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elementary school principals in East Tennessee**

Dixon, Steven Franklin, Ed.D.

East Tennessee State University, 1994

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**ACTUAL AND IDEAL SHARED DECISION MAKING
PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN EAST TENNESSEE**

**A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department
of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education**

**by
Steven F. Dixon
May 1994**

APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Graduate Committee of

STEVEN F. DIXON

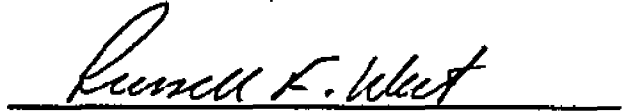
met on the

4th day of April, 1994.

The committee read and examined his dissertation, supervised his defense of it in an oral examination, and recommended that his study be submitted to the Graduate Council and the Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean, School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Supervision and Administration.



Dr. Charles Burkett, Chairman



Associate Vice-President for Research
and Dean, School of Graduate Studies

Signed on behalf of
the Graduate Council

ABSTRACT
ACTUAL AND IDEAL SHARED DECISION MAKING
PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS IN
EAST TENNESSEE

by

Steven F. Dixon

The problem of this study was to determine if differences existed in the perceptions of elementary school principals regarding the amount of involvement parents, teachers, and principals had in school decision making. The study was one part of a more comprehensive project conducted in the First Tennessee Developmental District which also investigated parents' and teachers' perceptions of involvement.

A questionnaire was developed to survey principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal level of involvement of parents, teachers, and principals in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel. A total of 95 principals (76%) returned the questionnaire.

Based on the significant differences found, principals felt that parents, teachers, and principals should be more involved in each of the three areas studied. Conclusions from parallel studies regarding parents' and teachers' perceptions were similar. Principals, teachers, and parents would like to see more governance at the local school setting.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

This is to certify that the following study has been filed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.

Title of Project Actual and Ideal Shared Decision Making Perceptions of Principals in East Tennessee

Principal Investigator Steven F. Dixon

Department Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Date Submitted 12-8-93

Institutional Review Board Chairman Anthony J. DeSena

DEDICATION

Dedicated
to my family,
Pat, Jamie, Joe and Rebecca

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My most sincere thanks are extended to Dr. Charles Burkett, my committee chairman. Dr. Burkett has been a continual source of professional guidance throughout my years as a school administrator. I am also deeply appreciative of the expert advice given to me by my other committee members, Dr. Cecil Blankenship, Dr. Donn Gresso, and Dr. Russell West. Without their continued assistance this dissertation would not have been possible.

I deeply appreciate the support of my wife Pat, and my children, Jamie, Joe and Rebecca. Their tolerance of the many hours I spent on this project did not go unnoticed. Helen Dixon, my mother, must be acknowledged for any accomplishments I might be fortunate enough to experience. She made many sacrifices to instill in me positive values and work habits and then provided opportunities for success.

My deepest appreciation is extended to my partners in this research project. Working with Rebecca Walters and John Clark has made the entire effort much more enjoyable. The many hours spent discussing and debating minute details has strengthened this project. Superintendent of the Bristol City Schools, Dr. James Street has also provide continual support of my efforts in this program.

Thanks are also extended to Martha Littleford for her assistance with the proofreading and final preparation of this paper. Her abilities are truly exceptional.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"An acknowledged disaster area for America is its factory-style school system, devastated by drugs, violence, and alienation" (Toffler, 1990, p. 444). These sentiments have been voiced repeatedly, and as a result, the 1980s could easily be called the decade of educational reform. This reform was launched by the publication of *A Nation At Risk* (1983) by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. American education throughout the 20th century has responded to perceived crisis with a return to the basics. Once again educators and politicians began immediate reform aimed toward improving students' minimal skills (Schubert, 1993).

These efforts began in Tennessee on May 27, 1981. On that date, Senate Joint Resolution Number 56 was adopted by the Senate of the 92nd General Assembly of the State of Tennessee. Some 2 weeks later, it received approval. This resolution called for the creation of a task force to implement a comprehensive study of public education in the state of Tennessee. Among the areas to be investigated by this in-depth study were programs, personnel,

facilities, finances and organization in all phases of the entire educational system (Task Force Review, 1981/82).

This study paralleled reform efforts occurring in other states. At the time of the passage of Senate Joint Resolution Number 56, eleven other states in the southern region were conducting some type of master plan or statewide review involving public education (Task Force Review, 1981/82).

With the guidance of Governor Lamar Alexander, Tennessee quickly became one of several states with some type of master plan for education as the Comprehensive Educational Reform Act of 1984 was passed. The major issues of this legislation were the Basic Skills First Program and the Career Ladder Program. These efforts constituted the first wave of recent educational reform efforts, those designed to focus educational change at the state level (Caldwell, 1990).

Educators saw school reform shift throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. This shift, referred to by many as the second wave of educational reform, placed the focus of change on the school (Caldwell, 1990). This new focus caused the question of decentralization to become a major issue in curriculum reform (Schubert, 1993).

Once again, efforts in Tennessee paralleled those in other

states. In 1991 the Educational Improvement Act was instituted. Among the major issues of this piece of legislation was an effort toward decentralization. Section 31 allowed local boards of education to initiate a program of school-based decision making. Recent clarifications by C. E. Smith, Commissioner of Education, allowed the local board to implement any program of shared leadership which best suits the system's goals and objectives (C. E. Smith, personal communication, March 19, 1993).

Decentralization of any form changes decision making from a rational, normative, prescriptive approach to a more complex, collaborative approach. It is clear that a number of problems, tensions, and constraints exist among those who practice school decision making (Duigan, 1990). In instances where decentralization occurred within the school, the supportiveness of the principal was found to be significantly related to the successful development of shared leadership, particularly as it related to the curriculum. Staff members reported that a supportive principal created an environment which promoted higher intimacy among staff, higher perceived group decision making, and higher perceived curriculum satisfaction (Brady, 1984).

According to David (1989), Kubick (1988), Lindelow and Heynderickx (1989), Valensky, Forsythe, and Hall (1992), and White

(1989), curriculum is only one of three areas commonly decentralized in the decision-making process. The other two areas are budget and staffing. Although parents, staff, students, and community members may be involved in the decision-making process, Lindelow and Heynderickx (1989) and Etheridge, Hall, Brown, and Lucas (1990) report that the principal plays the key role.

The reform effort in Tennessee has paralleled reform efforts throughout the United States; however, the current emphasis on decentralization places more emphasis on school-level decision making. This shift in the decision-making process has tremendous implications for the principalship. Principals involved in some form of shared decision making will no longer be able to make decisions autocratically. In addition, the degree to which teachers, parents, community members, and students are involved in the decision-making process will impact the total operation of the school.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

There appears to be a difference between principals' perceptions of the ideal and actual amount of involvement principals, teachers, and parents should have in decision making at

the elementary school level, and there is little evidence of the extent of the differences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the differences between elementary principals' perceptions of the amount of involvement principals, parents and teachers have in school decision making, and the amount of involvement they deem as ideal.

