

CHAPTER 4

Comparative Analysis

Introduction

This case-study represents an effort to demonstrate a substantive theory that is significant, theory-observation compatible, generalizable, reproducible, and rigorous. The information presented previously describes Swatara MS and the Central Dauphin School District and defines the school's quest to improve 8th-grade math achievement as measured by the state assessment. A review of the research of others is included to provide historical information relative to the responsibilities and the challenges public schools face today. Also, the responses from in-depth interviews of local middle-level school experts pertaining to school improvement are incorporated and serve as a basis for comparison to Swatara MSs improvement plan efforts.

This study is a realistic example of one middle school's journey to improvement and it illuminates the challenges NCLB elicits for public schools today, as well as the struggles in maintaining safe schools. Although a daunting process for some schools, this study demonstrates that it is possible for schools to improve student learning for all students without significantly increasing costs. The information provided in this study offers suggestions and a five-point model for transformational leadership teams to consider when adapting improvement strategies for their schools' reform efforts.

The interview sessions bring to light emerging themes that coincide with the process utilized by Swatara MS to improve student achievement as evidenced in this study. School improvement plans require assessing the school's current condition and