

The Human Costs of Education Reform: The Case of School Reconstitution

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School reconstitution has become a prevalent but underexamined policy option. Although the stated aim of school reconstitution is to enhance the human capital available in low-performing schools, this aim may not be realized. Instead, reconstitution reform may impose substantial human costs, which undermine its ability to achieve its primary aim. This article draws on 2 years of case study data to examine the nature, distribution, and consequences of the human costs associated with this reform. This case study can be empirically instructive, because it exposes a category of costs—namely, human costs—that were largely unanticipated and/or underestimated by the policy makers but were highly consequential for the fate of the reform. This discovery is significant, theoretically, because it reaffirms the recognition that human costs exist, and it contributes to the understanding of how these costs might be operationalized and linked to the efficacy of personnel-dependent reforms.

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Although school reconstitution can take a variety of forms, generally speaking, this strategy involves removing a school's incumbent administrators and teachers (or large percentages of them) and replacing them with educators who, presumably, are more capable and committed (Malen, Croninger, Redmond, & Muncey, 1999). At heart, reconstitution is a human capital reform grounded in the assumption that upgrading the human capital in low-performing schools will improve the performance of those schools. Although the aim of reconstitution is to enhance the human capital in a

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school, the act of reconstituting a school may or may not accomplish that objective. Nonetheless, reconstitution has become a key component of high-stakes accountability reforms frequently being advanced as both a consequence of a school's low performance and the correction for it.

In a national context characterized by clarion calls for performance-based standards and high-stakes accountability systems, reconstitution is a prevalent but underexamined option (Education Commission of the States, 2000; Elmore, Abelman, & Fuhrman, 1996; Ladd, 1996). As is often the case with innovative policies (Kingdon, 1995), neither the origin nor the history of school reconstitution as a remedy for low-performing schools has been well documented. Descriptions of school reconstitution suggest that this policy surfaced as early as the mid-1980s as part of a desegregation consent decree affecting San Francisco public schools (Fraga, Erlichson, & Lee, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Since then, other cities including, but not limited to, Cleveland, Chicago, Denver, and Washington, D.C., have experimented with reconstituting low-performing schools (Hendrie, 1998; Moreno, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 1998, 2001). Currently, this option is nested in a variety of state accountability systems¹ and is one of the sanctions specified in the recent federal No Child Left Behind legislation. Some reconstitution efforts have been studied (Adcock & Winkler, 1999; Hansen, Kraetzer, & Mukherjee, 1998; Khanna, Flores, Bergum, & Desmond, 1999; Wong, Anagnostopoulos, Rutledge, Lynn, & Dreeben, 1999), but even in settings with relatively extensive experience with this approach to reform, data regarding its effects are rare (Fraga et al., 1998). In short, we know little about either the history or the viability of this reform. Our understanding about whether, how, or why reconstitution engenders—or ought to be expected to engender—school improvement is limited both conceptually and empirically.

This article is part of a broader effort to address these conceptual and empirical gaps in the literature through a 2-year study of a district's experience with a school reconstitution reform (Finkelstein et al., 1998, 2000). This study demonstrates that, although the stated aim of reconstitution is to

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enhance the human capital available in low-performing schools, that aim may not be realized. Instead, reconstitution reform may impose substantial human costs, which undermine the ability of this reform to achieve its primary aim. Given that unexpected finding, the purpose of this article is to examine the nature, distribution, and consequences of the human costs associated with reconstitution reform. Drawing on the theoretical literature on cost, we articulate three interrelated dimensions of human costs: (a) task costs, (b) social costs, and (c) psychological costs. We draw on case study data to document these costs, describe the distribution of them (including the degree to which the district could have offset these burdens), and demonstrate how these human costs help explain the inability of the reform to realize one of its major stated aims (i.e., enhancement of human capital in targeted schools as a requisite to improving performance in those schools). To develop this line of argument, we describe the theoretical framework that anchors our analysis, summarize the data sources and methods, and provide background on the district's initiative and its initial impact on the stock of human capital in reconstituted schools. With that groundwork in place, we analyze the human costs, and we then discuss the empirical and conceptual contributions this analysis makes to our understanding of the human costs of personnel-dependent reforms such as reconstitution.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN COSTS

All education policies and practices carry costs. The cost of an intervention is the value of what is given up when resources are dedicated to support the goals of the initiative. As described by Levin and McEwan (2001, p. 44), "All costs represent the sacrifice of an opportunity that has been foregone. . . . By using resources in one way, we are giving up the ability to use them in another way, so a cost has been incurred." Although the benefit of an initiative is the utility that is gained as a result of the investment, the cost of the initiative is the utility lost.

Assessing Opportunity Costs

Assessing the total cost of any program, policy, or practice involves identifying and assigning a value to the full array of resources that are required to realize the goals of the initiative. The economic approach to cost analysis recognizes the full opportunity cost of all resources devoted to an initiative. In some cases, such as the direct purchase of a good or a service, the cost of a

program or initiative can be represented easily in terms of monetary expenditures.² However, educational interventions generally require a variety of resources including time and effort, facilities and infrastructure, and materials and equipment that can be difficult to value (Monk & King, 1993; Rice, 1997, 2002). For example, education reforms tend to require substantial time and effort of personnel. Although one could use salary information to assign a dollar value to the time invested by teachers, administrators, and other employees, valuing volunteer time is less straightforward. Even more problematic is appraising the time of students whose most valuable forgone opportunity may be learning rather than earnings (Rice, 1996). Furthermore, even if the amount of time devoted to an intervention is accurately valued, gauging the level of effort expended during that time presents further challenges. Consider a situation in which two equally qualified individuals spend equal amounts of time on the job. The value of these two people could be assumed to be equal; that is, they deserve equal compensation for their time. However, if one person devotes substantially more effort than the other, the value of that individual's time on the task is arguably greater.³ Understanding the full opportunity cost of an intervention involves recognizing these nuances and valuing all of the resources required to accomplish the goals of the initiative.

The costs and effects of education interventions are often distributed across a variety of individuals and organizations. Analyses that recognize the distribution of costs and effects have the potential to heighten awareness of who pays for and who benefits from an initiative. Without accurate and comprehensive information about the range of costs and how these costs are distributed across individuals and organizations, policymakers in the early planning stages of program implementation could be ill equipped to judge whether the community has the appropriate levels of various types of resources to support the program (Rice, 1996). For instance, suppose a reform pivots on parent involvement; a community lacking willing and able parents, as well as the opportunity structure to support their participation, may be well advised to consider other alternatives in which resource requirements better match the available resources. In the case of reconstitution, a primary resource is capable and committed teachers and administrators; this reform may not be appropriate for communities that do not have or cannot secure this resource in abundant supply.

