

Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust

SuperEd Network: School Learning Laboratory

Final Evaluation Report

For the Period October 1, 2003 - December 30, 2006

Prepared for the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust
November 30, 2006

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SuperEd Network: School Learning Laboratory

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Executive Summary

The SuperEd Network and its fiscal agent, the Maine Math and Science Alliance implemented a three-year School Learning Laboratory (*SLL*) project that designed, utilized and tested a case management approach to service delivery to schools in Maine's western region, in collaboration with the Western Maine Partnership. The *School Learning Laboratory project's* goal was to ***develop a collaborative model for delivering external services to schools that produces high quality instruction for all students.***

The Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust provided \$180,500 for project expenditures. The project partners, the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance, the SuperEd Network, participating schools, and the Western Maine Partnership provided an estimated \$163,000 of value in-kind goods and services.

The *SLL* project had a total of eight school districts' comprised of eleven attendance centers as active participants. These attendance centers served an estimated 1700 students and 140 certified teachers. Seven of the eight participating school districts completed their engagement with the *SLL* project in a manner as had been originally contracted. The eighth district terminated its engagement prior to project completion.

The project leadership developed a plan to ***develop a collaborative model for delivering external services to schools that produces high quality instruction for all students.*** The plan was executed largely in the manner in which it was originally predicted. Plan modifications resulting from implementation experience were well documented and reported to the funding agency. The leadership conducted its scheduled internal project review process and in doing so documented its *Learnings* and identified the resulting *Implications*.

SuperEd Network members, participating schools' teachers and administrators, *SLL* facilitators, and school project leaders, largely administrators, agreed that the services provided by the *SLL Facilitators* were of a high quality.

The *SLL* project had four outcomes. Following is a synopsis of the external evaluation findings for each outcome:

1. *A replicable, sustainable process for using external services.*

The process for engaging external service providers was well document as illustrated in the *Toolkit*. The project is in the process of disseminating the *Toolkit* using a static website to make the kit available. As far as can be determined the project leadership team made no plans, other than to disseminate the *Toolkit* using a static website, to use the *SLL Toolkit* outside of those eight schools originally selected to participate in the development of the *Toolkit*.

2. *A toolkit of products and processes to select, use and assess external services.*

As of this date, November 29, 2006, the *Toolkit* has been developed. The *Toolkit* as it is now developed is able to function as an independent process and product package that can be adapted by skilled *Facilitators* to a wide variety of applications in which an educational service agency is seeking to engage an external service provider.

3. *Innovations that impact teachers, students and instruction.*

The *innovation* the project addressed was the *Toolkit development process* identified in its goal statement. There is ample evidence participating schools were provided the opportunity to participate in innovative process experiences. And, in general the *innovation* was believed to have had a beneficial effect. The Collaborative Review process, one element of the multi-phased development process was described by teachers as, "... an energizing and useful learning process for both SuperEd Network members and school participants."

4. *Schools with improved organizational capacity for change*

There was evidence in seven of the participating schools of ongoing assessment of the change and development process in which they were engaged. In two school cases there was stronger evidence of specific data collection and related planning for change. Some schools in which project progress faltered at the

doorstep of leadership specifically identified that clearly defined leadership was essential for successful engagement with a development process such as *SLL* and for engaging external service providers. Such self-knowledge serves as a building block to improving organizational capacity for change.

The purpose of SuperEd Network: School Learning Laboratory (*SLL*) evaluation report is to inform the funding agency - the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust; the fiscal agent – Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance; the School Learning Laboratory’s leadership team and facilitators; the eight participating Maine education agencies and their eleven participating attendance centers of the progress achieved in the design and development of a case management approach to service delivery to Maine schools. This report covers the period beginning October 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2006 with a no-cost extension until December 30, 2006.

The SuperEd Network: School Learning Laboratory (*SLL*) Project

The Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance organization working in collaboration with the SuperEd Network designed and implemented a three-year *SLL* project that designed, utilized and tested a case management approach to service delivery to schools in Maine’s western region. The *School Learning Laboratory [project’s]* goal [was] to ***develop a collaborative model for delivering external services to schools that produces high quality instruction for all students.***¹ The Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance, a 501 (c) 3 organization headquartered in Augusta, Maine is a partnership of some sixteen higher education and K-12 education organizations dedicated to improving mathematics and science education. The SuperEd Network is an informal group of thirteen-to-fifteen Maine educational service provider nonprofit organizations dedicated to enriching curriculum and learning for all Maine students.

Program leaders identified outcomes and associated leading indicators by which they determined progress toward the project’s outcomes. Outcomes and leading indicators are identified in Table 1.

¹ Maine Math and Science Alliance. (July 2003). Super Ed Network: School Learning Laboratory - School Innovation for Student Achievement: Using and Testing a Case Management Approach. A proposal for Funding presented to *Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust*.

Table 1	
<i>SLL Outcomes¹ and Leading Indicators</i>	
Outcomes	Leading Indicators
<i>1. A replicable, sustainable process for using external services.</i>	• Use of <i>SLL</i> toolkit and/or processes by others.
	• Plan for using <i>SLL</i> toolkit and/or processes
	• Plan/Activities to sustain <i>SLL</i> .
	• In-Kind commitments from SuperEd Network, WMP, and <i>SLL</i> sites
<i>2. A toolkit of products and processes to select, use and assess external services.</i>	• Toolkit outline, table of contents, samples
	• Evidence of use and revisions
<i>3. Innovations that impact teachers, students and instruction.</i>	• Feedback data from <i>SLL</i> meetings
	• Charters/Contracts
	• Charter activities aligned with needs and outcomes.
	• Assessment data from <i>SLL</i> Projects in sites.
	• Data from <i>SLL</i> Project Closure in sites.
<i>4. Schools with improved organizational capacity for change.</i>	• Structures for collaborative decision making relative to change within sites.
	• Evidence of data collection and planning for change.
	• Evidence of assessment of change projects.

The proposal for funding projected an *SLL* budget “. . . at approximately \$200,000 each year, a total three-year budget of \$600,000. Of this amount, we expect to generate \$420,000 in network members’ in-kind contributions and participant fees and fully complete all of the proposed activities and events.”¹ Actual project expenditures are reported using Maine State Department of Education expenditure categories in Table 2. Chart 1 illustrates the proportional distribution of expended funds for the three and a half year period. Table 3 contains an explanation of expenditure categories.