Significance of the Problem

In a memorandum to superintendents and directors of schools, Commissioner of Education C. E. Smith (1993) clarified the intent of legislation in the State of Tennessee which encouraged any form of school-based decision making. Central to this effort is the principal of the school (Etheridge et al., 1990; Lindelow & Heynderickx, 1989). However, no research is available which would allow principals to compare their perceptions of shared decision making to the perceptions of other principals. Information of this nature would be highly beneficial to any principal considering a shared decision-making venture. Data are needed which will allow principals to better judge whether to initiate such a process. Data are also needed which would allow the principals to realize which areas of shared decision making they perceive in the same way as

other principals. This study will provide data which could be used in either of these areas. Results of this research could also be used by central office staff to realize which principals might be the most successful in a shared leadership role. This could be achieved by comparing principals' perceptions in the system to typical principal perceptions identified in this study. Data gathered through any research on shared decision making can also serve as a baseline for principal in-service.

To provide this needed information, studies should be undertaken which will provide a data base, pinpointing the differences, if any, between the decision-making processes which presently exist in schools, and the decision-making processes deemed the most desirable. By using this data, schools are more likely to succeed in their efforts with school-based decision making. It is hoped that the end result will be a more effective learning environment for the students in Tennessee's schools.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study were:

H₁ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of teacher involvement in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

H₂ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of parent involvement in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

H₃ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of involvement in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

H₄ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of teacher involvement regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

H₅ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of parent involvement regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

H₆ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of their involvement regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

H₇ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of teacher involvement in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

H₈ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of parent involvement in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

H₉ A significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of involvement in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this study:

1. It was assumed that principals' responses to the instrument used in the study were honest.
2. It was assumed the statistical procedures used were valid for analyzing the data.

Limitations

The following were the limitations of the study:

1. The study was limited to elementary school principals in the First Tennessee Developmental District.
2. The study was limited to the 1993/94 school year.

Definition of Terms

1. Autonomy--Hanson (1991b) defined autonomy as the independence of groups in an organization from control by other parts of the organization or even by the whole organization.
2. Bureaucracy--This term refers to a governance plan that involves a hierarchy of authority with structured rules, regulations,

and a division of labor designed to attain specific goals effectively (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

3. Consensus--"A process by which a team or group cooperatively arrive at a mutually acceptable decision that all members agree to support" (Lewis, 1986, p. 64).

4. Deconcentration--The transfer of workloads to subordinates without the transfer of genuine authority (Hanson, 1991b).

5. Delegation--The actual transfer of decision-making authority from superordinates to subordinates (Hanson, 1991b).

6. Deregulate--The process of waiving the rules, policies and regulations for local schools or systems (Etheridge et al., 1990).

7. Elementary School--Any single school in the sampling frame whose organizational pattern contained at least one grade level below grade 6.

8. Empowerment--Giving official authority to those on the school site (Dunklee, 1990).

9. Enabling--Providing principals, teachers, and parents in each individual school not only the opportunity but the means to succeed (Dunklee, 1990).

10. Shared Decision Making--"A process in which the professional members of the school collaborate, where appropriate,

in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, shaping direction, and monitoring program implementation" (Wallace, Radvik-Shovin, Piscalish, & LeMahieu, 1990, p. 8).

11. Site-based management--A plan which decentralizes the central office and empowers the principal to participate in decisions which affected the school (Michigan Education Association, 1989).

12. Site-based decision making--Referred to as a plan which decentralizes the school and empowers teachers and others to make the decisions which affect the school (Michigan Education Association, 1989).

Parallel Studies

Principals' perceptions of involvement in school decision making were examined in this study. It represented one of three sections of a more comprehensive research project undertaken to identify perceptions of decision making within the entire school community. The two parallel studies were conducted simultaneously to complete the research project. One examined teachers' perceptions of involvement in school decision making and the other examined parents' perceptions of involvement in school decision making. The data compiled from all three studies were

analyzed and reported in Chapter 6. Conclusions and recommendations of the comprehensive research project are also included in Chapter 6.

In order to insure a statistically correct analysis of the data in Chapter 6, portions of the three parallel studies were completed using similar procedures. Nine hypotheses were tested in each of the studies. Although each study measured a different area of perceptions, hypotheses were worded semantically alike and were measured with the same statistical test. The questionnaires used in the three studies were tested for validity through the same pilot study. All questionnaires used the same format and subscales with only minor terminological differences deemed more appropriate for each group of respondents.

Population samples for each study were drawn from the elementary schools in the First Tennessee Developmental District. This allowed each member of the research team to generalize findings to educational communities in the same geographical region.

Data collection was a cooperative effort among all three researchers. Elementary schools in the First Tennessee Developmental District were divided into three groups with one group assigned to each researcher. Each team member was

responsible for obtaining principal, teacher, and parent data from schools in the assigned group. Questionnaires were color coded to insure their return to the appropriate researcher.

Procedures

The procedures of the study were as follows:

1. A review of related literature was conducted which included an ERIC computer search.
2. A decision was made to work cooperatively with two other researchers conducting parallel studies.
3. Schools to be included in the sampling were identified in the First Developmental District in the state of Tennessee.
4. A survey instrument was constructed which contained demographics and a questionnaire.
5. Validity of the instrument was obtained through a pilot study.
6. A panel of doctoral students reviewed the format, procedures, and plans for implementation of the study.
7. Approval of the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.
8. Principals were contacted and permission was obtained to conduct the survey.

9. Surveys were delivered to the individual schools and were either administered or explained to the principals. If necessary, the researcher returned to the schools to obtain completed surveys.

10. The results of the study were analyzed through appropriate statistical analysis.

11. Conclusions and recommendations were identified.

12. Results of this study were combined with those of two parallel studies for more comprehensive conclusions.

Overview of the Study

The study was organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the problem, assumptions, limitations, definitions, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the related literature. Chapter 3 contains the research methodology and instruments used in the study. Chapter 4 contains the presentation of data and the analysis of findings, and Chapter 5 contains the summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Chapter 6 concludes the study by combining results from this research with results from the parallel studies.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Related Literature

Introduction

Chapter 2 consists of a review of literature relating to principals' perceptions of decision making. The chapter is divided into four sections: (a) Traditional Decision Making in Education, (b) Shared Decision Making in Education, (c) Implementation of Shared Decision Making, and (d) Summary.

The first section, Traditional Decision Making in Education, describes approaches principals have typically used in making decisions. The section reviews rational decision making and making decisions by applying theories. Educational theories which affect school decision making are reviewed.

The second section, Shared Decision Making in Education, describes the process of making decisions collaboratively. Different aspects of the process are reviewed.

The third section, Implementation of Shared Decision Making, reviews sites where this process has been placed into educational practice. Selected state, district, and school projects are described. A summary concludes the chapter.