Sometimes resource substitutions can be used to offset the cost shouldered by one group or to shift the cost burden from one group to another (Rothenberg, 1975). For instance, teachers could be compensated for the additional responsibilities resulting from a reform initiative such that the cost burden is shifted from individual employees to the public treasury. However,

resource substitutions may not fully offset the costs. For example, the additional teacher compensation may not adequately offset the strain incurred as a result of the reform. Likewise, additional staff hired may not fully offset a decline in morale resulting from an intervention. As these examples suggest, for resource substitutions to effectively offset costs, at least two conditions must be met: (a) The value of the substitution must be sufficient, and (b) the nature of the substitution must be appropriate (i.e., reasonably well aligned with the resource required).

Unpacking Human Costs

Human costs are one component of the full opportunity cost of an initiative. We define human costs as reform-related sacrifices made by individuals and groups of individuals in the organization. The theoretical literature has acknowledged the presence of human costs; for example, Levin and McEwan (2001) recognized the loss of a friendship as a cost. Although some cost analyses of education policies attend to the distribution of costs by explicitly recognizing the costs that reforms impose on teachers, administrators, and school staff (e.g., see King, 1994; Little et al., 1987; Rice, 2001, 2003), the category of human costs is typically not reflected in empirical efforts to understand reform and, consequently, is underdeveloped terrain in the education-cost literature. Some studies of education reforms describe how various initiatives such as site-based management and career ladders can intensify work, decrease morale, undermine collegiality, or otherwise operate to frustrate or alienate administrators and teachers (e.g., see Carnoy & MacDonell, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994; Malen, 1993; Malen & Ogawa, 1992). These results tend to be cast as initial negative side effects that frequently occur when new initiatives are introduced in school systems. Such a characterization operates to dismiss real and recurrent reform-related tolls more as symptoms of individuals' resistances to change than as matters of sound policy design and implementation (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995). The concept of human costs may prompt researchers and policymakers to take these issues more seriously and deal with them more explicitly in the selection, design, and implementation of policy options.

We contend that human costs are particularly relevant to personnel-dependent enterprises like education. Although the productivity of many industries is a function of resources other than personnel, most efforts in the field of education are contingent on the capacity and commitment of the people who live and work in schools. We also argue that human costs are critical in personnel-targeted interventions where the primary mechanism of reform is a dramatic change in the roles and responsibilities of those who work in

schools (e.g., site-based management, career ladders, school reconstitution). This article considers the human costs associated with a personnel-targeted reform in the personnel-dependent field of education.

We identify three categories of human costs. The first category is task costs—the time and effort that individuals in the organization expend to meet work demands. The second category is social costs—tolls paid collectively in the form of worker turnover and loss of community, trust, and collegiality between employees. The third category is psychological costs—burdens borne by individuals often in the form of a general loss of professional efficacy and self-worth.⁴ These three categories may interact in important ways. For example, a reform that involves intense social costs and psychological costs can dismantle collegial structures and undermine teachers' sense of professional efficacy such that the task costs are even more difficult to bear. Likewise, a reform that carries excessive task costs could erode one's sense of professional efficacy and undermine efforts to develop a collaborative work environment. As this article demonstrates, these three categories provide a useful framework for understanding the human costs of reconstitution reform.

With this framework in mind, we draw on the documentation of the human costs associated with school reconstitution to underscore the importance of assessing the full range of costs associated with these sorts of personnel-dependent initiatives. In so doing, we contribute to the theoretical literature by reaffirming the existence of human costs and illustrating how these costs might be operationalized and linked to the efficacy of personnel-targeted reforms. We contend that failure to take this comprehensive approach to cost can result in a dramatic underestimation of the full cost of reforms. Such a serious miscalculation has implications both for evaluations of school reconstitution as a policy and for comparisons of reconstitution with alternative policy options designed to improve low-performing schools through enhanced human capital. As stated by Levin (1983, p. 14), "Ignoring costs can be costly." As we demonstrate in this article, the serious miscalculation of the costs of school reconstitution has major implications for the fate of the reform.

CASE STUDY DATA SOURCES AND METHOD

Because little is known about how reconstitution reforms play out in schools, an interdisciplinary research team adopted an exploratory case study design to describe what happens when schools are reconstituted and to generate insights regarding the premises and promises of this initiative as an education reform strategy. This case study concentrated on a large, metropolitan district's experience with the enactment and implementation of a

reconstitution reform. Although the reconstitution initiative targeted six schools, our study focused on nested case studies (Yin, 1994) of policy implementation in three of those six schools. The three schools we studied (two elementary sites and one middle school) were selected largely on the basis of their willingness to participate in this research venture.

To map reform developments across levels of the system and across stages of the process (from the initial adoption through the first 2 years of implementation), the research team collected documentary, interview, and observational data on multiple aspects of the reconstitution initiative. Data for this study were collected between March 1998 and December 1999. The school-based data were used to create case narratives of the reconstitution experiment in the three sites we studied in depth. To preserve the anonymity of these three sites, the research team used these school-based case narratives and other district-level documentary and interview data to develop two composite profiles of the district's reconstitution initiative—one at the end of the first year of implementation (Finkelstein et al., 1998) and a second at the end of the second year of implementation (Finkelstein et al., 2000).

This article draws on these composite profiles. The profiles are based on multiple documents (e.g., policy statements, meeting minutes, descriptions and evaluations of district initiatives); extensive observations of classroom activities, faculty meetings, and organizational routines; and interview data acquired from more than 360 conversations with top-level district administrators, building administrators, board members, teacher union representatives, classroom teachers, program specialists, and support staff who were in positions to know how this reform was selected, authorized, and instituted (see Appendix A for a summary of interview sources). At the elementary schools, the interview pool included all administrators and nearly all teachers and specialists. At the middle school, the interview pool included administrators and a cross section of teachers representing the various grade levels and special program areas at that site. In all cases, the pools were composed of men and women of different races and ethnicities who varied in terms of their years of experience as educators and their length of employment at the reconstituted schools. The vast majority of these interviews were semistructured exchanges that ranged from 20 minutes to 3 hours with most falling between 45 and 90 minutes. These semistructured interviews were augmented by informal exchanges, which ranged from 10 minutes to more than 2 hours but averaged about 55 minutes.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the research team incorporated multiple checks for bias and error. For example, open-ended interview guides were used, anonymity and confidentiality assurances were provided, interviews were taped whenever possible, and detailed notes were

taken in all instances. Reflecting the inductive character of exploratory case study designs, data analysis involved scrutinizing sources to (a) identify prominent patterns as well as exceptions to them; (b) lay out the chains of evidence that supported, contradicted, or qualified emergent themes and interpretations (Yin, 1994); and (c) develop narrative accounts of the participants' expectations of and experiences with the reform during the first and second year of its implementation. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, we worked to corroborate or correct our interpretations by checking the detail, accuracy, and consistency of information received from individual interviews and by comparing the extent to which themes were evident in (absent from or challenged by) the information provided by multiple informants who occupied different roles, had different levels of professional experience, and varied along the dimensions of age, race, sex, and ethnicity. We also cross-checked information secured through interviews with data from observations and documents. As a further check for bias and error, the research reports were reviewed by the research team, key informants, and two colleagues who have expertise in education policy but were not involved in this study (Murphy, 1980).