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Table 2
SLL Project Expenditures

	Year 1 10/1/03 - 6/30/04 Expenses	Year 2 7/1/04 - 8/30/05 Expenses	Year 3 7/1/05 - 12/30/06 Expenses	Amt Encumbered⁽¹⁾	Total Expenses	Budget Amt.	Balance
Grants and Allocations⁽³⁾	\$4,500	\$7,500	\$12,750	\$0.00	\$24,750	\$24,750	\$0
Subawards for Projects⁽²⁾	\$41,212	\$42,027	\$15,500	\$8,500.00	\$107,238	\$113,027	\$5,788
Evaluation of Project	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$3,300.00	\$5,800	\$5,500	-\$300
Technology	\$0	\$0	\$600	\$0.00	\$600	\$1,250	\$650
Office Supplies-Grant	\$535	\$164	\$174	\$100.00	\$974	\$1,133	\$159
Internet and Web	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,183.00	\$10,183	\$2,283	-\$7,900
Postage and Delivery	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$250	\$250
Printing and Reproduction	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$0.00	\$500	\$1,000	\$500
Staff Travel	\$734	\$1,447	\$313	\$300.00	\$2,793	\$2,345	-\$448
Travel Staff Eval Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$1,300	\$1,300
Meetings	\$0	\$82	\$0	\$0.00	\$82	\$82	\$0
Indirect	\$10,020	\$8,780	\$8,780	\$0.00	\$27,580	\$27,580	\$0
Totals	\$59,500	\$60,000	\$38,617	\$22,383.00	\$180,500	\$180,500	\$0

(1) The report was assembled in November 2006. All funds had not been expended, however, some were awaiting expenditure pending completion of contract work.

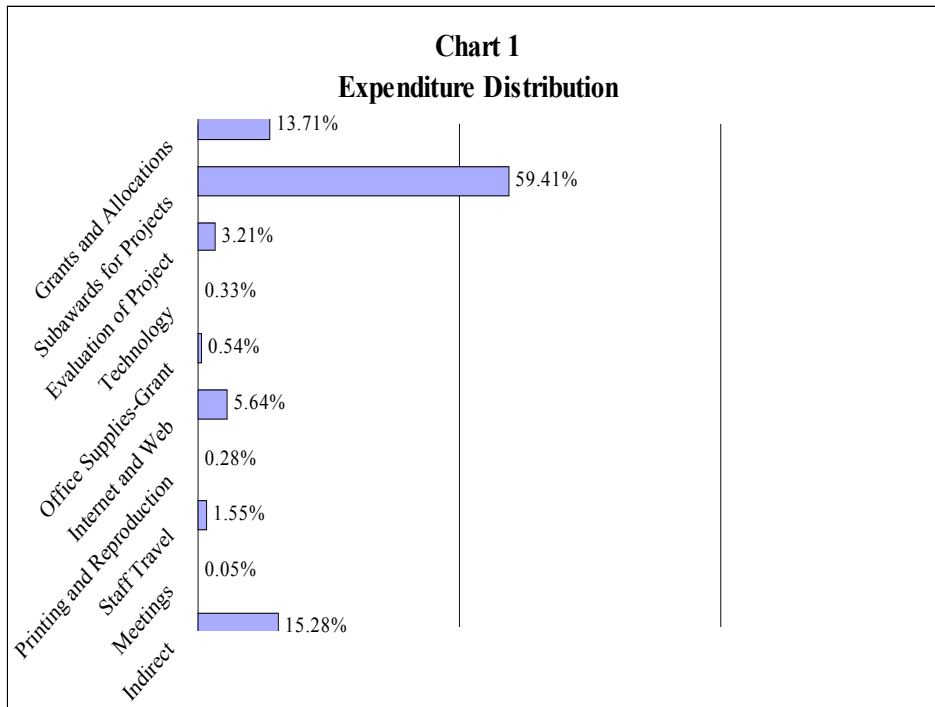
Table 3
Explanation Of Expenditure Categories

Expenditure Category	Description
Grants and Allocations	Stipends awarded to the participating schools with which they could purchase services from the SuperEd Network membership

Table 3
Explanation Of Expenditure Categories

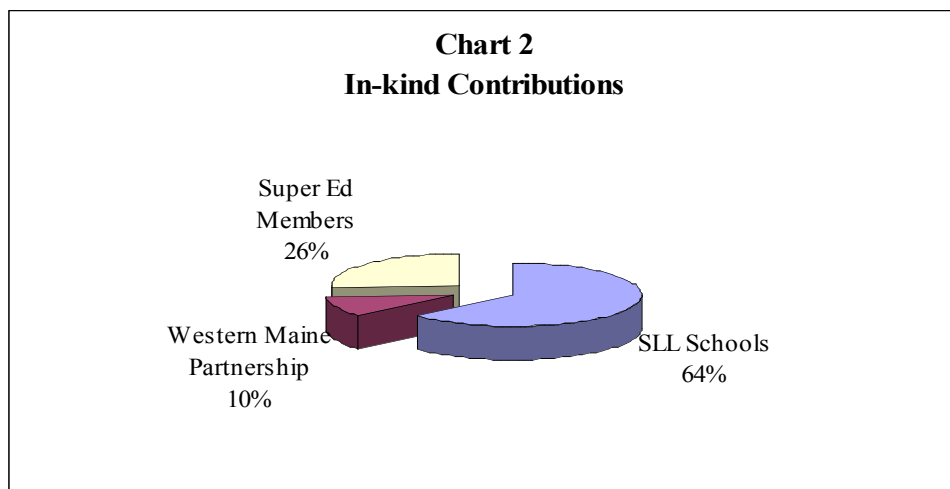
Expenditure Category	Description
Subawards for Projects	Amount paid to Ray Consulting, covers direct service provided to the participating districts by the project director and facilitators
Evaluation of Project	Amount paid to Ron Senne & Associates for evaluation services performed by the independently contracted evaluation consultant
Technology	Consultant fees to design and implement a dissemination website that contained the project's <i>Toolkit</i>
Office Supplies-Grant	As described
Internet and Web	Consultant fees to design and implement a dissemination website that contained the project's <i>Toolkit</i> and to pay MASCD for web site hosting.
Postage and Delivery	As described
Printing and Reproduction	As described
Staff Travel	Represents travel by sub-award project director and facilitators
Travel Staff Eval Contracts	Amount paid to Ron Senne & Associates for evaluation services performed by the independently contracted evaluation consultant
Meetings	Represents expenditures for meetings with participating schools and service providing agencies
Indirect	Paid to Maine Math & Science Alliance, the fiscal agent.

