectives**

The Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) is the one of the major partners for the Boston-Harvard Leadership Development Initiative (LDI). Members of the HGSE faculty have been part of the LDI program since its inception, and have played a variety of key roles in the LDI. Roles include: collaborating on the original proposal, serving on its on-going board of advisors, presenting at various LDI summer institutes and offering LDI workshops and seminars, visiting LDI schools upon request as outside consultants, and advising graduate students who are LDI consultants.

Given the faculty's involvement and HGSE being a major stakeholder in the LDI, we interviewed five HGSE faculty members who have been centrally involved in the LDI for their views concerning the value and impact of the LDI. All five were teaching faculty of HGSE. Three were current members of the LDI advisory board and had assumed multiple teaching, consulting and supervisory roles for the LDI over the course of the project's four years, while two had played active teaching and/or consulting roles in the LDI summer institutes, seminars or on-site school visits. Each faculty member was interviewed individually for approximately 45 minutes.

Major themes from these interviews are summarized below.

**The LDI's Value for HGSE Graduate Students.** Faculty members described how they had clearly seen the LDI significantly enhanced the educational training of the graduate students serving as LDI consultants. Similar to the views of the graduate students themselves, they saw the LDI consultancy as offering a challenging, real-world context in which to learn about whole school reform in urban schools and an opportunity to connect research and practice, an experience valuable to a number of future career directions:

*There is no question that the doctoral students involved learn a great deal and develop skills that they didn't have before they started... They have had to try to solve in a very real-world kind of way some of the problems, both short term and long-term of school reform. I know them; they have learned a whole lot, and it feeds back into what kinds of*

*things they do research on, what the link is between the research and the real practice. I have just seen them grow up.*

*- Faculty Member A*

*For our students, it's invaluable -- whether they are going to be school administrators whether they are going to be researchers -- to provide them this level of experience so early in their careers.*

*- Faculty Member B*

Furthermore, faculty members recognized the experiences and strengths that many of the graduate students already possess when coming to HGSE. They regarded the LDI consultancies as a complementary relationship: the opportunity for students to offer something of value to schools, and to receive a rich, training ground in which to learn.

*It's a wonderful place for our doctoral students, and students in general --to be able to go out and get experience and give experience. We get students who come with a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge, and while they're here, gain a lot of knowledge. But they also need a place to learn. I think the Ed school benefits greatly by being able to send students out into these schools to really live and work in the real world. In some cases, they give more than they get, in other cases, they get more than they give. But in the end, it's a complementary process and it's the way it should be. I don't know how you can teach students about schools if you don't them out into the laboratory where they can actually test out their hypothesis.*

*- Faculty Member C*

*I think it's an important set of engagements that add value in a lot of different dimensions. For our doctoral students, they have ongoing contact at the building level, and that adds value to their own learning. Where they add value as consultants to their school, and the school provides a context for them to enhance their own learning. Many of them are, or have been teachers and/or school leaders, so this gives them a real place to work on some of these issues in an ongoing way. So I think the doctoral students benefit greatly, in their own professional and academic development.*

*- Faculty Member D*

**The LDI's Value for the Faculty.** Faculty members we interviewed emphasized the important benefits of the LDI program for the HGSE faculty. For faculty members already engaged in direct work with urban schools and administrators, it provided an additional outlet and locust of activity to engage schools and faculty colleagues. For others, the LDI drew them closer into the day-to-day workings and complexities of urban public schools, and helped inform their research. This was achieved not only through interactions with school participants, through faculty presentations and on-site consultations, but also through LDI graduate students, as students enriched both HGSE class discussions and conversations with professors due to students' ongoing consulting work with LDI schools. As had the graduate students, faculty viewed the LDI as an important testing ground for linking and applying research, theory and practice.