To honor our anonymity and confidentiality commitments made to study participants, we attribute quotations to members of broad groupings (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents). We do not identify the source of quotations by specific characteristics of the individuals who provided them (e.g., race, ethnicity, grade level, program area specialization). Implementation patterns including evidence of human costs were remarkably consistent—not only within and across sites but also across categories of informants. Therefore, these more general designations are both sufficient and appropriate.

Although this research, detailed in two reports (Finkelstein et al., 1998, 2000), capitalized on multiple sources of data collected over an extended time period, the scope of the study (three schools in one district) does not permit firm generalizations about reconstitution reforms that may be designed differently or may be launched in contexts that are not comparable to the one we studied. Within the confines of these constraints, we indicate throughout the article how this case can be instructive both empirically and conceptually.

THE DISTRICT'S RECONSTITUTION INITIATIVE

Background of the Reform

The district's reconstitution effort was largely a political response to a complex web of demographic conditions, governmental pressures, and school

performance issues that threatened the stability and legitimacy of the district and its leadership (for a detailed analysis of the politics of enactment and implementation, see Jones & Malen, 2002). For example, this district has a complex mix of cultures, a growing number of students who speak English as a second language, high percentages of African American and Hispanic students, and relatively high percentages of families eligible for free and reduced-price school-lunch programs. High student mobility rates, low teacher salaries, high faculty turnover rates, high percentages of uncertified or provisionally certified teachers, and pent up demands for new and refurbished school facilities undermine the prospects for meaningful school improvements in this district.

Located in a state that is strongly and publicly committed to high-stakes testing and stringent accountability measures including reconstitution, this district has been under escalating pressure to improve organizational performance and demonstrate effective management of its fiscal and human resources. The district superintendent, local board members, and key central office staff believed that rapid, “dramatic,” and “decisive” action was required to avert a state takeover and to quell local discontent. The district was “in the spotlight” and the superintendent was “in the hot seat.” The words of one administrator reflect the views of many study participants:

[The superintendent] had no choice but to do something drastic. . . . The state’s label of failing schools had put people in a panic mode. . . . The testing environment was creating anxiety. . . . The state had been pressing hard; . . . [he] had to do something dramatic. . . . We were in a fishbowl with the state. . . . We had to find a way to fend them off. . . . [The superintendent] had to find a way to be victorious.

In this highly politicized context, the superintendent announced that six schools would be restaffed. The district-articulated criteria for selecting the six schools included low test scores, high absentee and suspension rates, and a number of poverty indicators and diversity factors. In addition, the district considered the availability of special grant monies that might be reallocated to support comprehensive improvements at each site.

Cast as the first step of a new, determined effort to redesign low-performing schools in the district, the reconstitution initiative embodied sweeping changes for the six schools. New principals were appointed in five of the six schools. Teachers and staff members who wanted to continue to work in those schools, no matter their experience, preference, or history, had to (a) reapply for their positions; (b) sit for a formal interview with a committee composed of the new principal, district administrators, and/or intermediate-level administrators; and (c) accept the verdict of that selection committee. Displaced personnel were guaranteed other positions within the district.

The district asked all employees hired at the reconstituted schools to make a 3-year commitment to the school and to attend special staff development meetings prior to the opening of school as well as during the first year of the reform. The superintendent envisioned that reconstitution was an “extraordinary opportunity” that would engender collaborative exchanges between school staffs and their communities, promote innovative responses to school problems, and improve the academic achievement of students in the schools. In short, the superintendent had high hopes for this initiative. These six schools, in cooperation with the district, were to initiate a range of school improvement strategies and become models of school improvement in the district, if not in the state and nation.

To advance this ambitious agenda, the superintendent pledged to support this initiative for 3 years. He promised to staff the schools with cadres of master teachers and instructional aides and to provide the necessary supplies, equipment, and professional development these schools might require. At the outset of the reform, the district created an office composed of three individuals who were to assist site personnel and earmarked \$1.2 million from existing resources to support the office, staff development programs, and school improvement initiatives. At the end of the first year of the reform, the new office was disbanded and responsibility for oversight and support was transferred to an office that monitored school improvement plans in low-performing schools. Evidence of any fiscal allocations earmarked for this reform disappeared, in part, because the district was struggling to support multiple initiatives with limited funds and, in part, because the superintendent had lost credibility with the board and was no longer in a position to procure the monetary resources the reconstitution reform required (Jones & Malen, 2002; Rice & Croninger, 2001).⁵

Impact of Reconstitution on Human Capital

The viability of reconstitution as a mechanism to turn around low-performing schools pivots on the presumption that reconstitution will improve the stock of human capital available in the schools and thereby stimulate and sustain major and meaningful improvements in organizational programs and practices (Malen et al., 1999; Rice & Croninger, 2001). Theoretically, reconstitution reforms can affect both the quality and the quantity of human capital. The quality may be affected most directly by changes in the make-up of existing staff positions, and the quantity is most directly altered through the addition or subtraction of positions. We examined each of these possibilities. In the section that follows, we briefly present our findings with respect to the impact of the reconstitution initiative on human

capital in the schools we studied. More detailed treatments of these general findings can be found in Malen, Croninger, Muncey, and Jones (2002) and Rice and Croninger (2001).

Changes in existing staff. Although restaffing is the cornerstone of any reconstitution policy, the particular staffing patterns that developed in the schools that we studied stand in stark contrast to the expectation that reconstitution would enhance human capital at each site. Principal and teacher replacements, on average, had less experience and fewer teaching credentials than the previous faculties.

At the outset of the reform, the district replaced veteran principals at five of the six reconstituted schools. Newly assigned principals had some prior administrative experience, but few had extensive experience as principals and none had direct experience as turn-around principals charged with the responsibility of redesigning reconstituted schools. All three of the principals at the schools we studied in-depth were considered to be “novice” and “inexperienced” principals by their faculties. The faculty viewed the inexperience of building principals as a serious liability, especially during the first year of the initiative. Reflecting back on the first year, an elementary teacher provided us with a prevalent view:

We were all so new and ill-prepared for what we were being asked to do. . . . We needed a strong leader. . . . We needed someone more experienced, someone who knew how to get things done in the school and in the system.