Chart 1.



In-kind contributions, contributions of professional time and services by participating schools, SuperEd Network members and the project partner, Western Maine Partnership, were anticipated to make a 70% contribution (\$420,000 of \$600,000) to the project's implementation. Data received from the project director reflected a \$93,000 contribution of professional goods and services during the project's first two years. The evaluator estimates (Third year information is not available at this time.) an additional \$70,000 in-kind contribution during the project's third year based on second year contributions for a total of \$163,000 of in-kind contribution of goods and services. This in-kind represents 47.5% of the total \$343,500 project budget utilized. Chart 2 illustrates the contributions made by the project's partners.

Chart 2.



The *SLL* project was staffed using a consulting services model. The consulting services model consisted of the Ray Consulting organization providing project management and facilitating consultants to the project (management) and to the schools and SuperEd members. The schools and SuperEd members received facilitation services from Ray Consulting employed by Ray Consulting. Ray Consulting held a single service contract with the project's fiscal agent. The project director was employed by Ray Consulting. Original planning described in the funding proposal requested 255 contractual days for direct service delivery to participating schools. As of the first of October 2006 the staff had utilized 69% (176.3 days) of the funded amount. Consulting

staff utilization is described in table 4.

Table 4 Consulting Staff Utilization				
Position	Annual Utilization (Days)			Role
	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	
Director/Facilitator	40.43	35.15	33.10 ^(a)	Administer the project, facilitate the implementation of the project evaluation. Facilitate project participant involvement for 3 school attendance centers and document the project.
Facilitator	17.15	12.61	5.6	Participate in project planning meetings. Facilitate project participant involvement for 2 school attendance centers, document the participant meetings.
Facilitator	N/A	16.83	15.41	Participate in project planning meetings. Facilitate project participant involvement for 3 school attendance centers, document the participant meetings.
External Evaluator	5.0	0	4.0 ^(a)	Participate in the design of Project evaluation. Follow-along during evaluation implementation. Write the final evaluation report.
<u>Notes</u>				
(a) As of October 1, 2006. It is anticipated work is continuing on closing the project.				

The *SLL* project had a total of eight school district comprised of eleven attendance centers as active participants. These attendance centers served an estimated 1700 students and 140 certified teachers. Table 5 identifies each attendance center, provides descriptive information and describes its duration of project participation.

**Table 5
Participation Information**

	2003-2004			2004-2005			2005-2006		
	Duration								
	GL	Enr	Fac	GL	Enr	Fac	GL	Enr	Fac
MSAD #58 - Kingfield Elementary School Kingfield, ME	k-8	200	20						
MSAD #44 - Elementary Schools Andover, ME Bethel, ME Woodstock, ME	k-5	477	51						
Union #42 - Mt. Vernon Elementary School Mt. Vernon, ME					114	8			
MSAD #36 - Livermore Falls Middle School Livermore Falls, ME				6-8	300	19			
Lewiston Public Schools - Governor James B. Longley Elementary School Lewiston, ME				k-6	235	13			
MSAD #17 – West Paris Schools - Agnes Gray (Grades 2-6) & Legion Memorial (Grades K-1) Elementary School - West Paris, ME							k-6	115	10
MSAD #17 -Waterford Elementary School Waterford, ME,									
Augusta Public Schools - Lincoln Elementary School Augusta, ME							k-5	240	12
<u>Notes</u> GL = Grade Level / Fall Enr = 2005-2006 Student Enrollment / Winter Fac = 2005-2006 Number of certified teachers / Spring - Summer									

The *SLL* process was designed to evolve over the three-year project period and was extended to a three and a half year project. The project's first year, October 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004, was considered a “piloting” year. Project staff members made a decision at the project's onset not to include high schools as candidates for project participation. This decision was made on the basis of Maine high schools' being already heavily involved in externally funded projects that were programmatically complex and resource intensive. Following the first year, project staff members re-designed the *Collaborative Review Process*, an element in Phase I, School Project Definition. The re-design included a more formal exchange of written information and discussion process among SuperEd Network services providers, participating schools and project staff. The result, according the project staff members, was more in depth engagement between service providers and participating schools.

The *Toolkit* Development Process

The execution of the SLL phases and the complete *Toolkit* development cycle follows.

The project director working in collaboration with the director of the Western Maine Partnership and project staff consultants began the first year's Phase 1 with two districts, Kingfield Elementary and SAD#44's three elementary attendance centers (Andover Elementary. -Andover, ME - Crescent Park Elementary. -Bethel, ME - Woodstock Elementary. -Bryant Pond, ME), in October 2003.

PHASE 1: Defining a School Project

In the project's first year, participating schools were hand selected and invited to participate. Project staff and the director of the Western Maine Partnership invited schools that they considered would be likely to engage successfully in the School Learning Laboratories project. They considered the schools' leadership, its past record of using external services and its relative health as an organization. Second and third year participants were selected by the project staff members from a more widely dispersed set of schools who applied. Engaging schools that represented diversity and a likelihood of

success were prime considerations in the selection process for years two and three. Principals and one curriculum coordinator from participating district attendance centers served as the primary points of contact with the schools. Primary contact persons selected an additional number of staff members to work on the schools' *SLL* Teams. In small schools the entire teaching staff participated. The teams had a wide range of variability in terms of the previous experience working as collaborating team members. *SLL* project staff members collected the information for the School Case Profile and distributed it to SuperEd Network members. Participating schools and SuperEd Network members reached agreement on identified need, solutions, and delivery of services and collaborated to facilitate the Collaborative Review process. The result was the further development of the School Case Profile into a Request for Proposals for services and a Charter (the contract) for services.

At the conclusion of Phase 1 the *SLL* School Case Profile contained the participating school's assessment of *Strengths and Weaknesses, Documentation of the Collaborative Review Process proceedings, a Request for Proposals*, the SuperEd Network members' *Proposal for Services*, and the *Charter* – an agreement for services between the SuperEd Network member and the school. Overall, schools were involved in Phase 1 for an average of 7.5 months over a calendar period of two school years. That is, often school's initial contact and selection took place during the spring of one school year and continued, following a summer break, in the fall of the following school year.