*It connects our faculty with practice, through its forums and summer programs and the like. These are conversations that our faculty can have and [later] embed those conversations in their research that then feed back on practice. For those of us who make less of the instructional modality than the consultant modality it allows us to continue the mission that we set out all those years ago to accomplish. If you are serious about the improvement of public education, and you sit over here [at Harvard], what are the ways that you can contribute? [LDI provides a way to do that.]*

- Faculty Member B

*As faculty, these are the kinds of experiences that continue to ground my own teaching and research in the complexity of practice in the school, in a full and vivid way. When we get to work with school teams – either in the summer or on-site – it’s just a vivid reminder of the complex problems that these institutions face and how research concepts and ideas might apply to them. So as a faculty member, it has benefited my own perspective and teaching in working with complex organizations, specifically public schools.*

- Faculty Member D

*[The LDI director] has “employed” a lot of Harvard researchers. I think it’s valuable for them. They have to stand up in front of practitioners and test their theories, and see how it plays out, and respond either to the positive or negative comments. I think it informs their research agenda; at least I hope it does.*

- Faculty Member C

*It is giving people like me a better chance for outreach. My connections with teachers on a personal-professional level allow me to keep a current understanding of what Boston schools are facing. I am involved in several efforts connect to Boston but there is nothing like sitting down with people in a classroom and learn about what they are thinking about, what their strengths are, what approach they use, how they feel about it, on a real nitty gritty technical level.*

- Faculty Member E

One faculty member also discussed the benefits of LDI in affording opportunities to work collaboratively with senior colleagues and with doctoral students in new and substantive ways, resulting in “better ways of working, new ways of working together that adds value to our own work.”

Faculty members spoke very highly of the ways in which director Kemp played an important role as visionary, collaborator, and liaison for the HGSE faculty. In spite of their many teaching and research demands, they described how Kemp made it very easy for faculty to understand the needs of the LDI schools and participants and to identify how best to draw upon what they could offer as faculty members. They did not discount lightly the on-going support for all the small, but essential details that ensured that courses, Institutes, and workshops ran smoothly, or that the ways in which Kemp respectfully treated school participants to ensure a highly engaged group of educators.

*The challenge we face as faculty members is unlimited opportunities for engagement and that means time. My own personal decision to take part [in the LDI] is based on that quality of the work that [the LDI director] does, and the importance of the task.*

*- Faculty Member D*

*She really aligns things well, so that there is not a lot of running around. “Here’s what they say they need, here’s how you can deliver it, let me help you structure it.” So for Ed School faculty, and I think students too, her sense of organization and sense of the mission helps that. Being able to connect to and learn from practice.*

*- Faculty Member B*

*[The LDI director] is very easy to work with. She said, “Think about what you’d like to do.” I said, “What do you want me to do?” We sat down and decided what we’d do- that we’d have readings, disseminate the readings, expect people to come after having read the articles and be prepared to use those articles as a theoretical base to discuss what they were facing in their schools, with everyone joining in to talk about how they might change practice. To me it wasn’t a difficult thing to come up with. What surprised me is that they were so true to attendance. [Unlike other sessions I’ve done after school where school administrators would come dragging in or not show up], what I found with [this LDI] group is that they always showed up. And they were ready; they were prepared to do what the group was supposed to do. I was impressed.*

*- Faculty Member C*

**The LDI’s Value for Harvard as an Institution.** One of the faculty members described some of the “intense skepticism” that many schools have of Harvard in general, and how the LDI has demonstrated a sustained commitment of bringing some of its best people to work in and with the schools. She spoke about how the LDI, now entering its fifth year, has enabled HGSE to have a positive presence and history with public schools:

*I think we are better informed about what’s going on; it opens the way for subsequent things at other times because people point to what we have been, what things have been developed, and are more likely to think we will deliver on other things too... There is a relation with schools – a public relation side of that with schools that is important – to affirm our involvement with public schools, particularly urban schools; there’s a kind of understanding about what is going on in those schools that comes back to our school from the faculty’s involvement and the students’*

*- Faculty Member A*

Others asserted how this is simply the “right thing to do”: that a school of education (and research for that matter) should be in the business of actively helping schools improve.

*Research doesn’t make a whole lot of sense if you don’t use it to improve practice... Harvard needs to be valid in the work that they do. I don’t think they can do*

*that in isolation without dealing with the real world of practice. So I think Harvard gets a lot of benefit.*

*Harvard ought to be doing something for the Boston and Cambridge schools. And this is a good thing to be doing. If I just think about it as community service, we ought to be in the business of improving practice in those communities that are contiguous to ours; in one case, we actually reside in the community.*

*- Faculty Member C*

While faculty acknowledged that there were other efforts at HGSE that worked with public schools, they viewed that LDI offered something distinct and powerful: focused, cohesive, proactive and sustained:

*LDI is coordinated and connected: working in the same schools for a period of time and giving more than it gets in terms of faculty and students...None is as focused as the LDI. The LDI has its 10-11 schools...Even with the internships in student teaching that are [done] on a regular basis, the rest of what we do is sort of on request by the system or on request in some sense.*

*- Faculty Member B*

*What Peggy's doing has long term implications for the way we run schools in Boston...She's built on what we've done [in other programs at Harvard], but she's gone beyond it. She has created a series of activities that require follow-up, not over months, but over years...Peggy has put together an agenda, that over time, builds leadership skills in the BPS, thereby changing the way people do business that ultimately will improve student achievement*

*- Faculty Member C*

**The LDI's Value for Schools.** Faculty members attested to the critical importance of the LDI's shared leadership model to develop new school leaders. They described the significant accomplishments the LDI has achieved the past four years, as well as underscored the importance for such a program to continue.

*Peggy's created a venue where other people's leadership skills can evolve and shown in a way. People are being plucked out to become leaders...The evolution of people who aspired to be leaders, but might never been noticed...Principals get to lead in new ways, and they really get to think about a team approach. What the LDI has taught a group of principals from Boston is that there's another way to lead: that you don't have to be the only leader, but you need to be cognizant of how to build leadership or create opportunities for others to evidence their leadership within the school ...It's the right way to think about leadership...[But] there's a lot more to do. You can't just say, "Well, we did our part, and now we have these ten schools." It takes so long to get to the real issues.*

*- Faculty Member C*

*I am always distressed by the constant reassignment of principals that has been an issue for us all along. To the extent that the schools can develop some leadership capacity that is a little more stable, then as new principals come in, there is something to build on and it is not just the responsibility of one person to make this work... I think there is a lot yet to be done, and that the district is not stable enough yet in either administratively or the employment of new teachers to not need this. I don't think it is about a job that gets done. I think it's ongoing support for these schools in the midst of what is likely to be continuous, dramatic changes in staffing. There are going to be wholesale retirements, there are going to be a lot of new people who are not well prepared to teach. They may be eager and smart and well educated in other ways but they are not really ready to work in urban schools with the needs that kids have and those school have...I do think that schools are getting stronger, but I think they are going to need a lot of support.*

*- Faculty Member A*

#### **IV. Summary of Findings and Recommendations: Importance of Continuing LDI Efforts Importance of the LDI's Shared Leadership Model and Developing School-Wide Leadership**

The LDI's shared leadership model encourages school leadership to reside not only with each head of school but also with other administrators and faculty members. We found instilling this notion of shared leadership to be critically important to schools because it helps provide stability and continuity of leadership that mitigates against program uncertainties and disruptions that often accompany a change in top administrative positions. Of the ten original LDI schools, five now have a head of school who is different from the person who was head when the school joined the program just four years ago.

For many of the participants, particularly teachers, the LDI was their first, formal training in developing school leadership. At the same time, the vast majority of the LDI participants have been asked in the past year to assume leadership responsibilities in their schools, such as school-wide curriculum leader or literacy specialist, member of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), or head of a study group or committee. Thus, the LDI appears to address itself directly to some of the leadership demands that are increasingly placed upon the school participants within their schools. Viewed another way, the school participants have numerous opportunities in the day-to-day operations of their schools to apply directly the skills and knowledge acquired through the LDI.

**Impact of the LDI Program on Schools:** The LDI program, with its multi-faceted program events and activities focusing on effective leadership and instructional and curricular issues, reached an impressive number of school professionals. Approximately 126 administrators and teachers from the twelve LDI schools participated in the regular LDI program offerings. Additional faculty and students from several LDI schools enjoyed presentations from LDI consultants and faculty members who led on-site sessions at the schools. And over 500 educators from schools and organizations in Boston and throughout the state participated in LDI's two Fleet Forums.

The vast majority of the LDI school participants indicated that they felt that the LDI has had a positive impact on their professional development as a school leader. Administrators felt that the LDI had improved their effectiveness as a team leader working with faculty and staff, and that it had improved their interpersonal skills, making them more effective running department meetings as well as resolving confrontational situations. Teachers described how the LDI had enhanced their understanding of schools and their own roles as teachers, and had renewed their commitment to themselves as adult learners. A number spoke about how the LDI has enabled them to gain a much broader perspective on themselves, their school, and the important role that they play in their schools beyond their individual classrooms, and how that understanding has caused them to assume more responsibility and leadership positions in their schools.