As with the newly appointed principals, the experience level of the reconstituted faculties was lower than that of the faculties that existed prior to the reform. Many veteran teachers elected to leave the school, in part, because they were “shocked,” “insulted,” “angered,” and “deeply hurt.” Although the precise impact of these sentiments on teachers’ decisions to reapply for their positions is difficult to gauge, it appears that negative sentiments prompted some reputedly excellent teachers to accept positions in other schools at the outset of the reform. Reconstitution provided an opportunity to reassign weak teachers but not without a cost to the stock of human capital at sites. The comments of departing and returning teachers underscore these losses:

Lots of dedicated professionals who knew the curriculum and the students and had their classroom management strategies intact left because they would not succumb to the insult; they would not tolerate the disrespect, the mistreatment.

We lost some wonderful, experienced teachers. . . . We got rid of a few bad ones, too, but we lost some real jewels.

We lost lots of good teachers. . . . People who had proven their worth did not want to reapply. They were hurt. They left. . . . The school lost out.

New, inexperienced teachers filled most of the vacancies created by those who left the schools. In the three schools that we studied in-depth, roughly 75% of the teachers hired during the first year of reconstitution were first-year teachers, many of whom had not yet received their state certification and therefore had to enroll in after-school and weekend courses as well as meet their contractual obligations at the reconstituted schools.

The infusion of inexperienced teachers was not a one-time occurrence. Even though the district sought to guarantee stability in staffing for 3 years, teachers continued to leave reconstituted schools at the end of the first and second years of the initiative. Faculty replacements, as in the first year of implementation, came from pools of relatively new teachers rather than from cadres of experienced, master teachers. Even though a principal at one of the elementary schools that we studied did succeed in hiring a group of veteran teachers at the start of the second year of reconstitution, the majority of faculty still had less than 3 years of teaching experience. At another elementary school, roughly two thirds of the classroom teachers were first-year teachers when school opened in the fall of the third year.

As these general patterns demonstrate, teachers and principals hired under the auspices of the reconstitution initiative had less experience and weaker credentials than their predecessors. Because salary scales are based, at least in part, on education credits and experience levels, it is likely that the total salaries for these schools' staffs were lower than they had been prior to the reform. These savings could be invested in creating new positions at reconstituted schools; but, as the next section demonstrates, that did not occur.

Additional staff positions. Although additional personnel were brought into some of the schools we studied, this occurrence was a rare event and, at best, an indirect result of the reconstitution initiative. In terms of new positions directly resulting from the reform, one individual captured a prominent view: "No additional personnel have been added with [reconstitution] money, because such funds don't exist."

Although the reconstitution reform was not responsible for creating new permanent positions at the site level, we did find evidence of additional staff in the reconstituted schools. For instance, some schools used grant money to procure additional personnel. Likewise, during the second year of reconstitution, the state's teacher mentor program provided a mentor teacher in each of the schools we studied. Schools may have qualified for this program because

of the high level of staff turnover and an increase in the percent of inexperienced teachers that resulted from the restaffing of schools. Although new school-level staff positions were not a direct provision of reconstitution, reconstitution may have contributed to the conditions that qualify sites for additional, state-supported personnel.

Even when we could identify additional positions at schools, school personnel indicated that new positions were not necessarily aligned with the educational priorities of the school. For example, the principal in the middle school that we studied would have preferred a testing coordinator to the mentor teacher allocated from the state's program. Likewise, school staffs would have preferred certified teachers to help reduce the size of classes rather than the more narrowly defined personnel allocations they received. Unfortunately, the few additional positions that we did identify were supported by grant or other program money that had clear restrictions regarding how dollars could be spent. In sum, we found no evidence that any savings resulting from restaffing provided schools with the flexibility to make additional investments in human capital during the first 2 years of reconstitution.

THE HUMAN COSTS OF RECONSTITUTION REFORM

The previous section demonstrates that the reconstitution reform we studied did not realize its primary aim of enhancing human capital in the target schools. In this section, we focus on a partial explanation for that disappointing result. We show that the often-overlooked human costs contributed to the inability of this reform to enhance human capital in the reconstituted schools. Although the human costs took a variety of forms, we concentrate on three interrelated tolls that were paid largely by the administrators and teachers who work in the reconstituted schools and by the students who depend on them for many, if not most, of their educational opportunities.

Task Costs

Reconstitution reforms, by definition and design, dismantle the organizational infrastructure of schools. They remove the staffs and, in so doing, erase the standard operating procedures and established practices that organizational employees rely on to structure, regulate, and manage their work. Our study demonstrates that rebuilding the organizational infrastructure of reconstituted schools may be an extremely difficult, daunting, and draining process. In this case, that process imposed intense, arguably excessive task costs in the form of increased time and effort to accomplish the work of the

organization in the face of insufficient resources and undependable support. Several patterns illustrate.

First, newly appointed principals along with a handful of district officials had to invest a great deal of time and energy just to fill the vacant positions. Given the large number of vacancies, the shortage of teachers in the region, and the timing of the reform, administrators were, in their words, “scrambling” just to have a regular or substitute teacher in every classroom on the opening day of school. Building administrators were putting in what some termed “endless hours” and “very long days” during the work week and on the weekend just to fill, or more precisely, refill faculty and staff positions. Similarly, displaced teachers were required to invest time and energy in reapplying and reinterviewing if they wanted to return to their original positions or if they wanted to be considered for other positions in the district.

Second, the newly hired principals and newly hired or rehired teachers were expected to participate in additional staff development programs offered before school opened and throughout the first year of implementation. These programs were in addition to the course offerings that the newly hired but not yet uncertified teachers had to take to retain their jobs. These programs also exceeded the expectations for other building-level administrators in the district. Although teachers received some additional financial compensation for the time they invested in various in-service sessions, the stipends did little to reduce the real price school personnel paid as they tried to survive the frenetic pace they had to keep to meet the broad array of organizational responsibilities they faced. Quite apart from the quality and utility of the various offerings, the effort required to simultaneously handle these heavy demands was a source of frustration, exhaustion, and strain on many teachers. The words of one teacher capture a prevalent view: “It’s like I never stop running.”

Third, the newly configured staffs had to recreate the organizational infrastructure required to carry out the most basic operations of a school without the benefit of such basic resources as a full complement of permanent faculty, an adequate supply of instructional materials and supplies, or essential information about the students, the previous programs, and the surrounding community. Much of that local knowledge left the school when incumbent administrators and veteran teachers were replaced by less experienced administrators and teachers who were both new to the school and, in many instances, new to the profession. With little time to meet either with their professional colleagues or their school community and with little opportunity to plan more robust instructional programs, the newly configured staffs had few reserves to draw on to offset the heavy loads and hectic pace that accompa-

nied the reconstitution reform. As an administrator and a teacher recalled in their descriptions of the first year of implementation,

I thought we would be meeting as a staff and talking about how we were going to change the school. . . . [But] they were hiring people 'til like the day before school started. . . . We didn't know what grade levels we were teaching; closets were not unpacked; there were no reliable class lists; supplies had not been ordered. . . . It was crazy.