Traditional Decision Making in Education

Despite the importance of decision making in life, no systematic, formal program of decision making can be found in educational programs (Juniper, 1976). Rational decision making models were often used to describe the process of making decisions. These models were characterized by (a) delineating the exact nature of the problem and formulating clear goals, (b) identifying and specifying all possible alternatives, (c) specifying and anticipating outcomes of the alternatives, and (d) ranking the possible outcomes from best to worst (Sergiovanni & Carver, 1980). Rational thinking models used various approaches, such as lists and assumptions to describe decision making.

Saphier, Bigda-Peyton, and Pierson (1989) listed 12 steps which lead to legitimate decisions and build a strong foundation for schools.

1. Identify and explicitly state the issue, who owns it and what the underlying goal is.
2. Find out and explain how much discretion you have to take action or not.
3. Every issue lands in someone's lap to begin with. If it lands in yours, be sure to choose the proper path for who will make the preliminary and the final decision.
4. At the beginning of the process, communicate clearly who will make the decision and identify any constraints that will affect the scope or content of the decision.

5. State explicitly the values you want to maintain and why they are not negotiable if that is the case.
6. Identify and periodically check out with people what the full impact or full consequences of the decision will be and communicate them to all parties involved.
7. Involve all parties whose working conditions will be affected by the decision.
8. Make clear the time line for deciding and implementing the decision.
9. Decide and then make an explicit statement of the decision or recommendations, summarizing all key points.
10. Provide for exactly how and when the decision-making group will revisit the decision later to evaluate or revise necessary.
11. Close the loop. Communicate the reasons for the decision fully and clearly to all affected parties, including how people's input was used.
12. Plan how to monitor and support the day to day implementation of the decision and communicate the plans to everyone involved. (Saphier et al., 1989, p. 6)

The first 5 steps of this model comprised the planning section. Steps 6 through 10 were in the deciding section and the final two steps were labeled the implementing section. A recognized weakness of following a step-by-step approach in making decisions was the time needed to complete the procedure. Proponents of this model argued that improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and morale are worth the investment of time (Saphier, et. al., 1989).

Another approach used in describing the decision-making process was found in Dean F. Juniper's (1976) Decision-Making for Schools and Colleges. The purpose of this book was to educate

students in decision-making skills. The method presented by the book was divided into four stages labeled aims and values, information, evaluation and decision.

Juniper considered aims and values the first stage of decision making because he felt they were the foundation and integrating framework of the entire process. According to this author, aims and values dictated the action to be taken, the information which was sought and the evaluation and consideration given to the data located.

The second stage in Juniper's process called for the locating of information. All alternative solutions could be considered only when all information had been gathered. The third stage began with calculating the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. The fourth stage of the process was to choose the best alternative, thereby, making the best decision.

A third rational thinking approach to decision making found in the review of literature was the listing of assumptions which would eventually lead to the selection of the best alternative. Suggested assumptions for successful decision making, compiled from an administrators' workshop on shared decision making in 1977, are summarized below.

1. Decision making is a process which should create confidence and trust. Thorough plans should be developed and adequate time provided for change.
2. People who are immediately affected by a decision should have input into making it. Along the way the problem must be defined and alternatives suggested. The decision should be continually reviewed.
3. School personnel are interested in being involved in the process which leads to a decision, even though they realize they may not get to make the final determination.
4. Forms of decision other than shared decision making may be appropriate. However, arbitrary decisions end the review process.
5. The flow of information within a school is a critical element in the shared decision making process.
6. Formal school structure either enhances or inhibits the flow of information.
7. Delegating responsibilities in the decision making process to different levels within the building helps to ensure the accomplishment of defined objectives.
8. The structure for making decision must be understood and used appropriately.

9. Certain skills are necessary in order for individuals to make decisions properly.

10. Those who possess decision making skills can help provide direction to the entire process.

11. Decision makers need to be aware of their personal leadership styles.

12. A critical element of shared decision making is consensus (DeRoche, 1985).

Because of time constraints, administrators were likely to substitute workable decision making strategies for rational ones. Workable decision making relied not only on rational thought processes but also on administrator intuition (Sergiovanni & Carver, 1980). Lipham (1983) agreed by describing the decision-making process as logical and rational but highly political and personal. Lipham went on to say decision making interacted extensively and intensively with change and leadership in innovative schools. He further added that a balance of leadership behaviors in a school was essential for effective decision making. These workable approaches to educational decision making, involving leadership behaviors and administrative intuition, were influenced by the administrator's value system. Sergiovanni and Carver's (1980) basic premise that choices were based more on values, reality, beliefs and ambitions

than on rational theory supported the idea that educational decision making became a result of a fundamental interdependence of theory and practice.

Hoy and Miskel (1991) stated that educational practice is influenced by theory because theory guided rational decision making. Therefore, an overview of the educational theories were included in the literature review.

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

Theory X and theory Y were usually associated with Douglas McGregor (cited in Silver, 1983) who did extensive research on these approaches and published his findings in 1960. Designed as a leadership theory, it helped explain decision making techniques often used by principals. Theory X administrators were viewed as autocratic managers. Actions by administrators following this approach were based on the belief that teachers were lazy, immature, and self interested. Theory Y administrators viewed teachers with more support and respect. Their actions would support the belief that teachers were mature, hard working individuals who wanted to make contributions to the organization. Therefore, administrators following each of these styles would likely make different decisions and follow different courses of

action. McGregor supported the theory Y approach to administration (Silver, 1983).

Need Theories

Need theories comprised some of the most important models in the quest to understand employee motivation. Essentially, these theories claimed that all humans have certain needs which must be satisfied. The degree to which these needs were met by the administrator and the organization affected the employees' productivity. Many advocates of the needs theories approach felt that needs were the basic driving force behind employee behavior in organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

The most widely discussed and reviewed needs theory is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (cited in Hoy & Miskel, 1991). In this hierarchy Maslow listed five human needs arranged in a priority manner. The first level was comprised of the basic physiological needs which were considered essential for all living organisms. The second level involved safety and security needs. The third level contained social needs such as love and belonging. The fourth level included esteem and the need for individuals to be highly regarded by others. Maslow called the final level self-actualization. The fifth level of Maslow's hierarchy has been the

subject of much discussion. A simple explanation for this concept is the need an individual feels to realize personal potential in all levels of life, and to achieve all goals (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Maslow's theory stated that as lower level needs were fulfilled, it became necessary for the individual to address needs from the next level. He also contended that most people have the first three levels of need fulfilled regularly and that the last two levels were rarely met. The hierarchy of needs is considered useful in explaining human motivation, but efforts toward further research and expansion are necessary (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Another widely accepted needs theory was presented by Herzberg in 1959 (cited in Hoy & Miskel, 1991) and referred to as the motivational hygiene theory. This theory dealt with individuals' perceptions regarding their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their work. These two concepts were not viewed as opposites but as separate dimensions of an individual's attitude about work. Part of his conclusion stated that certain factors act to increase job satisfaction with employees, but the absence of these factors did not cause job dissatisfaction.

