

and titleholders who are still struggling to implement past reforms. Much as a blue-ribbon commission would embrace scientific management, it could also strengthen the other tides by reconciling the continuing conflicts between often-contradictory goals such as openness and privacy, speed and fairness, compliance and creativity, and consistency and innovation. As past reformers might say, at least it's worth a try.

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Notes

1. I define major statutes by judgment through a reading of the legislative history of each law, media coverage, and status accorded by *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*. Many statutes crossed over into my database from

- other organizations, such as the Administrative Conference's *Federal Administrative Procedure Sourcebook* (1992) and Ronald C. Moe's *General Management Laws: A Selective Compendium* (1997). Others crossed over from David C. Mayhew's *Divided We Govern* (2005) and from my own database on the president's agenda. Still others made the list through reviews of legislative hearings conducted by the U.S. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee and the U.S. House Government Operations and Government Reform Committees, as well as reviews of U.S. Government Accountability Office reports.
2. The National Performance Review can be found in a cybercemetery at the University of North Texas at <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/upr/>.
 3. My original tides of reform database consisted of 141 statutes. In updating the database for this study, I added three additional statutes: the 1950 National Science Foundation Act, the 1969 Tax Reform Act, and a 1977 act prohibiting the first year of salary increases authorized under the 1977 Federal Salary Act Amendments. The first of these was listed in the appendix to *The Tides of Reform* (Light 1997) but was not actually included in the database.
 4. The table shows the primary focus of each reform statute. Sixty-four percent of the 177 statutes embraced one reform philosophy only, whereas 29 percent included a primary and secondary philosophy, and 7 percent contained a primary, secondary, and tertiary theme. The determination of primary, secondary, and tertiary emphasis was based on a plain reading of the legislative text and history. Each major provision of the 177 statutes was coded for its basic philosophy, using the legislative text, committee hearings and reports, and floor debate to discern the underlying purpose of the reform.
 5. See the *Congressional Record*, September 23, 2001, p. H7643.
 6. These statistics come from ongoing surveys by Princeton Survey Research Associates (www.psra.com) on behalf of the now-defunct Brookings Institution Center for Public Service. The percentages on perceived waste in government came from a telephone survey of 770 randomly selected Americans conducted in October 2003, in which 73 percent said the federal government in Washington wastes "a great deal" of money and 20 percent said "a fair amount." The opinions on the perceived sources of federal employee motivation came from telephone surveys of 1,003, 1,033, and 986 randomly selected Americans conducted by the Center for Public Service in August and October 2001 and May 2002, respectively. Additional information on the 2001–03 surveys can be found at www.brookings.edu/gs/cps/cps_hp.htm.
 7. These figures came from a 1997 telephone survey of 1,762 Americans conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (1998) and the four surveys described in footnote 6. Further details on the Pew Center survey can be found at <http://peoplepress.org/reports/display.php3?pageID=592>.
 8. These surveys were conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates on behalf of the Brookings Institution Center for Public Service. The samples were identified through random-digit dialing. To protect against biases associated with being identified as a government, nonprofit, or private sector employee, respondents were told that they were participating in a survey about work life. All questions were designed to elicit opinions about each respondent's job or organization without reference to sector.
 9. This question was only asked of employees who said their organizations had been reformed, reinvented, or reorganized in the past five years.
 10. This question was asked of all employees in the samples.
 11. Personal communication with the author.

CASE STUDY 13

Introduction

Professor Light's essay surveys the current landscape of administrative reorganization and argues that it is dominated by four major, competing ideas, i.e., scientific management, the war on waste, the watchful eye, and liberation management. All four have accelerated in pace and intensity, according to Light, in recent decades throughout American government, leading to what he refers to as the present situation of "hyper-reform." Given this "hyper-nature," sorting out these trends and how they affect agencies is by no means easy today, even for specialists who closely follow government reforms. However, does Light's thesis apply elsewhere in U.S. government, say at the local level? Do the same sources initiate public sector reorganizations as at the federal level? Develop in similar ways? Lead to like impacts? Or, do grass-roots organizational reforms fundamentally differ from those within the federal government?

The following insightful *New Yorker* story, "Expectations," by Katherine Boo, highlights a major citywide initiative to improve its public education system. As in many other big cities today, enhancing the quality of public schools became a high priority for Denver and its elected leaders. Its popular mayor, John Hickenlooper, was convinced by the end of his first term that there was little evidence of educational progress, despite his successful economic revitalization of the downtown, the passage of a \$300 million bond issue to improve schools, and a willingness of the powerful teacher's union to take the risk of undertaking major educational reforms. In July 2005, Hickenlooper appointed his chief of staff, forty-two-year-old Michael Bennet to take charge of leading school reform. Though lacking an educational background, Bennet's low-keyed, intelligent success as the mayor's deputy earned him respect from many quarters as someone who possessed the right leadership talents to fill the superintendent's post. When Bennet assumed control of Denver's 150 public schools with 73,000 students, he quickly moved to impose the highest systemwide graduation standards in the state of Colorado. His goal was to prepare a majority of Denver public school graduates for college. A key portion of implementing his strategy was to close the worst performing schools and shift those students to better ones. To emphasize his serious commitment to educational reform, Manual High School was targeted first for closure. A century-old high school, Manual, as its name implies, was established originally to offer manual training instruction to those not college bound. However, over the years its demographics shifted to black and later to mostly Hispanic from lower-income backgrounds. By 2005 Manual ran half empty due to urban population changes, had one of the highest dropout rates among Denver schools, the lowest student test scores, exhausted teachers, plus significant violent gang activity.

In February 2006, as a warning to twelve other poor performing schools, the school board, with Bennet's approval, voted to close Manual. Bennet's rationale for his drastic reorganization decision combined what Paul Light terms, "war on waste," i.e., improve overall educational efficiency by closing an underutilized, poor institution and send its students to higher quality public high schools, as well as "liberation management," i.e., allow students to select any school they wish to attend. Mentors, summer remedial classes, and academic counseling would be added to ease the transition. Computers would track student performance and identify those who needed extra help. That was the crux of Bennet's reorganization strategy. Yet, as the following case recounts, ideal organizational plans involving just one public high school were neither easy nor simple to execute.