We were still trying to hire people in late August. . . . We didn't have schedules or room assignments. . . . We had to put classes in storerooms because we don't have enough classroom space. . . . We had so many new teachers that had never set up a room. They needed a lot of help. Supplies had not been ordered so people didn't have much to work with. . . . Some of the new teachers were in a real bind and bought stuff with their own money. . . . It was wild. . . . Some of us were working around the clock just so we could open school. . . . Planning? That was a shot in the dark. All we had was test data. . . . We didn't know the kids, the school. . . . We didn't have the people we needed or the time we needed to do it right. . . . We were scrambling and we have been playing catch-up all year.

The intense strains that occurred at the outset of the reform persisted throughout the first year of implementation. Administrators and teachers in all our sample schools talked candidly about feeling “swamped,” “inundated,” and “overwhelmed” by all that had to be done to figure out and carry out the day-to-day operations of schools. They talked frequently about “making it through the day” and keeping their sights on “avoiding major disasters.”

During the second year of implementation, the recurrent pattern of administrative reassignments and staff departures meant that site actors were having to repeatedly reinvent the wheel. They continued to focus on restoring the organizational infrastructure and establishing their routines. Reflections at the end of the second year of the reform capture a prominent assessment:

Here, every year is a new year. . . . It is hard to make any headway when you don't have the basic systems [schedules, attendance, and discipline programs] in place.

We have so many new people it's like we start over every year. . . . We struggle just to get the basic routines in place.

The [reconstitution] reform . . . was one big upheaval. We continue to go in circles. . . . We take some baby steps, but mostly it's been a disruption we could have all done without.

The human costs associated with dismantling and rebuilding the organizational infrastructure of the schools were borne not only by the administrators

and teachers at the reconstituted schools but also by the students who attended these schools. The influx of inexperienced educators along with the disruption the reform generated took a toll on the instructional opportunities available to the students. The comments of many, including those who were initial supporters of the reform, corroborate this appraisal. Often preoccupied with, if not consumed by, the demands of a frantic, at times, chaotic environment, new staffs did not have the experiential background or the organizational opportunity to redesign instructional programs let alone to engender greater continuity in the development and delivery of educational services. Beginning teachers openly acknowledged that “those who launched this reform thought that the teachers would bring new ideas, but we don’t even have the basics.” More experienced teachers concurred in comments such as:

When you have so many beginning teachers, it can be really hard. . . . There is just a lot of trial and error that can be costly to kids.

Although the evidence presented here describes the nature and distribution of costs associated with the intensification of work, what is critical is that the ability of site personnel to cope with these task costs was undermined by the lack of district support. Teachers and school-level administrators often spoke about the “promises” the district had made in various public and private meetings with school faculties and staffs. They had been told that the reconstituted schools would have smaller class sizes, additional instructional assistants, ample amounts of interesting and appropriate materials and supplies, substantial if not sophisticated computer supports, the opportunity to work with master teachers, specially tailored professional development programs, and other supports. But these promises never materialized. Our data are replete with references to the “frustration,” “overload,” “exhaustion,” “disillusionment,” and “betrayal” teachers and administrators experienced as they tried to cope with the demands the reform imposed without the supports they had anticipated.

Social Costs

Reconstitution reforms, again by definition and design, deliberately disassemble professional networks in hopes that more productive networks will be forged. Both the dismantling and the reconstruction of collegial networks can impose substantial social costs. In our study, social costs were manifest initially when existing professional networks were abruptly disassembled and subsequently when reconstituted staffs struggled to reestablish these

networks. Informants in our study described these developments in vivid and dramatic terms. They talked about how teams were disbanded, how whole staffs were “blown apart,” and how cohesive units were “torn apart,” “broken-up,” and “destroyed.” They also talked about the difficulty of forming new collegial relationships. We capture that difficulty through a synopsis of the impact of the reconstitution reform on staffing stability and on trust and collaboration.

Staffing stability. At the outset of the reform, the superintendent asked all newly hired staff to make a 3-year commitment to their schools. Although the district requested 3-year commitments, presumably to enhance staffing stability at reconstituted schools, the district failed to comply with its own request. At the end of the first year of reform, one of the six principals was reassigned to a nonreconstituted school; at the end of the second year of reform, the district reassigned three of six principals to other schools. In one of the middle schools, the district assigned three new principals over a 3-year period.

Instability, however, was not limited to building leadership positions. Teaching assignments were also affected. Although it is difficult to determine the full range of personal and professional reasons for teachers' employment decisions, reconstitution appeared to have a negative effect on teacher turnover. Although some teachers told us that they were attracted by the notion of a “fresh start,” a “new beginning,” “the opportunity to be part of a ground-breaking event,” and the chance to “see real organizational change,” the initial appeal of reconstitution was short-lived. When the reform moved beyond the announcement phase, sentiments changed markedly.

At the end of the first year, about a quarter of the reputedly effective and potentially promising teachers who were placed in the schools that we studied elected to go elsewhere. At the end of the second year, teachers continued to leave, many giving reform-related reasons to queries about their decisions. Even teachers who were initially enthusiastic supporters of reconstitution departed because they were “frustrated,” “disillusioned,” and “depressed.” Although turnover rates varied across the schools, schools were constantly working to fill vacated positions, which, in turn, made it difficult for staff to sustain school improvement plans. Administrators acknowledged the problem directly: “It’s like starting over every year.” Another reported, “We have almost as many new teachers this year as the first year. We keep replacing, not advancing.” Teachers concurred. They recognized that “it takes time to develop good working relationships” and that the “large number of new faces” each year complicated their ability to develop those relationships.

Trust and collaboration. As previously noted, the initial year of reconstitution was chaotic, disruptive, and highly stressful for principals and teachers. Opportunities for collaboration on school redesign were overtaken by more urgent and immediate problems such as organizing class schedules, identifying curriculum materials, addressing discipline problems, and establishing basic routines.

The initial chaos made it difficult to establish a vision for schools and develop the collaborative arrangements required to implement such a vision. The massive changes in the composition of the staff meant that school personnel had no prior experience working together and little teaching or teaming experience to draw from. Simply put, reconstituted staffs had more intense work demands and fewer professional reserves. Under these conditions, it is hardly surprising that even veteran teachers found it exceedingly difficult to recapture the cohesive and, in their minds, constructive relationships they had before the reconstitution initiative altered those associations. As one told us,

We were making progress when they decided to come in and do the change [reconstitution]. . . . We were a close-knit family. We helped each other. When they broke up the family, things went downhill at this school, and it has gone downhill since.