Herzberg divided the factors into two categories, motivators and hygienes. Motivators were the factors which increased job satisfaction beyond a neutral point but when absent, caused little or

no dissatisfaction. Hygienes were the factors which, when present, produced little job satisfaction, but when missing, created job dissatisfaction. Included as motivators were achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and job advancement. Hygiene factors included salary, status, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and job security (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Open Systems Theory

The open systems theory differed in basic assumptions and conceptual frameworks from the classical theories. Open systems theory suggested that many decision-making approaches existed while classical theories suggested one best method. Open systems theory was an attempt to understand and describe the kinds of phenomena which existed in organizations (Hanson, 1991a).

This theory viewed schools as a network of major and minor cycles which were interdependent and reinforced each other. The cycles were composed of patterns of events which became fairly constant over a period of time. When a new pattern of events was repeated systematically, change had occurred. All cycles occurring within an organization had three stages: the inputs, the throughputs, and the outputs. Inputs were described in three categories: human, material, and constraint. Throughputs were

processes used to convert inputs into outputs. Outputs were the results created by the organization. The cycle began anew when the results became inputs (Hanson, 1991a).

Social Systems Theory

Jacob Getzel and Egon Guba developed a model which attempts to explain how and why individuals behave as they do within organizations. The two basic elements of their model were placed into two dimensions, the idiographic and the nomothetic. The idiographic dimension dealt with individuals' behavior in terms to roles and expectations aimed at meeting the goals of the organization or system. The nomothetic dealt with individuals' behavior as it related to their own needs and personality. Getzel and Guba contended that each dimension explained many behaviors which occurred within a social system. However, when combined, even more explanations of individuals' behavior were possible. By using their concepts, a great many generalities could be made regarding the larger social system (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Contingency Leadership Theory

For the two decades between 1950 and 1970, the contingency leadership theory was extolled as the answer to the kind of leader principals should be. This democratic view of leadership had as its

primary objective the creation of an educational environment with high morale. During the 1970s, this humanistic movement was questioned as educators realized that schools characterized by high morale were not always productive. This attitude gave rise to other educational thought such as contingency theories (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990).

Contingency leadership theories were considered an improvement over the theories which assumed one best leadership style. Although complex and sophisticated, they could be learned by school decision makers. In these approaches various factors, on which the decision becomes at least partially contingent, entered the decision-making process. Several models were available for the decision maker to use (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988). Discussed in this section are Fielder's Contingency Model, the Hersey Blanchard Model, Glickman's Contingency Model, and Vroom's Contingency Theory.

Fred Fielder's theory (cited in Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988) resulted from 15 years of research completed at the University of Illinois and the University of Washington. The theory coming from this work was based primarily on the research traditions which were usually associated with small group psychology. The studies centered on two types of leaders, the task-oriented and the

relationship-oriented. In his approach, the assumption was made that a leader's style was accepted and should not change. Therefore, it was important to realize which situations were the most appropriate for each of the two groups of leaders (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

Among the conclusions of Fielder's extensive research was that task-oriented leaders performed best in situations where either very little or a great deal of influence could be exerted over a small group. Relationship-oriented leaders performed best when an intermediate degree of influence was exerted over the small group (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

The actual model constructed in this research project plotted correlations between leadership styles and a taxonomy of group situations. This grid showed that the leader having a structured task, a great deal of authority, and being liked by group members could exert a strong influence on the group. Conversely, the leader who was not well liked, had an unstructured task, and had little authority, could exert little influence on the group (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

The Hersey and Blanchard contingency model emphasized the maturity level of the followers. According to this theory, the administrator should vary leadership style depending upon the

maturity of the group or individual. With those deemed immature, a very directive and structured style should be used. Moderately mature groups or individuals should be handled with a blend of task and relationship-oriented styles. The more mature the followers, the less directive the leader should be, delegating more responsibility to the followers (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

According to this model, administrators should identify teachers with high maturity levels as those who set high but attainable goals and showed a willingness to be responsible. Education and experience also affected individuals' maturity levels. This theory has been well received by administrators due in part to the ease with which it could be learned. Also, administrators tend to understand this notion intuitively (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

Another contingency theory was suggested by Vroom. This theory focused on one important factor, the participation of teachers in the decision-making process (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988). Vroom's dissertation in this area received honors from the Ford Foundation in 1959. His findings supported the idea that the personality characteristics of an individual affected participation in decision making (Vroom, 1960).

Vroom expanded this work into a decision making flow chart. The chart contained seven critical questions. As each question was

answered with yes or no, the decision maker was led to one of 18 possibilities. Each possibility suggested a leadership style to use when selecting the best course of action. The five leadership styles contained a range of participatory decision-making approaches to be used with teachers (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

A different contingency theory was presented by Carl Glickman (cited in Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988). Glickman's model was based on three leadership styles--directive, collaborative, and nondirective. His theory was based on the idea that each of the three leadership styles could be used successfully depending upon the characteristics of the situation being examined. Glickman suggested considering two major categories of characteristics: one was the commitment levels of teachers, and the other was the teachers' levels of abstract thinking (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

Commitment was related to maturity and measured on a continuum from high to low. Abstract thinking referred to the ability of teachers to accurately view themselves, their classroom and their instruction. After subjectively assessing these two characteristics, the administrator used a less directive approach with teachers who exhibit high abstraction and commitment. A more collaborative approach would be used when abstraction or commitment levels were high. If commitment levels and

abstraction levels are low, a more directive approach should be used (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

The literature review of traditional methods of making educational decisions, whether through rational thinking models or through a theoretical approach, were typically designed to help an individual make the best possible decision. These approaches were associated with a centralized approach to school management. Bacharach and Conley (1986) labeled this method as the bureaucratic model of school management and contrasted it with the professional model. The professional model was characterized by teacher autonomy and decentralized decision making. Shared decision making was a key ingredient to the latest educational reform movements. As Elmore (1991) stated, site management was a proposal to de-bureaucratize schools; however, for some, it meant shared decision making among administrators and teachers while for others, it went even further, giving decision making power to parents and community members.

Shared Decision Making in Education

In the 50 years of public education prior to the early 1970s, public schools became governed more and more by centralized procedures. Often this came as a result of a desire to increase

efficiency, many times by consolidating schools. Traditional methods of making decisions also complimented the move for greater centralization in public school management. As centralization increased, teacher input decreased, and the distance between educational managers and the public increased. The shift away from centralized school administration can be traced to the New York State Fleischmann Commission's report in 1971. This was followed by Florida Governor's Citizens' Committee Report on Education 2 years later. This report embraced the concept of shared decision making (Pierce, 1980).