MSAD #58 - Kingfield Elementary and SAD #44's three elementary attendance centers (Andover Ele. -Andover, ME - Crescent Park Ele. -Bethel, ME -Woodstock Ele. - Bryant Pond, ME) entered Phase 2 in September and August 2004 respectively. Lewiston Public Schools - Governor James B. Longley School, Union #42 - Mt. Vernon Elementary School and Livermore Falls Middle School began Phase 1 in May 2004. MSAD #36 - Livermore Falls Middle School began the termination of their relationship with the project beginning in October 2004 with the loss of the school's principal. This termination was formally recognized in June 2006.

PHASE 2: School Project Implementation, Monitoring & Documentation

SuperEd Network members (Kieve Affective Education, KIDS Consortium, The

Center for Educational Services and Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance) working in collaboration with participating school teams, delivered professional development and/or facilitated school planning processes during this second phase. In some cases, delivered services were adjusted *in-process* as a result of clarifying discussions among SuperEd Network members and school team members. Schools utilized their stipend monies and also, in some cases, paid monies from other fund sources to purchase the professional development services from the participating SuperEd Network member(s).

Project staff members, working in collaboration with the participating school and SuperEd Network member(s) developed and implemented an assessment and data collection plan intended to determine the respective Charters' progress and impact. School and SuperEd Network members worked together an average of 9.7 months during Phase 2. In some cases the engagement spanned a two school year period.

MSAD #58 - Kingfield Elementary and SAD #44's three elementary attendance centers (Andover Ele. -Andover, ME - Crescent Park Ele. -Bethel, ME -Woodstock Ele. - Bryant Pond, ME) entered Phase 3 in June 2005 and September respectively. Lewiston Public Schools - Governor James B. Longley School and Union #42 - Mt. Vernon Elementary School began Phase 2 in April 2005 and January 2005 respectively. MSAD #17 - West Paris Elementary Schools, MSAD #17 - Waterford Elementary and Augusta Public Schools -Lincoln Elementary began Phase 1 in April 2005 and Phase 2 in the fall of 2005.

PHASE 3: School Project Closure

School Project Closure, facilitated by *SLL* project staff members, was a highly differentiated process used to bring the respective Chartered projects to closure as the School Learning Laboratory project neared the end of its extended three year funding period. The facilitator met with various combinations of school personnel to collect information and develop a final set of conclusions regarding Charter progress and an overall statement of learnings. Four of the project closure meetings took place in the spring and summer months of the 2005-2006 school years and it was reported that team members were under school closing deadlines or perhaps off contract for the summer resulting in closure activity meeting attendance being restricted to principals and a facilitating project staff member SLL Staff members prepared "School SLL Project

Summaries” once the schools’ projects were completed and the work closed.

MSAD #58 - Kingfield Elementary and SAD#44’s three elementary attendance centers ended Phase 3 in October and December 2005 respectively. Lewiston Public Schools - Governor James B. Longley School and Union #42 - Mt. Vernon Elementary School began Phase 3 in June 2006. Phase 3 ended for Governor James B. Longley School and Union #42 - Mt. Vernon Elementary School in July 2006. MSAD #17 - West Paris Elementary Schools and Augusta Public Schools -Lincoln Elementary began Phase 3 in June 2006 and ended Phase 3 in July 2006. MSAD #17 - Waterford Elementary began Phase 3 in the fall of 2006 and ended Phase 3 in November 2006.

The project director conducted annual project reviews in July 2004, July 2005 and August 2006. The review included an assessment of leadership & operations, resource use, and activities. Those involved in the review included active SuperEd Network members – Maine Center for Education Services, Kids Consortium, Maine Alliance for the Arts and Maine Support Network. Personnel from the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance serving as the project’s fiscal agent and a member of the SuperEd Network also participated. An annual report was filed with the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust reporting on the annual review’s proceedings.

The School Learning Laboratory (SLL) Toolkit, October 2006

What follows is the School Learning Laboratory process for school engagement with external service agencies as it has been developed and refined over the project’s duration. It is currently identified as *School Learning Laboratory (SLL) Toolkit, October 2006*. See the accompanying file “Toolkit_1-0 (11-1-06) – eval rpt version.doc” to which electronic links are established from this report.

The School Learning Laboratory school external service engagement process is designed as a three- phase process.

- ❖ PHASE 1: Defining a School Project
- ❖ PHASE 2: School Project Implementation, Monitoring & Documentation
- ❖ PHASE 3: School Project Closure

[PHASE 1: Defining a School Project](#) consists primarily of (i) Identifying a Client School, (ii) the Entry & Kickoff, (iii) the School Assessment Process, (iv) the Collaborative Review Process, (v) the Chartering Process. The hyperlink located in this section provides detailed access to the *Toolkit's* Phase 1 description.

[PHASE 2: School Project Implementation, Monitoring & Documentation](#) is characterized largely by (i) the engagement of the school and SuperEd Network member(s) working to achieve the Charter's goals and objectives, (ii) the assigned facilitating *SLL* project staff member monitoring the work in progress,

(iii) The facilitating *SLL* project staff members developing an assessment and data collection plan to be utilized to determine the respective Charters' progress and impact. The hyperlink located in this section provides detailed access to the *Toolkit's* Phase 2 description.

[PHASE 3: School Project Closure](#) is a highly differentiated process used to bring the respective Chartered projects to closure as the encompassing School Learning Laboratory project neared the end of its funding cycle. A final "School *SLL* Project Summary" document was prepared by the *SLL* project staff member as each Chartered project achieved closure. The hyperlink located in this section provides detailed access to the *Toolkit's* Phase 3 description.

The *Toolkit* exists as a largely self-sufficient guide to a case management approach to service delivery to schools. This evaluation report was being developed in parallel with the development of a dissemination website intended to host the *Toolkit*. It is reported that the website will be available in December 2006.