In addition to the effects of the LDI on individuals' professional development, the vast majority of participants also indicated that the LDI has had a positive impact on their school and its staff. Participants described the LDI's impact on schools as occurring in four major areas: strengthening the effectiveness of the Instructional Leadership Team, helping schools interpret and plan action steps around the MCAS, serving as a professional development resource for school faculty, and stimulating site initiatives related to school change efforts.

**Design of the LDI Program:** Results from our study indicated that the LDI program has been well-designed and implemented, with participants regarding the program as engaging, professionally rewarding, and positive in its impact on both their own professional development and on their schools. Participants consistently spoke highly of the value of a number of key features and components of the program, which we recommend be maintained:

**Multi-year commitment:** The schools' five-year commitment to the LDI program acknowledges the serious focus and devoted effort required for school change – that school change is a slow and difficult process that requires dedication and perseverance. It recognizes how difficult it is to develop shared leadership, and the importance of sustained support of that process. This sustained professional development and support is even more critical in light of the considerable changes in administration leadership often experienced by Boston schools. The length of the multi-year commitment in future phases of the LDI -- be it two, three or more years -- will need to balance the realities of changing leadership and demands placed upon teachers and administrators on the one hand, with the powerful stabilizing force that the LDI can offer schools and their staff in times of administrative change and shifts in district priorities and demands.

The multi-year commitment requested from LDI consultants benefits both Boston Public Schools and the Harvard Graduate School of Education students who serve as LDI consultants. The commitment counters schools' typical fleeting encounters with outside consultants and graduate students, and allows the schools to benefit more fully from a longer-term relationship. The weekly commitment also provides time for the graduate student to build a relationship with a school and its team, and affords a true and realistic picture of the challenging and often arduous process of school change.

**Relevant and high quality offerings:** School participants viewed the LDI program as addressing central ideas of school change and school leadership (e.g., envisioning instructional strategies, introducing and managing change; instructional and curricular focus across the grades; use of student data) that were key educational priorities of the Boston Public Schools' Whole School Change Plan and related district initiatives. Individual events were rated uniformly high in written evaluations: people valued the research expertise and highly knowledgeable perspectives of presenters, the rich and varied offerings of the topics and sessions, and relevance to the issues and necessary actions facing their school.

Participants valued the program's offering of both off-site and on-site events. School team members talked about feeling professionally renewed when leaving their own school, removed from the day-to-day job demands, and coming to Harvard to engage in informative presentations and classes, and to interact with colleagues from their school and other LDI schools. Site visits to several "best practices" schools in New York and Massachusetts were also described as inspiring and as concretely portraying how school change can happen and how it might look. At the same time, participants valued having LDI consultants coming to their own school -- working closely with their team, getting to know their faculty and students, and interacting with faculty and students.

Findings from our survey, as well as a review of evaluations from specific LDI events during Years 2-4, revealed that ratings were uniformly high for many of the LDI events. The main suggestion for improvement is to leave more time for schools to respond and discuss points raised in the presentations, and for the schools to either have an opportunity to reflect upon, and consider implications for their own schools, or to hear from one another.

**Responsive and respectful relationship with school participants:** School participants appreciated being treated as respected professionals and adult learners, and recognized the clear responsiveness of the program to their individual and their school's needs. The program offerings evolved both yearly and on an on-going basis, shaped by participants' needs and interests. Similarly, care and attention was devoted to selecting and matching up of LDI consultants, and the shaping of the consultant's role, support, and tasks as defined by the needs of the school and school team. Furthermore, each team considered its school's high priority areas for a given year, to determine for itself what its LDI team's foci and action agenda would be.

**Informed and independent perspective:** LDI consultants and staff are removed from both day-to-day school politics and longer-range district policies. Consequently, they offer independent perspectives and support that was much appreciated. School participants valued the opportunity to work with someone outside of the school system who was informed, who was neutral and without school or district alliances, and who could be trusted to keep confidences. They regarded consultants and project staff as people who could ask them the hard questions that were designed to help them turn ideas and discussions into plans, resulting in implemented actions that improve schools. School participants also appreciated learning from and working with the Harvard faculty members, whose research and insights were always enlightening and often inspiring.