A variety of definitions for shared decision making was found in the review of literature. Wallace et al. (1990) defined shared decision making "as a process in which professional members of the school collaborate, where appropriate, in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, shaping direction, and monitoring program implementation" (p. 8). Mutchler and Duttweiler (1990) stated the following:

Shared decision making is also referred to as "participatory decision making" in the literature. Participatory decision making is a collaborative approach in which the superordinate and the "subordinates" work together as equals to share and analyze problems together, generate and evaluate alternatives, and attempt to reach agreement (consensus) on decisions. Joint decision making occurs as influence over the final choice is shared equally, with no distinction between superordinate and subordinates. (p. 2)

Shared decision making was also found to be a strategy in site-based management plans and in site-based decision making plans. Site-based management generally referred to a plan which decentralized the central office and empowered the principal to participate in decisions which affected the school. Site-based decision making generally referred to a plan which decentralized the school and empowered teachers and others to make the decisions which affected them (Michigan Education Association, 1989). Lawson (1989) cited a list of terms to describe this new style of decision making. Included in this list were "school-site autonomy, school-site management, school-centered management, decentralized management, school-based budgeting, school-site budgeting, responsible autonomy, shared governance, the autonomous school concept, school-based curriculum development, and administrative decentralization" (p. 4).

Justification for the implementation of shared decision making projects varied according to the author. Lawson (1989) based the concept on two beliefs: (a) "Those most closely affected by decisions should play a significant role in making those decisions . . . and (b) educational change will be most effective and long-lasting when carried out by people who feel a sense of ownership and responsibility to the process" (p. 5). Pierce (1980) presented

five assumptions for school-site management: (a) public schools are productive and necessary; (b) even though public schools are productive and necessary, there are limits to what they can do; (c) there is no one best way of producing education in schools; (d) the current view of a hierarchal school management system must be challenged; and (e) parents can do a better job of making educational decisions for their children than educators can (p. 17). Mojkowski and Fleming (1988) listed four similar concepts which constituted a foundation for school-site management. These four concepts were (a) the school should be the focus of change, (b) the authority of the school should be expanded, (c) teachers need to be treated as professionals, and (d) the primary focus should be on the learner and the learning process (p. 3).

Efforts to decentralize were seen by many as advantageous to organizational effectiveness (American Association of School Administrators [AASA], National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 1988). According to the National Education Association (1990), the primary reason to implement a program of shared decision making is to improve student achievement. Perceived advantages to the shared decision making process according to AASA, NAESP, and NASSP (1988) are:

1. It formally recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in individual schools to make decisions to improve learning.
2. It gives teachers, other staff members, and the community increased input into decisions.
3. It improves the morale of teachers, because staff members see they can have an immediate impact on the environment.
4. It shifts the emphasis in staff development. Teachers are more directly involved in determining what they need.
5. It focuses accountability for decisions. One individual--typically the superintendent or the building principal--has ultimate responsibility for any decision.
6. It brings both financial and instructional resources in line with the instructional goals developed in the school.
7. It helps to provide better services and programs to the students.
8. It nurtures and stimulates new leaders at all levels.
9. It increases both the quality and quantity of communication, which is more likely to be informal. (p. 7)

Lewis (1989) added two more advantages: (a) it is more likely to produce innovation, and (b) it results in increased flexibility because teamwork and training are increased (p. 1).

Herman (1989) listed several potential weaknesses for any type of shared decision making project. Included in this list were the possibility that some administrators and teachers would be reluctant to share decision making in some areas of the school environment. The involvement of unions could also complicate the process. Herman noted a third weakness, that some participants lack training in decision making activities. A lack of time and

hidden agendas were also included on the list of potential weaknesses.

The term "shared decision making" implies involvement by two or more individuals. This group, usually referred to as the school council, varies in its composition. Many authors (e.g., Clune and White, 1988; Mutchler & Duttweiler, 1990) stated the school council should be comprised of some combination of individuals including the principal, teachers, parents, community members, and students. Marlburger (1985) stated the council must be comprised of at least the principal, teachers, and parents. Throughout the literature review, these three groups were viewed as critical to the shared decision making process; however, the largest amount of data refers to the roles of the principals and teachers.

The importance of the principal in the decision-making process is not a new concept. Rallis (1988) stated the importance of the principal in the effective operation of the school. Lindelow & Heyndericks (1989) and Etheridge et al. (1990) further identified the principal as the key participant in any shared decision-making effort in school settings. Research conducted by Valensky et al. (1992) revealed principals' perceptions of school-based management were critical to the success of decision-making projects.

Teachers participation in the decision-making process is viewed as a newer concept. Teacher involvement in school decision making was measured by a Carnegie Foundation survey published in 1988 (cited in Boyer, 1988). In this survey, teachers from each of the 50 states were asked to respond to 10 different areas with either "involved" or "not very involved." According to this comprehensive survey, teachers in Tennessee reported more involvement than the national average in (a) designing staff development and in-service programs, (b) setting promotion and retention policies, and (c) evaluating teacher performance. Teachers in Tennessee reported less input than the national average in (a) choosing textbooks and instructional supplies, (b) shaping the curriculum, (c) deciding school budgets, (d) selecting new teachers, and (e) selecting new administrators. Responses from the teachers in Tennessee regarding setting standards for student behavior and deciding whether students are tracked into special classes matched the national average. Based on this survey, it would appear that teachers in Tennessee have slightly less input into decision making than the national average. On the national level, survey results indicated teachers were not sufficiently involved in making critical decisions. High amounts of teacher influence occurred only in shaping the curriculum and helping choose textbooks (Boyer, 1988).

The actual role and degree of involvement of the principal and the teachers on the school council depended upon the school or district guidelines. In some settings, the council acted to make all decisions, while in other settings the council made a recommendation to the principal who then made the final decision (Kubick, 1988). The areas which were used in the shared decision making process also varied with the setting. Budget, staffing, and curriculum were the areas most often associated with the process (David, 1989; Kubick, 1988; Lindelow & Heynderickx, 1989; Valensky et al., 1992; White, 1989).

Implementation of Shared Decision Making

According to the review of literature, the process of managing schools with some type of shared decision making model is occurring throughout the United States. However, the method of implementation varies widely. In some instances, shared decision making resulted from a state-wide mandate. In other locations, it was implemented as part of a system-wide effort. Some schools have implemented the process entirely independent of state or district pressure.

Many states, such as Tennessee, have actively entered the reform movement in recent years as a result of legislative efforts

which suggest the implementation of shared decision-making programs in schools. The state of Kentucky went one step farther and required its use. The Kentucky Educational Reform Act of 1990 mandated that at least one school in each system implement site based management by the beginning of the 1991-92 school year (Harrington-Lueker, 1990). According to the Kentucky Education Association (1992), any school may choose to move toward school-based management by a two-thirds vote of their faculty. By 1996, every school in the state must have a site based council in place. Councils are to be composed of the principal, two parents, and three teachers. This council has the power to set policy in curriculum, attendance, budgeting, and staffing (Harrington-Lueker, 1990). Schools meeting requirements as determined by the State Department of Education may, by a majority vote of its staff, be granted an exemption for participation in the school-based decision making program (Kentucky Education Association, 1992).

Teacher opinions in Kentucky regarding the educational reform appeared to be positive. Although shared decision making was listed as a reason, administrative support and a collegial faculty were given higher ratings by teachers (Ruscoe & Whitford, 1991).