Although perceptions of collegiality and collaboration of prior staff varied across the schools that we studied, veteran teachers who reminisced about collegiality claimed that the “old staff” had been “like family,” whereas new staff find it hard to “join in and say we are family.” Reconstitution, by their accounts, not only shattered norms of collegiality and collaboration at their schools but also undermined their ability to reinstate new or stronger forms of consultation and cooperation, in part, because the new staffs did not know each other and had little time to communicate with one another. This condition, along with the strain of the reform and the tense climate in the schools, prompted many teachers to isolate themselves.

For example, some teachers observed that “when you bring in a lot of different people with different personalities and different agendas it can get dicey,” especially in the absence of sustained efforts to develop a collective agenda. Many maintained that the reconstitution reform strained staff relationships; contributed to climates marred by suspicion, intimidation, and distrust; and prompted teachers to cope by retreating to their classrooms, pods, or program areas (Malen, 2001). Select but typical comments illustrate the pervasiveness of this tendency:

I make it a point not to talk to many people. I close my door. . . . I am in my own world.

I stay in the [special program] sphere. . . . I keep my eyes on [my program area]. I don't even want to know what is going on in other quarters.

I've stopped going to faculty meetings. . . . I mind my own business. I come, teach, and go home.

I am pulling back a lot. I made that decision last month [February]. I am going to focus on my own role. Enough is enough.

There is no togetherness here. We are very divided. . . . I've tried to discuss it but got nowhere. There was only more friction. . . . So, I keep to myself.

Although each of the schools that we studied implemented some form of teaming, these groups did not appear to function as collaborative units, even in the second year of reconstitution. Rather, such teams functioned as a public space in which to air grievances, discuss discipline, or communicate routine policies and practices. Although some teams collaborated on particular units or projects, none that we observed functioned as collaborative units in developing and implementing a comprehensive, school-wide redesign plan. The absence of deeper forms of collaboration as well as the tendency to retreat suggest that teachers were more inclined toward isolation than collaboration. Given the disruption emanating from district reassignment of principals and high teacher turnover, prospects for developing trust and forging collaborative arrangements were, by most accounts, bleak. As one principal explained,

This school requires true commitment. Unfortunately, we are developing a profile here that says, "Why commit?" Every year is a first year. We just keep starting over. It is hard to build commitment. . . . It is like we are experimenting and every year we start over.

In sum, the reconstitution initiative imposed serious social costs on school personnel and, in all likelihood, on students, as well. The disbanding of collegial networks left reconstituted staffs with less capacity to deal with more intense demands imposed by the reform. Staff instability and the lack of collaboration and trust made it difficult for schools to offer a coherent educational program for students, let alone develop a shared vision that might guide the improvement of educational opportunities.

Psychological Costs

Reconstitution is, to varying degrees, a public indictment on the professional capabilities and commitments of educators, generally, and teachers, particularly. Even when couched, as it was in this case as a “redesign” effort and presented as “a real opportunity” to overhaul and improve public schools, the reform signals that school staffs (rather than district inadequacies), state shortcomings, broad social forces, or a host of other factors are the proximate cause of a school’s low performance and, hence, the appropriate target for remedial action. Such indictments carry psychological costs that can damage individuals’ self-worth and professional efficacy, here, meaning the sense that they are worthwhile contributors who can make a difference in the organization in multiple and lasting ways.

Various psychological costs were borne initially by the incumbents of the reconstituted schools who were the clear and direct objects of public sanction. These costs were imposed when the reconstitution reform was announced. By most accounts, when faculty and staff at the schools learned of the reconstitution reform, they were “shocked,” “insulted,” “angered,” and “deeply hurt.” The reform came across as an unanticipated, blanket, and brutal assault of teacher competence and commitment. The reconstitution reform came without clear warning and in spite of the fact that some schools had recorded encouraging improvements on select tests and had received reassuring comments from district administrators and, in one instance, an external review team (Jones & Malen, 2002). The requirement that all faculty and staff who wished to remain at the school had to reapply came across as a ruthless way to address teacher quality concerns. The words of one capture the dominant reaction:

If teachers are weak, you can remove them or retrain them or even transfer them. . . . You don’t have to annihilate a whole faculty to deal with a few bad apples who may mean well but do not teach well.

For a variety of reasons, the reform came across as an arbitrary and ruthless action. The words of one capture the prevailing view: “The superintendent dropped a bomb. It devastated people.”

The sense of unjust and cruel treatment intensified as the incumbents of the targeted schools encountered caustic media coverage. Headlines that referred to the initiative as a “purge” of school staffs reinforced the punitive character of the reform. Informants at all our sample schools maintained that the media coverage fueled allegations that “all the teachers had been fired” and, in some instances, prompted students to taunt their teachers. Both the

tone and content of articles implied that the displaced teachers and principals were incompetent and uncommitted educators. For example, stories suggested parents would not want these principals and teachers reassigned to their children's schools. In these and other ways, media coverage served to magnify the stigma associated with the redesign initiative (Jones & Malen, 2002).

The public stigma was not the only source of professional humiliation and degradation. The common perceptions that "the teachers had all been fired" and that "people who have proven their worth [were required to] beg for their jobs" meant that teachers who wished to remain part of the school went through what they termed a "demeaning," "disrespectful," and "inhumane" reapplication process. Those who were rehired also experienced a traumatic reentry process. Teachers who returned to their schools talked frequently and openly about the "pain and anguish" they felt as they mourned the loss of colleagues and friends who were no longer a part of the school.

The superintendent tried to counter the intense negative reactions with his own press releases designed to reassure employees and parents that the initiative was an effort, as documents noted, to "extract greater commitments from [educators], not a ploy to get rid of them." But he was not able to rein in the damage. He also tried to turn around teachers' initial feelings of "shock," "disbelief," "anger," "anxiety," "pain," and "humiliation" that surfaced when the reform was aired by emphasizing what the teachers in the reconstituted schools would stand to gain. As one teacher recalled:

He had to do something to try to make this thing seem more positive. So, he made lots of promises about things that matter to teachers . . . like small class sizes, instructional aides, computers, materials, supplies.

The blend of appeals and reassurances were persuasive to some who were "moved by what the superintendent said," and they believed that, "if [the superintendent] gave the schools what he said he would give them, [the school] would be a great place to teach." But, for most educators, the initiative came across as a "real slap in the face" or as a "devastating blow." Unprepared for the depth, breadth, and durability of the negative reactions the reform invoked, the superintendent was unable to quell the trauma. He listened to concerns, reminded all employees that they were guaranteed a job in the district, repeated his rationales, and reiterated the promises that might make this initiative more palatable to teachers. But, as earlier noted, his inability to deliver on these promises contributed to a pervasive sense of "disillusionment," "betrayal," and "alienation" that lasted well beyond the first year of the reform. These psychological costs were borne by the newly configured staffs that had

to absorb both the strain of the reform and the frustration, disappointment, and depression that develops when people's experience with a reform runs so counter to the expectations they held for it.