The *Toolkit* contains a description of the process in which facilitators, schools, and external service providers may engage with the intent of enhancing the school's instructional services. Reference the [Toolkit's table of contents](#) for specific and detailed understanding:

The *Toolkit* provides access to process oriented materials which serve to provide structure and guidance to facilitating personnel. Examples of these process oriented materials are located at:

- ✓ [Assessment Meeting Process Plan](#)
- ✓ [SLL Gameboard](#)
- ✓ [SLL Gameboard SWOT Analysis](#)
- ✓ [School Program Tree & SWOT Analysis](#)
- ✓ [School Needs Description Worksheet](#)
- ✓ [Using External Service Provider Handout](#)
- ✓ [Assessment Meeting Follow-up Memo](#)

The *Toolkit* provides examples of data collection and data management forms and techniques. Examples of these forms are located at:

- ✓ [SLL Assessment Meeting Feedback Form](#)
- ✓ [School Case Profile – Version 1.0](#)
- ✓ [Sample School Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#)
- ✓ [SLL School Charter Template](#)

✓ [Documentation & Assessment Plan Template](#)

In addition, the *Toolkit* provides an array of supplemental materials that serve to explain the *Toolkit's* use, collect and manage data related to the *Toolkit's* administration and promote its use. These materials can be viewed at the following hyperlinked location: [SLL Handouts](#).

The Project's Evaluation Design

Mr. Ron Senne served as the project's external evaluator. Mr. Senne was contracted to design the project's evaluation in collaboration with the project director, Ms. Doris Ray and the project facilitators. Once an evaluation design was determined, Ms. Ray served as the facilitator of the evaluation implementation. Annual reports and other relevant information were shared with Mr. Senne. Ms. Ray conducted annual review meetings, documented project progress and learnings. Mr. Senne received all project materials beginning in October 2006; reviewed the materials and developed the final project evaluation report in November 2006.

Collaborative action evaluation research involved participant data collection regarding the process and product (progress toward established goals and objectives) and facilitated reflective sessions that resulted in the development of *Learnings* and *Implications* by which the participants could inform their future implementation efforts. School personnel, led by the building principal and facilitated by the assigned *SLL* facilitator were responsible for their internal (within-organization) evaluative efforts. Similarly, project personnel led by the project director conducted annual data collection, reflection and development of project *Learnings* and *Implications* which in turn informed the project's future implementation efforts. The project conducted three cycles of these annual reviews. Information from these internal efforts was provided to the external evaluator. This information was used, along with externally gathered information, to develop this evaluation report.

A set of evaluation guiding questions was developed as part of the evaluation design process. These questions are identified in Table 6.

Table 6 Evaluation Guiding Questions
1. Context -- What are the contextual factors (national, regional, state-wide, local school factors) that influence the design and implementation of the project?
2. Context - Which contextual factors are being influenced by the project, and to what end?

Table 6
Evaluation Guiding Questions

3. Inputs -- In what ways have the leadership and operations within the project's internal arenas supported and facilitated the achievement of the project outcomes and goal?
4. Inputs -- In what ways did the design and use of resources contribute to the achievement of the project's outcomes and goal?
5. Inputs -- In what ways did each of the activities (interventions) contribute to the achievement of the project's outcomes and goal?
6. Process -- In what ways did the quality of the implementation of program activities contribute to the effective delivery of high quality services?
7. Process -- What progress was made in achieving the project's intervening program activities (Phases of Engagement)
8. Impact -- In what ways were the primary audiences (<i>SLL</i> Staff, SuperEd Network, and <i>SLL</i> Sites) impacted as intended by their participation in this project?
9. Impact -- What unintended consequences occurred as a result of the participation?
10. Impact -- In what ways did the project's program activities (interventions) facilitate participant's success and perceptions of having achieved the project's goal and outcomes?

Evaluation Stakeholders

Evaluation stakeholders were identified as those individuals who are directly impacted by the project intervention. In the *SLL* project these stakeholders were school attendance center principals, lead teachers, and other teachers directly involved in the project's professional development activities. Secondary stakeholders are considered to be those students enrolled in the participating attendance centers. Other secondary stakeholders are school district administrators and local boards of education to the extent they experience the project as brought forth by attendance center principals and lead teachers. Tertiary stakeholders are those individuals involved in delivering the projects services, the project director and facilitators. By the nature of the project evaluation design the tertiary stakeholders can be seen also as primary stakeholders.

The Evaluation Model

The evaluation has as its framework the CIPP (Context, Inputs, Process, Product) Model. The CIPP model is a management-oriented approach to evaluation with a data

collection and reporting process that emphasizes formative, decision-facilitative data collection, reporting and utilization.² Table 7 delineates the general CIPP model elements. The following section, *Evaluation Theory of Action*, describes the change and learning theory of the modified collaborative implementation strategy utilized.

Table 7	
Evaluation Model Components	
Decision Making (formative evaluation)	Accountability (summative evaluation)
<i><u>Context:</u></i> Developing an understanding of the environment in which the grant is being designed and implemented including the state/regional and local history, the grant team, participating partners and their respective communities.	
<i><u>Inputs:</u></i> Determining what overall need is to be addressed by the grant. Understanding the extent to which the Grant is effectively organized (budget, personnel, resources, planning and evaluation processes, partnerships, etc.) to implement its strategies toward its intended goals.	
<i><u>Process:</u></i> Determining what strategies are being implemented. Determining the achievement of quality of the implementation processes utilized to achieve grant goals. Answering questions such as: What barriers threaten the success of the grant? How can the implementation be refined?	<i><u>Process:</u></i> Record of the actual process of the implementation.
<i><u>Impact (Product):</u></i> Determining quality and utility of products and impact of their use. Determining strategic direction.	<i><u>Product:</u></i> Evidence of quality, utility and impact.

Evaluation Process Theory of Action

The collaborative implementation strategy utilized to conduct the evaluation was designed to maximize evaluation process and product ownership among participating organizations and project service delivery personnel. The objective was to engender a

² Worthen, Blaine R. and Sanders, James R. (1987). *Education Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*. New York: Longman.

more collaborative and more capacity-building learning and change model in each of the participating schools and for the project. The foundations of this “inside-outside” strategy are advanced by Hopkins and Jackson (2002)³. These underpinnings are:

- The importance of people - the leaders, educational professionals and students, and the dynamic expansion of their collaborative contributions through the development of professional learning communities within and between schools.
- The alignment and synergies created when internal processes and teams are working optimally.
- The organizational arrangements (‘project coherence’ and the ‘networks’) which support capacity development.
- The ‘higher order’ territory of commonly shared values, moral purpose, social cohesion and trust-based relationships.