New York State also mandated a shared decision making plan, but only for those schools not meeting set requirements. In 1984,

the State Education Department implemented a plan for identifying schools in need of improvement. The following year the first annual Comprehensive Assessment Report was published. This report listed the worst performing public and private schools according to test scores and attendance rates of third and sixth grade students. Each Board of Education governing these identified schools was required to initiate a Comprehensive School Improvement Process which mandated improved educational opportunities through a bottom-up, school-based planning process. A state-wide Office of School Improvement Process was formed and budgeted \$5.5 million for the 1987-88 school year (Kelly, 1988).

During the initial year, schools were required to develop the improvement plan. Committees consisting of the principal, teachers, parents, and other staff members were assigned this task. Plans were expected to be implemented the following year. Schools were encouraged to develop and implement plans based on existing funds. However, various grants were also made available. Once students meet State criteria, schools were removed from the list (Kelly, 1988).

Possibly the largest existing district-wide model of site-based management is being implemented in the Los Angeles public school system. This system had an enrollment of over

610,000 students, employed more than 30,000 regular teachers and had a budget of almost \$4 billion. It is the second largest school system in the United States, with only the New York Public Schools being larger. The reform decision to include site based management evolved from a bitter contract dispute between the Board of Education and the United Teachers of Los Angeles. Principals were not involved in the negotiations and were unhappy with the results of the process (Hanson, 1991b).

The Los Angeles model will occur in two stages. Shared decision making began immediately following the signing of the contract agreement. The second stage, site based management, will begin only after experience has been gained from the first. At the center of the plan for the first stage was site based councils for each school. Every council had one primary purpose, to improve the school so teachers could teach more effectively and students could learn more successfully. Representatives on the council included the principal, elected parents/community members, an elected non-teaching employee, the chairperson of the school's union chapter, and elected teachers. The principal and union representative co-chaired the meetings, but the teachers had the number of votes necessary to control the actions of the councils. A central council also existed which reviewed, evaluated and approved

plans and proposals developed by the individual school councils (Hanson, 1991b).

Perhaps the most publicized of all shared decision making efforts occurred in the Chicago Public Schools. The Chicago Public School System was the third largest school district in the United States. The total enrollment was approximately 425,000 students served through 594 schools. The grade configuration had six junior high or middle schools, 492 elementary schools containing grades K-8 and 65 high schools. Approximately 26,500 teachers were employed by the school system (Moore, 1989). Ogletree and McHenry (1990) reported that the system had a 50% dropout rate and was characterized by low achieving students. Reform for this district came as a result of a variety of factors. The system had a history of strong centralization with teachers being employed by elected officials of city hall and the majority of school decisions being made by a core of central office administrators. These trends continued through the 1960s and into the 1970s. Although several reform movements occurred prior to the 1980s, the primary control of the school system remained with the mayor's office. A change in the city's leadership occurred during the early 1980s with the election of the city's first black mayor and the employment of an outside school superintendent by a search committee. These

factors, along with racial tensions, business concerns, fiscal problems, parental dissatisfaction, and the 1987 school strike led to the massive educational reform in Chicago (Moore, 1989).

The result of years of reform effort was Senate Bill 1840, now known as Public Act 85-1418. This Act rewrote the Illinois School Code and fundamentally restructured the Chicago Public School System. Central in this reform legislation was the mandate that each public school be governed primarily by a school council. A great deal of power was yielded to these councils including the approval of school budget, selection of curricular materials, the development of a school plan and the hiring of teachers (Hanson, 1991b).

Perhaps the most powerful influence legislated to these councils was the hiring and firing of school principals. Principals not rehired were placed on a preferential list for teaching vacancies. If not taken for a teaching position, the principals became unemployed (Hanson, 1991b).

Considered critical to the issue of council members was training. Each member of the 11 member council received training in school budgets, educational theory, and personnel selection and practices. The 11 persons comprising a council included the principal, six parents, and two teachers. One student was also

considered a member of the committee but had no voting privileges (Hanson, 1991b).

Principals are viewed as the key to developing and implementing the shared decision making process as well as all of the school improvements in the reform package. Although they must work with the school councils, principals have more authority in managing school affairs than in previous years. Tenure has been abolished for principals and they now work under a 4 year, performance based contract (Etheridge, 1989).

The fourth largest school system in the United States, the Dade County Florida School System, also implemented a shared decision-making program. Over 254,000 students are served by approximately 14,000 teachers. The annual budget is in excess of \$1.5 billion (Hanson, 1991b). The Dade County School Board actually began progress toward shared decision making in the early 1970s by adopting regulations which shifted certain budget decisions from the central office to the local schools. In 1975, the board rejected a proposal to employ school based management (Gomez, 1989). The site based management issue surfaced again in 1986 following a task force report. Leading to the final adoption was a tentative agreement in teachers' contracts. Following adoption, 32 schools were selected to participate on a pilot basis. Each school developed

its own version of site based management. Typically, the schools created councils modeled after the factory quality circles found in Japan. The principal maintained the responsibility of having the final say on all decisions. Early observations revealed teachers and other members of the councils were more involved in budget, hiring, scheduling, and curriculum issues (Hanson, 1991b).

Strusinski (1990) reported that an early obstacle to the success of the Dade County project was the need for teacher training in the areas of management skills. The two skill areas mentioned most often included professional skills training and budget preparation. Gomez (1989) compiled a list of common problems found in the Dade County project. Included in this list were unrealistic expectations, provincial perspectives, difficulties assuming new roles, problems conducting meetings, increased workloads, burnout, feuding, pressure on the principal and problems with the size of the committees.

The Memphis City School System, a large urban school district like many of its counterparts, tried many restructuring efforts during the 1980s with limited results. In an effort to better address the needs of the school population, a new phase of educational reform was initiated in 1989. This phase was an effort to end the traditional top-down mandates which had been instituted

during the 1980s and replace it with a plan of school based decision making. A deregulated plan was implemented in seven inner city schools. The plan was reached as an agreement between the Superintendent and the Memphis Education Association. A team of individuals consisting of parents, teachers and principals at each school became directly responsible to the superintendent which created changes not only at the school site, but also in central staff positions (Etheridge, Horgan, Valensky, & Smith, 1992).

Following 3 years of observations and interviews, it was concluded that progress in shared decision making came slowly. Another conclusion reached was that the leadership style of the principal was critical in the process of efficient school-based decision making implementation. Schools with principals characterized as authoritarian or as laissez-faire appeared to make little progress in the shared decision making venture. Schools with democratic principals showed the greatest success. It was also concluded school personnel needed training in the process for the program to have the greatest amount of success (Etheridge et al., 1992).

Smaller school districts were also implementing the use of the shared decision-making process. One example was the South Huntington School District on Long Island in New York State. This

district served 5,500 students in seven school buildings. Known as an innovative system, South Huntington began training all teachers in quality circle techniques in 1982. Even though extensive training was supplied, the design was deemed restrictive by the district. As a natural progression, the district moved toward school-based management. A transition program was approved by the Board of Education and the Superintendent. The entire project was then adopted as one of the district's goals (Domenech, 1989).