Unfortunately, as the reform evolved, the district did not act in ways that might counter the disappointment and disillusionment that had developed. On the contrary, the district reduced rather than intensified its support for the reform (Rice & Croninger, 2001). As a consequence, throughout the second year of the reform, site personnel talked often about being "deserted." The comments of one capture the sentiments of most: "It seems that the powers that be have forgotten the [reconstitution] reform and us."

Although teachers responded differently to the public sanctions and the multiple ramifications of it, the data suggest that reconstitution undermined educators' sense of self-worth and professional efficacy and prompted them to either depart the organization or retreat within it (Malen, 2001). Although large numbers of teachers "just left in disgust," others stayed. Some had high hopes for the reform, particularly given "the promises" that the superintendent had made. But when their experience with the reform turned out to be, as one captured it, "the opposite of everything we expected," they felt undermined, "abandoned," and "betrayed." For some, the reform was "a push-me-over-the-edge experience" that prompted individuals to resign their positions, transfer to other schools in the district or region, or leave the profession altogether. For others, the reform was a draining, at times debilitating, experience they tried to survive often by detaching from school-wide issues and, as earlier noted, retreating to their classrooms, pods, or program areas.

Taken together, the patterns in our data do not conform to the image of energized and empowered professionals engaged with their colleagues and communities in the redesign of schools. They paint a very different picture—that of a strained and demoralized workforce. Perhaps that is the natural, if not inevitable, result when policy makers do not anticipate or seriously underestimate the multiple human costs that may be incurred and when they try to offset those costs by making glowing promises they cannot keep (e.g., see House, 1974). The intense psychological costs incurred by teachers and administrators may well have had a negative impact on students' learning opportunities. Although we did not explicitly trace how the loss of self-esteem and professional efficacy affected administrator and teacher performance, and relatedly, student learning, other researchers have documented the relationship between multiple dimensions of teacher efficacy and student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Deiro, 1996; Guskey & Passaro, 1994).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Although case studies, by their very nature, are more suggestive than definitive, the research presented here is instructive, empirically and theoretically. Below we highlight the empirical and theoretical insights and discuss their implications for gauging the power of human costs as an explanation for reform effects.

Empirical Insights

Our study casts doubt on the ability of reconstitution reform to enhance human capital in low-performing schools. School reconstitution is an approach to education reform that is grounded in the assumption that improvement in low-performing schools requires an upgrade in the personnel at those schools. Reconstitution, the argument goes, will improve the human capital and, as a result, organizational performance. Our study of a school reconstitution policy in one district found that the reform was unsuccessful at enhancing the human capital in the targeted schools. In fact, we observed a decline in the average qualifications of the teachers and administrators in the schools we studied.

In addition to casting doubt on the key assumption undergirding reconstitution reform, our analysis sheds light on the nature, distribution, and consequences of the human costs embedded in the district-initiated reconstitution reform we studied. We identified multiple forms of human costs; we documented that those costs were borne largely by principals, teachers, and students in the reconstituted schools; and we demonstrated that the intense costs along with the inability to effectively address those costs provided a partial but powerful explanation for the failure of the reform to accomplish its objectives. In so doing, this analysis underscores the importance of attending to the human costs of education reform, particularly in a personnel-targeted reform like reconstitution.

Recognizing that a case study of a particular version of reconstitution in a particular setting does not warrant firm generalizations, we contend that it is a useful point of departure for those who are interested in addressing the gap in the literature regarding the efficacy of reconstitution reform and the manner in which human costs may affect the fate of the reform. Perhaps our findings regarding the inability of the reform to enhance human capital are unique to this context. The observed decline in human capital may have been predictable given the district's heavy reliance on new and uncertified teachers, the

shortage of experienced teachers in the state, the design and timing of the initiative itself,⁶ or, as one administrator summarized, the absence of any “incentives that would make large numbers of master teachers want to come to [reconstituted] schools.” But this outcome was also the result of the array of underestimated and mismanaged human costs. Whether these findings hold in other settings is an empirical question that warrants attention given the prevalence of this reform strategy.

In addition to serving as a point of departure for much-needed additional research, this study provides a point of comparison for studies that focus on alternative forms of reconstitution as well as studies that look at alternative policy options. We studied a particular approach to school reconstitution; determining whether other approaches yield similar effects is a critical next step. Further, reconstitution stands alongside other initiatives, such as increasing teachers’ salaries or strengthening teachers’ professional preparation, that seek to enhance human capital in low-performing schools. To be a worthy policy option, the costs and benefits of reconstitution must compare favorably with the costs and benefits of these and other alternative courses of action that could be pursued. By considering an often overlooked but critically important dimension of cost—human cost—this article is a first step toward these more comprehensive, comparative analyses.

Theoretical Insights

This analysis reaffirms the importance of expanding the concept of cost to include the broad array of resources devoted to (or imposed by) an intervention (e.g., see Chambers, 1999; Levin & McEwan, 2001; Rice, 1997). We demonstrate that the concept of cost refers not only to the fiscal investments that architects and advocates of the reform may make in a particular intervention but also to a wide range of tolls that may be paid by organizations and the individuals who work in or are served by those organizations. Our analysis demonstrates that one of the most important, but often overlooked, tolls may be the human costs embedded in reform.

In addition to reaffirming the literature recognizing the importance of human costs, we extend the literature by identifying conceptual dimensions that may be useful for exploring the human costs of reconstitution reforms and, perhaps, other reforms, as well. In terms of reconstitution, our data support a three-dimensional typology that characterizes the nature of human costs: task costs, social costs, and psychological costs. We employ additional categories to characterize the distribution of human costs. In this case, both the primary targets (educators) and the intended beneficiaries (students) of the reform repeatedly paid a high price for school reconstitution. Whether

these analytic categories prove to be a robust way to capture the nature and distribution of the human costs of school reconstitution remains to be seen. Additional research could test the validity and utility of these analytic categories.

The Explanatory Power of Human Costs

By linking the nature and the distribution of the costs to the outcomes of the reform, this study illustrates the importance and the difficulty of treating human costs as an explanatory variable. A first consideration is whether the human costs we observed are inherent to the reform or unique to the situation we studied. A second issue is whether the human costs constitute the most powerful explanation for the effect of the reform or whether other rival explanations are more compelling.

Although we argue that the underestimation and mismanagement of human costs offer a partial explanation for the inability of the reform to enhance human capital, what is not clear from our data is the degree to which the costs we observed are inherent to the reform or unique to the situation we studied. In other words, one critical question is whether the district could have handled these human costs more effectively. Another is whether more effective management of human costs would have enabled the reconstitution initiative to realize its central stated aims.