These are believed to be essential for collaborative and network-based activity between and among both people and successful organizations.

Evaluation Activities

The external evaluator and internal evaluation team members engaged in the following evaluation / project management activities identified in Table 8 during the period of October 1, 2003 thru November 30, 2006.

Table 8	
Evaluation Activities	
Evaluation Activity	Participants / Date
Set up documentation system	D. Ray
Set up evaluation plan	R. Senne, D. Ray / April 2004
Set up Annual Review Process	Project Director & Staff / July 2004

³ Hopkins, D. and Jackson, D. (2002) *Networked Learning Communities – Capacity-building, Networking & Leadership for Learning, NCSL publication.*

Table 8
Evaluation Activities

Evaluation Activity	Participants / Date
Annual review of proposal needs section to reassess and document changes. Determine implications of findings. <u>Report:</u> in Annual Report ⁴	Project Director & Staff / July 2004, July 2005, August 2006.
Annual review of leadership & operations, resource use, and activities. Determine implications of findings. <u>Report:</u> in Annual Report	Project Director & Staff / July 2004, July 2005, August 2006.
Annual review of implementation of <i>SLL</i> Cycle for each <i>SLL</i> School Site (timeline and phases). Annual review of <i>SLL</i> outcomes for presence of leading indicators. Annual review of <i>SLL</i> Sites progress through the <i>SLL</i> Cycle. Determine implications of findings. <u>Report:</u> in Annual Report	Project Director & Staff / July 2004, July 2005, August 2006.
Collect context information in <i>SLL</i> site interviews, needs assessment data collection. <u>Report:</u> in <i>SLL</i> School Profile	Site Level Leaders / at the project's onset
Collect information on <i>SLL</i> leadership, use of resources, and activities for each <i>SLL</i> site throughout implementation. <u>Document:</u> in <i>SLL</i> Portfolio.	Site Level Leaders /
Collect information on <i>SLL</i> Site implementation of <i>SLL</i> Cycle. Ongoing review of progress of <i>SLL</i> School Sites progress through Cycle to describe progress and diagnose/assess client needs. Collect information about <i>SLL</i> clients' perspectives of implementation progress. <u>Document:</u> in <i>SLL</i> Portfolio.	Site Level Leaders / at least annually
Site Summary Report	<i>SLL Facilitators</i> , reviewed by the external evaluator
Develop Final Project Evaluation Report	November, 2006.

Evaluation Findings

Project Outcomes Achievement

The School Learning Laboratory project established the following outcomes:

⁴ Ray, D. (July 15, 2004). Annual Grant Report: Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust Project: SuperEd Network: School Learning Laboratory.

1. *A replicable, sustainable process for using external services.*

And project staff members established the following indicators to measure progress on this outcome:

- Use of *SLL* toolkit and/or processes by others.
- Plan for using *SLL* toolkit and/or processes
- Plan/Activities to sustain *SLL*.
- In-Kind commitments from SuperEd Network, WMP, and *SLL* sites

Finding of Achievement:

The process for engaging external service providers is well document as illustrated in the *Toolkit*. The project is currently in the process of disseminating the *Toolkit* using a static website to make the kit available. As far as can be determined the project leadership team made no plans, other than to disseminate the *Toolkit* using a static website, to use the *SLL Toolkit* outside of those eight schools originally selected to participate in the development of the *Toolkit* and its related processes.

2. *A toolkit of products and processes to select, use and assess external services.*

And project staff members established the following indicators to measure progress on this outcome:

- Toolkit outline, table of contents, samples
- Evidence of use and revisions

Findings of Achievement:

As of this date, November 29, 2006, the *Toolkit* has been developed. There have been some revisions of *Toolkit* processes and data collection and management tools during the project. The *Toolkit* as it is now developed is able to function as an independent process and product package that can be adapted with the use of skilled *Facilitators* to a wide variety of applications in which an educational service agency is seeking to engage an external service provider.

3. *Innovations that impact teachers, students and instruction.*

And project staff members established the following progress indicators to measure progress on this outcome:

- Feedback data from *SLL* meetings
- Charters/Contracts
- Charter activities aligned with needs and outcomes.
- Assessment data from *SLL* Projects in sites.
- Data from *SLL* Project Closure in sites.

Findings of Achievement:

The external evaluator, in the absence of a prescribed definition for the term *innovations* in this outcome used a definition of *innovation* provided by Everett M. Rogers:

“An *innovation* is an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. It matters little, so far as human behavior is concerned, whether or not an idea is “objectively” new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery. The perceived newness of the ideas for the individual determines his or her reaction to it. If the innovation seems new to the individual, it is an innovation.”⁵ (p.12).

The *innovation* being addressed is the *Toolkit development process*. Within the development process several underlying processes were embedded: the use of skilled facilitators, the use of pre-engaged, collaborating SuperEd Network members, the allocation of expertly facilitated “gifts of time” (Carefully planned and executed meetings.) for discussion, planning and assessment around this project, the opportunity for cross-organizational (education and service agency) learning that was designed into the process, the creation and use of the participating schools’ *SLL* Teams, and several elemental sub-processes - the Collaborative Review sub-process and the Chartering sub-process, the School Assessment sub-process, etc.

There is ample evidence participating schools were provided the opportunity to participate in innovative process experiences. And, in general the *innovation* was believed to have had a beneficial effect. The Annual Progress Review report of September 2006 contains the following statement: “In six of the *SLL* sites, the projects appear to have had an impact on faculty and the school as an

⁵Rogers. E. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovation*. 5th Ed. Free Press, New York.

organization.”⁶ Data in the School *SLL* Project Summary reports support this statement.

⁶ Ray, D. (2006) School Learning Laboratory – [Report of the 3rd] Annual Progress Review. July 12, 2006.

In School *SLL* Project Summary reports that contain data derived from participating teachers and administrators the Collaborative Review process, a highly structured and facilitated meeting of service providers, the facilitator and the engaged school] was described as “... an energizing and useful learning process for both SuperEd Network members and school participants.”¹ And, the same School *SLL* Project Summary reports from three schools (Kingfield , Lincoln, Longley) contain information from teachers that reflected on some changes in internal meeting processes that illustrate an appreciation for the concepts of internal community building and effective teacher-to-teacher and teacher-to-administrator communication.