A unique situation evolved in the Centennial Pennsylvania Public Schools. In this system the superintendent decided to change from a management by objectives approach to a local building needs assessment approach. Each school was responsible for conducting a building level needs assessment and developing goals. To achieve this, a Needs Assessment Committee was established which consisted of the principal, four students selected by teachers and all of the parents and teachers who volunteered. Although somewhat new, participants are labeling it a success (Solkov-Brecher, 1992).

The implementation of shared decision making in the Pittsburgh Public School District also evolved from other school reform projects. In 1981 the Pittsburgh Board of Education established specific priorities for the district. One of these, school

improvement, contained two objectives. Those two objectives were to improve student achievement and the quality of personnel evaluation. To achieve these goals, Instructional Cabinets were organized at each school. Although shared decision making was encouraged, the involvement level of the members of the Instructional Cabinet was decided by the principal of each school (Wallace et al., 1990). Three years into the process, several observations were made. Although some progress occurred at each school, it did not come as quickly as projected. A major area of concern was the problem solving function of the school Cabinets. Few true problems have been addressed by the Cabinets (Johnston, Bickel, & Wallace 1990).

Another system which has initiated a shared decision making project was the ABC Unified District, located in a suburb of Los Angeles called Cerritos. The 21,000 plus students of this district were racially and ethnically diverse. Whenever the district sent home system-wide communication, it was written in Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, and English. The first move to empower teachers occurred in the 1970s when staff members were used as school leaders. A dramatic rise in test scores and a significant decrease in student absences were attributed to the renewal process which occurred in schools as a result of the reform

effort (Sickler, 1988).

Some school districts have implemented the shared decision making process, not because it evolved, but as a result of its adoption by the Board of Education. An example of this was the Tacoma Public Schools in Washington. During the 1989 school year, one of the district goals set by its Board of Directors was to pilot school-based decision making. A Task Force composed of parents, principals, teachers, union representatives and a member of the Board was formed to develop the guidelines for the process. Seven schools were chosen to pilot the project and were given \$15 per student to fund its implementation. Most of the pilot schools focused on parent and teacher team building skills, problem solving and methods of reaching consensus but eventually began to identify the areas of decision making in which they wished to become involved (Tacoma Public Schools, 1990).

Beers (1984) reported the Charleston South Carolina School District's efforts to implement a shared decision making process. This district was another example of shared decision making occurring as a result of a central decision. In Charleston, though, not only were the schools directly involved in the process, so was the central office. Job responsibilities and accountability were redefined for all line and staff administrators. Clear lines of

communications and budgetary considerations were established prior to school involvement. Twenty pilot schools were then selected through an application process. Each school was required to function with a management team composed of the principal, teachers, parents, and individuals from the community. Principals were viewed as the key to the management philosophy of the school and received training in problem solving, needs assessments, and management areas related to business. Principal training took 15 months. Other team members received similar training but on a more limited scale. Team progress was evaluated by a central management team composed of the Superintendent and the four Deputy Superintendents.

Other school districts in the United States involved in shared decision-making projects included School District #12 in Adams County, Colorado (Harrison, Killion, & Mitchell, 1989); Boston School District, Massachusetts (Doherty & Wilson, 1990); Hammond School District, Indiana (Casner-Lotto, 1988); Kenmore-Tonawanda Schools in Buffalo, New York (English, 1989); Lake Washington School District, Washington (Scarr, 1988); Monroe County School District, Martin County School District, Fairfield-Suisun Unified, and the Irvine Unified School District all of Florida; Portland School District, and Cherry Creek School District, Oregon; Albuquerque

Public Schools, New Mexico (Robinson, 1987); and the Lunenburg Public School District, Massachusetts (Lindelov & Heynderickx, 1989).

Also reviewed in the related literature were examples of shared decision-making projects implemented on an individual school basis. One example was Central-Hower High School in Akron, Ohio. In 1984 the staff of Central-Hower were directed by system administrators to develop a shared decision making plan which focused on school improvement. Central-Hower had around 970 students, with approximately 33% receiving either a free or reduced price lunch. The project began with the formation of a faculty senate. This senate included the principal and a representative from each area of the curriculum with each member having one vote. The process did allow for the principal to appeal any decision to the Director of Secondary Curriculum for review. The senate was charged with establishing school policies which did not violate existing school board policies. Early in the process, the senate found time constraints restrictive and appointed a Curriculum Council. The principal remained responsible for all the normal administrative duties but acted only as a consensus builder in educational programming (Strauber, Stanley, & Wagenknecht, 1990).

Other school sites implementing shared decision making

techniques include St. Petersburg High School, Florida (Tuthill, 1990); John Glenn Middle School in Bedford, Massachusetts (Aronstein, Marlow, & Desilets, 1990); Hopi Elementary School in Scottsdale, Arizona (Bradley, 1990); and West Potomac High School in Alexandria, Virginia (English, 1989).

Examples of shared decision making in education were not limited to schools in the United States. A process of decentralization began in Australia in 1975 with the passage of the Education Act. Although School Councils have always existed in Australia, this legislative action was aimed toward balancing the power between principals and the local Council by increasing the powers of Council members. In the early 1980s, the membership of the Councils and their duties and responsibilities were further broadened. The composition of the Council was then required to consist of parents, staff members, students (in post-primary schools), community members, and the principal. The Council became responsible for the selection of the principal as well as the overall performance of the school (Moyle, 1989). Connors (1989) questioned the restructuring process occurring in Australia by describing the energy which had been invested in the process and by pointing to other educational issues which needed to be addressed.

The entire public educational system of Spain has recently

been involved in a decentralization process. This process took place within the context of a larger government reform effort which transferred some of the central government's power to regional areas. A Local School Council was formed at every school in the nation. This Council consisted of the school director, the chief of the academic programs, a city government representative, teachers, parents, students, and the school secretary who had no voting privileges. This Council was charged with electing the school director for a 3 year term, with any individual director being able to serve only two terms. School directors must be employed from the existing school staff. The Council also had the power to fire the school director at any time. Other Council responsibilities included setting school goals, approving the school budget, evaluating school performance, and resolving disciplinary problems. Most of the negatives reported from the shared decision-making project in Spain dealt with the school director's position. Since the position must be filled from the existing school staff, no special training was required. To be reemployed by the Council, many directors also felt caught in a political dilemma. The lack of adequate compensation for the director's position was also seen as a negative (Hanson, 1991b).

Two school settings in Canada were identified as participating

in shared decision making projects. Edmonton Public Schools in Alberta and Langley School District in British Columbia both implemented school-based management in every school in the system. The principal was given total responsibility for the project and in no case was a committee organized to assist. However, Brown (1987) reported that a high degree of decentralization had occurred. Brown also concluded principals enjoyed the decentralized settings but noted increased time demands.

Revealed in the review of literature regarding shared decision making was implementation of projects at school settings inside and outside of the political boundaries of the United States. Whether implemented as a result of state-wide mandates, district-wide programs, or on an individual school basis, the principal's role was viewed as critical for success.