With respect to the task costs, the district could have provided more support to school faculties. For example, an increased allocation of personnel, release time, and administrative support may have alleviated some of the reconstitution-related burdens that school staff and students absorbed. In short, resource substitutions that may help offset task costs can be readily identified and, if available in sufficient quantity, can be directly instituted.

In contrast, resource substitutions to offset the social costs imposed by reconstitution are considerably more complicated. For example, in our case, district officials might have instituted salary bonuses to promote greater staff stability once schools were reconstituted. Further, they might have provided opportunities for new staffs to develop professional networks before the reconstituted schools opened and throughout the school year. However, it is not clear whether the value and nature of these resource substitutions would have been robust enough to offset the social costs imposed by the reform. We know little about what, if any, resource substitutions can compensate for social costs such as the erosion of trust or the loss of friendships in the workplace. Even if reconstituted staffs are able, over time, to construct new and improved collegial networks, social costs are inevitable, at least in the short term, because reconstitution necessarily disrupts, if not destroys, professional

networks, trust levels, and collaborative connections. And, as this case demonstrates, reconstitution may impose recurring social costs as staffs turn over and as schools are left with fewer and/or weaker collegial structures to deal with the intense demands of this reform. Our analysis indicates that these social costs are endemic features of reconstitution reforms, which are not easily or dependably alleviated.

With respect to psychological costs, a key question is whether these costs are necessarily widespread and enduring. Any restaffing initiative that involves removing incumbents is likely to impose some psychological strain on those who are not rehired. In our study, all the educators in the reconstituted schools were branded with the blame for the school's poor performance and stripped of the sense that they are valued professionals who can have a positive influence on the organization. Whether this debilitating pattern is typical or inevitable can be answered only through further research. It is conceivable that a district could do a great deal to cast the reconstituted staff as a critical component of its concerted effort to improve low-performing schools. It is also conceivable that the reform could be carried out in a way that publicly recognizes the commendable performance of some educators (both those who are rehired and those who are newly hired to teach in reconstituted schools) while removing those who are less effective. In other words, there may be ways to avoid the blanket indictments and counter the public assaults that were so prominent in our study. Research that examines alternative approaches to reconstitution could help determine whether there are ways to curb the loss of professional efficacy and self-worth we observed. If the seemingly insurmountable psychological costs evident in our study of school reconstitution turn out to be typical of this reform strategy, we may be hard pressed to identify any resource substitutions that can effectively counter those costs.

Even if one assumes that the human costs we outline in this article are endemic to school reconstitution, they may not be the only important factor shaping the fate of this reform. For example, weak design, poor timing, an insufficient supply of qualified educators, pernicious political dynamics, and other factors combined to undercut the reform we studied (Jones & Malen, 2002; Malen et al., 2002; Rice & Croninger, 2001). Amidst this array of interactive forces were intense, underestimated, and mismanaged human costs that undermined the ability of the reform to achieve its major objective.

Although many factors contribute to the explanation of reform effects, our study exposed the often-overlooked category of human costs. Our analysis demonstrates that these costs may be a partial, plausible, and powerful explanation of the inability of the reform to enhance human capital in reconstituted schools. For policymakers, this conclusion is a call for caution in the

development and implementation of these policies. For researchers, it is a call for a more comprehensive analysis of the nature, distribution, and consequences of the costs of personnel-targeted reforms. For practitioners, it is a call for a more explicit recognition of the costs that can occur and for a more concerted effort to arrange for resource substitutions that might offset some, if not all, of the human costs associated with reconstitution reforms.

APPENDIX A
GENERAL PROFILE OF INTERVIEW SOURCES

	<i>1st Year Reconstitution</i>		<i>2nd Year Reconstitution</i>		<i>Start of 3rd Year Reconstitution</i>	
	<i>Number Interviews</i>	<i>Number Individuals^a</i>	<i>Number Interviews</i>	<i>Number Individuals</i>	<i>Number Interviews</i>	<i>Number Individuals</i>
District officials ^b	20	12	19	17	3	3
Principals at reconstituted schools not selected for case studies	3	3	1	1	1	1
Administrators at schools selected for case studies ^c	23	11	44	13	5	3
Classroom teachers at schools selected for case studies	44	44	76	55	9	7
Program specialists at schools selected for case studies ^d	45	26	73	36	10	6
Paraprofessionals & support staff at schools selected for case studies	6	6	10	10	0	0
Parents/family members at schools selected for case studies	0	0	36	36	3	2
Totals	141	102	259	168	31	22

a. Number of different individuals who participated in one or more interviews. For example, in the first year of reconstitution, we conducted 20 interviews with 12 different district officials.

b. Number includes district administrators, board members, and union leaders.

c. Number includes principal and staff designated as part of a school's administrative team.

d. Number includes staff assigned to special programs or classes (e.g., media, technology, music, physical education, English as a second language, special education, reading recovery).

NOTES

1. Sources disagree on both the number of states that include reconstitution as one of their sanctions for failing schools as well as the specific states that have adopted this option (Education Week, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). These discrepancies could be a function of when the analysis was conducted and/or how reconstitution is defined. Whatever the explanation, the discrepancies illustrate that the prevalence as well as the history of the reform are topics ripe for research.

2. Costs are not the same as expenditures. The total cost is the value of all resources that are required to accomplish the goals of the initiative, whereas expenditures are the monetary outlays associated with the initiative. Expenditures may overstate costs to the degree that more valuable resources are being used than necessary (e.g., overqualified staffing). On the other hand, expenditures may understate costs to the extent that some resources necessary to meet the goals of the initiative are not associated with fiscal outlays (Rice, 2001).

3. This distinction is the general idea behind productivity pay; those who work harder and, consequently, produce more during a given period of time deserve greater compensation for their effort. In cases where harder working individuals are not compensated for their relatively high effort, the cost increment associated with effort is arguably shouldered by the individuals themselves.

4. We are indebted to an anonymous reviewer for encouraging us to include personal worth as well as professional efficacy in our definition of psychological costs.

5. In this case, as in other settings, the superintendent lost credibility with the board for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, his inability to implement reforms that substantially improved student performance. For a more detailed discussion of this case, see Jones and Malen (2002). For a more detailed discussion of the broader issue, see Carter and Cunningham (1997) and Hess (1999).

6. Announced in May for implementation in August, the initiative contained no detailed plans to recruit master teachers to the district, no incentive packages to encourage experienced educators within the system or region to transfer to the targeted schools, and little time to develop a sizeable pool of seasoned educators. The initiative did not allow time to systematically identify the talents and skills that might be especially critical to each school's success or to seek out candidates with those qualities.

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