School *SLL* Project Summary reports also contain information reflecting an enhanced appreciation for the use of skilled *Facilitators* for personal skill building and organizational planning professional development projects.

The Collaborative Review sub-process when combined with the Chartering sub-process, a formalized process innovation reflecting an identification of need, a process of writing a request for proposals, and a response by service providers, was identified by schools, SuperEd Network members and *SLL Facilitators* as a critically important element. SuperEd Network members’, *SLL Facilitators* and some participating schools’ data collected by the external evaluator reflects the need for further refinement based upon an enhanced skill set by service providing SuperEd Network members and the schools’ leaders.

4. *Schools with improved organizational capacity for change*

And project staff members established the following indicators to measure progress on this outcome:

- Structures for collaborative decision making relative to change within sites.
- Evidence of data collection and planning for change.
- Evidence of assessment of change projects.

Findings of Achievement:

There was evidence at all successfully participating schools of assessment of the change process in which they were engaged. A few schools (West Paris,

Longley, SAD 44⁷) were able to directly provide meta-analytic insight regarding their engagement in the process of developing a process for engaging an external service provider. Other schools provided inferential meta-analytic insight as they reflected on the progress they made meeting the needs they had identified for their schools.

In two school cases (West Paris, Longley) there was evidence of data collection and related planning for change. Accompanying the data collection and planning for change was the implicit development of structures for collaborative decision making related to change. And, essential precursor work - foundational development related to improved communication skills, re-awakening of awareness related to the importance of building trust and talking about values was reported in these same school cases.

For some schools (Livermore, SAD 44, Union 42), the *SLL* experience reinforced the ideal that clearly defined leadership, a structural element, is essential for successful engagement with a development process such as *SLL* and for engaging external service providers. In these cases projects faltered at the doorstep of leadership.

In the case of one school (Union 42), the existing school structure in which teachers have traditionally been committed to classroom responsibilities first and foremost made it difficult to engage in other time consuming projects in which the teachers believed they were addressing an important need. It appears the extra work, was overwhelming, even upon reflection.

Each of the *SLL* sites had an *SLL* Team composed of the principal or curriculum coordinator, teachers from the school, and other stakeholders established at the onset of their participation. Some team reported positive team

⁷ The SAD #44 project leader was one of the few school project leaders to respond to a survey sent by the evaluator. This response provided valuable insight from another perspective, that of the service consumer, of the project.

experiences (West Paris, Longley) and the likelihood of their continued existence is enhanced. Other teams (Livermore, SAD #44, Union #42) reported as experiencing stress by the circumstances of their work and leadership issues. It seems the likelihood of these teams having sustaining capabilities is low.

Response to Guiding Questions

The following section of Evaluation Findings will be organized according to the evaluation guiding questions and will augment the previous Findings Statements.

Guiding Question 1: What were the contextual factors (national, regional, state-wide, local school factors) that influence the design and implementation of the project?

The third year Annual Review Report summarized the contextual factors within which the project has operated. In summary:

- Increasingly centralized funding and program development policy at the federal level.
- Increasingly restricted funding opportunities for schools and school service agencies.
- Increasing demands upon the Maine state education agency to comply with federal requirements.
- Changes in the operations of the SuperEd Network members in an effort to generate revenue.
- Maine schools experiencing increasing pressure to obtain student performance results with the concomitant experience of increasing isolation, alienation and work load demand.

Additional local factors identified by *SLL* facilitators, SuperEd Network members and participating schools include:

- School administrators (and perhaps school systems) who/which are inadequately prepared to plan, execute and oversee the delivery of school educational services in an environment characterized by those factors identified in the previous paragraph.

- SuperEd Network members who are inadequately prepared to provide services to schools in conditions as described in the previous paragraph.

The September 2006 Annual Review report:

“The collaborative reviews held in September 2005 really brought into focus the issues that have been neglected in schools: building a community of professionals who support one another to achieve a common vision. All three schools elected to design projects aimed at working on this organization development issue.”

Guiding Question 2: Which contextual factors are being influenced by the project, and to what end?

The School Learning Laboratory project had as its goal: **[To] *develop a collaborative model for delivering external services to schools that produces high quality instruction for all students.*** In the process of executing its plan to develop a model for delivering external services the project provided limited services to schools that partially addressed personal and professional conditions under which school administrators are operating – the lack of adequate professional preparation. The *SLL* project’ scope was not designed to address the foundational and more complex issues with which educational agencies are faced today.

The *SLL* project also, in a less direct manner, set out to assist SuperEd Network members with the task of providing services to schools. Information gathered by the external evaluator did not directly assess the impact of these efforts.

Guiding Question 3: In what ways have the leadership and operations within the project’s internal arenas supported and facilitated the achievement of the project outcomes and goal?

The project leadership developed a plan to ***develop a collaborative model for delivering external services to schools that produces high quality instruction for all students.*** And they executed that plan largely in the manner in which it was originally predicted. The leadership conducted its scheduled internal project review process and in doing so documented its *Learnings* and identified the resulting *Implications*. The leadership made modifications, changing the Collaborative Review process, to the plan

following its first year of operations. These modifications resulted in an improvement of services by increasing the scope and depth of involvement of service delivery SuperEd Network members.

The leadership communicated with its constituents using a communication tool, *School Learning Laboratory Project Update*, issued once in 2003, five times in 2004 and twice in 2005.

Guiding Question 4: In what ways did the design and use of resources contribute to the achievement of the project's outcomes and goal?

[Table 2](#) contains detailed information related to project expenditures. [Chart 1](#) provides additional information. [Table 3](#) contains information regarding the disposition of *SLL* facilitator resources.

Guiding Question 5: In what ways did each of the activities (interventions) contribute to the achievement of the project's outcomes and goal?

Data collected from SuperEd Network members and *SLL Facilitators* provides some insight into this guiding question. The following Table 9 provides a summary of these limited responses. Table 9 was completed by various respondents in various ways. Responses were collapsed and the denominator in the calculations varied from outcome to outcome. It should be noted that two respondents, both SuperEd Network members declined to complete the survey item based on their reported incomplete knowledge of the project's activities.