**Collaboration with LDI consultancy:** School participants regarded their LDI consultant as an integral part of their LDI experience. Working with a consultant over several years gave the school team time to develop its ideas and actions. Often, the team viewed their LDI consultant as central to facilitating the group process, serving as a sounding board for the principal, and assuming responsibilities critical to promoting whole school change. Consultants often experienced the broadest impact when they were able to assume a role and presence in a school's Instructional Leadership team and at its meetings.

At the same time, most LDI consultants were able to play an active role in supporting teams grappling with school change efforts, and were afforded a first-hand experience that surpassed what they could acquire through course work, readings, and research assistantships. The LDI program afforded them unique opportunities to fit theory with practice and explore distributed leadership, standards-based reform, and large-scale instructional improvement. Both consultants and practitioners could test ideas by implementing them in schools.

**Development of LDI professional network:** School participants valued the professional relationships being fostered between the different participants from various LDI schools, and felt that the LDI had increased their professional networking with colleagues at other schools.

A number of participants expressed a desire to have greater opportunity to share more information and insights across schools. In Year 5, there is now a very committed cadre of LDI schools, and project staff may want to facilitate and encourage greater networking and exchange between these schools. This can begin to build a stronger network that can be sustained once the LDI staff and consultants assume a less active presence after Year 5. While there is a fair amount of informal networking and conversations that happen between two or three people before an LDI event, there is usually limited time to encourage discussions or small group work across schools during events themselves. Future sessions (perhaps as part of the Summer Institute) might encourage some "special topics/issues" break out groups, to encourage school participants to begin to see each other as possible resources for insights and advice, and fellow problem-solvers.

**Value of the LDI for the Harvard Graduate School of Education:** Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) faculty voiced the importance of the LDI program to its graduate students, its faculty, and to Harvard as an institution. They noted the ways in which the LDI consultancy offered their graduate students a challenging, real-world context in which to learn about whole school reform and to connect research and practice, valuable to a range of future career directions. Faculty regarded the LDI consultancies as a complementary relationship in which students could offer something of real value to schools, and receive a rich training ground in which to learn.

Faculty members also described important benefits for HGSE faculty. For some faculty members, the LDI enable them to continue to engage in direct work with urban schools in ways that were professional rewarding. For others, the LDI offered them a new opportunity for extending and enriching their own teaching and research in the complexity of practice in schools, and for collaborating with senior colleagues. For Harvard as an institution, faculty members

stated how the LDI actively and substantively demonstrated Harvard's interest, support, and sustained commitment to public schools, and to neighboring districts like Boston.

The LDI consultants also forcefully expressed the value that the LDI offered in their formative training as young educators. The immediacy of the consulting experiences compelled them to integrate and apply what they were learning about whole school change and distributed leadership in the real work context of improving urban schools. Many talked about how the insights, skills and experiences from these consultancies far surpassed what they could acquire through regular coursework, research and teaching assistantships.

**Necessary qualities of a LDI Director:** Director Kemp was regarded as essential component of the program's success, both as mentor and colleague, and in the ways she structured and guided the program. Graduate students described the excellent role model and mentor the LDI director embodies, and the important structure and function of the LDI consultants regularly meeting as a group to debrief, advise, and support each other. Faculty members described the director as an important visionary, colleague and liason, who enabled faculty members to contribute and participate in substantive ways yet respected the many teaching, research and administrative duties already placed upon them.

For the school participants, the LDI director represented someone highly familiar with the Boston Public Schools, yet offering an informed, independent perspective they could trust. The director was also strong agent and "champion" of the respectful and responsive ways in which school participants were treated and acknowledged.

**Importance of continuing LDI efforts:** All three key groups we spoke with in our study -- the school administrators and teachers, the LDI graduate school consultants, and the Harvard faculty -- strongly emphasized what a positive impact the LDI program had on their own professional development, their jobs, and the schools. Working hard on the complex and difficult process of school change in urban public schools, they all could point to personal and professional accomplishments that they attribute to the LDI. At the same time, they recognized with continuing commitment that the work is not yet done, and that much remains to be accomplished. They witnessed first-hand the extremely difficult process of school change: where gains can be modest, and large gains difficult to sustain, particularly given rapid changes in school administration and staff, and large- scale retirements of the teaching force anticipated in the coming decade. All underscored the importance of the LDI program continuing its exemplary, productive efforts and securing further funding and support for the program in the coming years, a recommendation that the evaluation team regard as well-founded.