Survey respondents were asked to: *rate the progress you believe the project made on each of its stated outcomes.*

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Table 9
SLL Outcomes¹ and Leading Indicators

Outcomes	Leading Indicators	Your Rating			
		Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1. <i>A replicable, sustainable process for using external services.</i>	• Use of <i>SLL</i> toolkit and/or processes by others.	N=2 17%	N=4 33%	N=6 50%	
	• Plan for using <i>SLL</i> toolkit and/or processes				
	• Plan/Activities to sustain <i>SLL</i> .				
	• In-Kind commitments from SuperEd Network, WMP, and <i>SLL</i> sites				
2. <i>A toolkit of products and processes to select, use and assess external services.</i>	• Toolkit outline, table of contents, samples	N=5 83%			N=1 17%
	• Evidence of use and revisions				
3. <i>Innovations that impact teachers, students and instruction.</i>	• Feedback data from <i>SLL</i> meetings	N=4 33%	N=7 58%	N=1 .8%	
	• Charters/Contracts				
	• Charter activities aligned with needs and outcomes.				
	• Assessment data from <i>SLL</i> Projects in sites.				
4. <i>Schools with improved organizational capacity for change.</i>	• Structures for collaborative decision making relative to change within sites.	N=1 11%	N=4 44%	N=3 33%	N=1 11%
	• Evidence of data collection and planning for change.				
	• Evidence of assessment of change projects.				

Guiding Question 6: In what ways did the quality of the implementation of program activities contribute to the effective delivery of high quality services?

SuperEd Network members, participating schools’ teachers and administrators, *SLL* facilitators, and the single individual responding to the external evaluator’s survey of school project leaders agreed that the services provided by the *SLL Facilitators* was of a high quality. One participating school’s teachers and project leader expressed a negative reaction to the work of a single SuperEd Network member. The issue was described as one in which the SuperEd Network member’s services did not match the

school's needs. This relationship appeared to be successfully terminated.

Guiding Question 7: What progress was made in achieving the project's intervening program activities (Table coding - Phases of Engagement: P1 = Phase 1, P2 = Phase 2, P3 = Phase 3, C = Completed engagement with *SLL* project, T = Terminated engagement with *SLL* project prior to completion)

Seven of the eight participating school districts completed their engagement with the *SLL* project in a manner as had been originally contracted. The eighth district terminated its engagement because of the turnover of a building administration and resultant interruption in communications with the *SLL* project facilitator. Table 10 provides details regarding each participating schools' duration of engagement.

Table 10 School Participation Calendar																	
	Duration																
	2003-2004				2004-2005				2005-2006				2006-2007				
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
MSAD #58 - Kingfield Elementary School Kingfield, ME		P1			P2			P3	C								
MSAD #44 - Elementary Schools Andover, ME Bethel, ME Woodstock, ME		P1			P2				P3	C							
Union #42 - Mt. Vernon Elementary School Mt. Vernon, ME				P1			P2						P3	C			
MSAD #36 - Livermore Falls Middle School Livermore Falls, ME				P1												T	
Lewiston Public Schools - Governor James B. Longley				P1				P2								P3	C

**Table 10
School Participation Calendar**

Duration																
	2003-2004				2004-2005				2005-2006				2006-2007			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Elementary School Lewiston, ME																
MSAD #17 – West Paris Schools -Agnes Gray (Grades 2-6) & Legion Memorial (Grades K-1) Elementary School - West Paris, ME								P1	P2			P3	C			
MSAD #17 - Waterford Elementary School Waterford, ME,								P1	P2				P3	C		
Augusta Public Schools - Lincoln Elementary School Augusta, ME								P1	P2			P3	C			

Two of the *SLL Facilitators* reported they believed Phase 3: School Project Closure as being hurried and a somewhat incomplete process as a result of not being able to assemble schools’ *SLL* teams to have closure meetings. School year closing activities and summer employment contracting became higher priority issues. This appears to be the case especially for the final three districts brought into the project - MSAD #17 – West Paris Schools -Agnes Gray (Grades 2-6) & Legion Memorial (Grades K-1) Elementary School - West Paris, ME; MSAD #17 -Waterford Elementary School, Waterford, ME and Augusta Public Schools - Lincoln Elementary School, Augusta, ME.

As a final observation regarding the coordination of participating schools’ planning calendars and the implementation of project phases, *SLL* Facilitators and SuperEd Network members remarked that schools were recruited and entered into the project at time periods that did not coincide with school budgeting cycles. The result was that there was, at times, a shortage of funds for schools to purchase services that were

Chartered (contracted). It was noted that some schools did use funds from sources other than the project to purchase funds. Detailed information regarding these funds was not requested.

Guiding Question 8: In what ways were the primary audiences (*SLL Facilitators*, SuperEd Network, and *SLL Sites*) impacted as intended by their participation in this project?

SLL Facilitators and SuperEd Network service providers were largely experienced educators. They universally reported their experience working with schools and SuperEd Network members as being an informative experience in which they gained additional understanding of schools, those factors which influence schools and the interactions among schools and external service providers.

SLL Facilitators specifically mentioned they valued the opportunity to work as a team and to learn from each other especially as they assessed the project's work, their *Learnings* and *Implications* for future endeavors. They also reported having gained more knowledge about the ways in which external service providers operate.

SLL school personnel reported they had gained interpersonal communication skills and they gained valuable information regarding needs analysis and "aligned" contracting with external service providers. They also reported learning about the importance of best practices that pertain to conducting meetings.

Guiding Question 9: What unintended consequences occurred as a result of the participation?

The external evaluator did not directly collect information regarding this question; nor was information collected by the project.

Guiding Question 10: In what ways did the project's program activities (interventions) facilitate participant's success and perceptions of having achieved the project's goal and outcomes?

The general impression received from *SLL Facilitators* was that the program activities provided the conceptual framework and working documentation necessary to

engage in the process of developing *a collaborative model for delivering external services to schools that produces high quality instruction for all students*. Various participating schools engaged with the process in different ways as dictated by local circumstances. SuperEd Network members also engaged in different ways as dictated by their local circumstances. It is important to note that two of the SuperEd Network members (of the four who responded) believed they were not able to respond to a query regarding specific project activities because they were insufficiently informed.

The one (of eight) school leader who responded to the external evaluator survey shared the perception that the project appeared to have a vacuum in leadership as *SLL Facilitators* transitioned into his school. It should be recognized that one of eight does not constitute a pattern. Also, it is important to note that seven of the eight participating school leaders who were surveyed by the external evaluator failed to respond to repeated (n=3) attempts to gather survey information regarding the project.