Summary

Chapter 2 contained a review of literature related to educational decision making. It was divided into three sections: (a) Traditional Decision Making in Education, (b) Shared Decision Making, and (c) Implementation of Shared Decision Making.

Reviewed in the first section, Traditional Decision Making in Education, were approaches which may be followed by principals

when making school decisions. Rational approaches attempted to delineate decision making into a systematic process which followed the same steps, assumptions, or stages each time a decision was made. Their simplicity was perceived as both a strength and a weakness. Although rational decision making approaches were easy to teach and learn, they did not always consider the many variables faced by the principal. This section also reviewed theories which may influence principals' perceptions regarding the decision-making process. Principals' educational beliefs and values were quite often based in theory. These beliefs and values directly influenced principals' leadership styles and greatly impacted the decisions made in local schools.

Reviewed in section two was the literature regarding shared decision making. Shared decision making had emerged as a major component of many educational reforms. It was an attempt to involve those who will be closely affected by the decision once it is made. The degree of involvement, the individuals involved, and the authority of those involved varied with each site. Few concrete studies were available to evaluate the process and mixed reviews were found in the literature. However, the majority of the literature pointed to favorable results.

Reported in the third section, Implementation of Shared

Decision Making, were educational sites where the process has been started. Sites in the United States and several foreign countries were included. Within the United States shared decision making has been implemented on a state-wide basis, in entire districts, and in individual schools. In no cases was the size of the school mentioned as a factor in the success of a shared decision-making project. The three sections, when combined, provide a basis to understand principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of input in school decision making.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology and Instruments

Introduction

The research procedures utilized in this study are described in Chapter 3. Sections in Chapter 3 include (a) selection of the sample, (b) the questionnaire, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) instrument reliability, and (f) summary.

Since the findings of this study regarding principal perceptions of shared decision making were to be compared with two parallel studies measuring parent and teacher perceptions of involvement in school decision making, special considerations were given to uniformity in the areas of instrument formation, the statistical tests to be used, and to the collection of the data. Similarities in these areas were necessary so comparisons of data in Chapter 6 would be more reliable.

Selection of the Sample

The population for this study was the principals of the public elementary schools in the First Tennessee Developmental District. For the purposes of this study and the parallel studies, an elementary school was defined as any single school in the sampling

frame whose organizational pattern contained at least one grade level below grade 6. Schools were considered that included grades 5 through 12 since the beginning grade level was lower than grade 6.

The sampling frame used in selecting the sample was the 1991-92 Directory of Tennessee Public Schools. This sampling frame provided a school number, address, telephone number, approximate number of students, and principal's name. One hundred eighteen schools were identified within the designated developmental area as meeting the definition of an elementary school.

In an effort to maximize the power of the study, it was determined, in collaboration with the researchers of the parallel studies, that the sample would involve all of the elementary schools in the First Tennessee Developmental District. Therefore, the survey sample for this study contained the principal from each of the 125 schools identified from the sampling frame.

The Questionnaire

After a review of related literature, consultation with the committee chairman, and discussions with the researchers conducting parallel studies, it was determined that a survey would be the most appropriate means of gathering data. The survey was

divided into two sections. The first section was designed to provide demographic information about the individual completing the form. The second section contained a questionnaire designed to measure responses of parents, teachers, and principals.

A pilot study was initiated in the Bristol Tennessee School System in order to field test the questionnaire. The instrument used in the pilot study was designed to measure the extent specific groups participated in decision making at the school level. It represented an attempt by the researchers to survey a variety of groups simultaneously.

The format consisted of three pairs of Likert scales. Each pair of Likert scales was used to identify the respondents' perceptions of actual and ideal levels of involvement. The first pair measured the respondents' perceptions of principals' involvement, the second pair measured teachers' involvement and the third pair measured parents' involvement. Each of the six Likert scales ranged from 1 to 4 with 1 representing no input, 2 representing minor input, 3 representing major input, and 4 representing total input.

One response on each of the six Likert scales, a total of six responses, was requested for each of 12 broad categories listed vertically on the questionnaire. The 12 categories were (a) school budget, (b) personnel selection, (c) curriculum determination,

(d) selection of instructional materials, (e) capital outlay purchases, (f) formation of system-wide policies, (g) establishment of the school calendar, (h) development of system-wide policies, (i) school goals and objectives, (j) grading and reporting procedures, (k) personnel evaluation, and (l) pupil services. Space was provided following each category to allow respondents to express personal attitudes regarding involvement in that specific area.

Teachers, parents, and principals participated in the pilot study. Teachers were selected by random sample from all six elementary schools, the junior high, and the high school. All principals in the Bristol Tennessee School System participated in the pilot study. All parents serving on Parent-Teacher-Association Executive Boards were surveyed. An additional random sample of parents was also taken. A cover letter was provided to all participants which explained the purpose of the survey and directions for completing the questionnaire. Space was provided for teacher respondents to indicate which grade levels they represented. Parent respondents indicated the grade level(s) of their children. This information was requested to give researchers an indication of the grade levels represented in the pilot study.

The research team was encouraged by the number of surveys returned. All grade levels were well represented in the returns of

both parent and teacher questionnaires. All data from the pilot study, including unsolicited comments regarding survey format and instructions, were carefully reviewed by the research team. The following conclusions were reached by team members:

1. The instrument was organized in a complex format which created confusion for those being surveyed.
2. The information obtained from the survey did not lend itself to sophisticated methods of statistical analysis for research purposes.
3. The content of the categories was ambiguous creating uncertainty by the respondents.
4. The respondents indicated limited knowledge of the areas being surveyed.
5. The title "Shared Decision Making Survey" provided the respondents information pertaining to the survey which could have biased the responses.
6. Likert scales were too narrow and additional clarity was needed for each numerical choice on the scales.

Feedback from the pilot study strongly indicated that the survey questions were too difficult and created confusion among many attempting to complete them. A more simple format was then developed which kept all of the original subscales. This format

consisted of 60 items, each of which was followed by two Likert scales. The first Likert scale measured the respondent's perception of the actual level of involvement while the second scale measured the respondent's perception of the ideal level of involvement. Scales were also broadened to contain five options. This change allowed parents, teachers and principals to respond in a more uniform, simpler context.

The 60 items represented nine subscales which were used to test the nine hypotheses in the study. The nine subscales measured respondents' perceptions of involvement of principals, teachers, and parents in the areas of budget, staffing, and curriculum.

The questionnaire was preceded by two pages containing directions and a request for seven demographic items about the participating principal. The seven demographic items asked for responses regarding gender, years of administrative experience, Career Ladder status, age, highest degree obtained, years since the last graduate course was taken, and a "yes" or "no" response regarding training in site-based decision making. Demographics were requested so the instrument could be analyzed for sample bias.

The instrument was once again reviewed by individuals representing the Bristol Tennessee PTA Council. The revisions were seen as favorable. A series of letters was developed stating the

purpose of the study, requesting cooperation of the principal of the selected schools, and outlining procedures that would be followed.

Data Collection

The principal of each school was contacted by telephone to solicit support for the study. The questionnaire was printed and taken to each school by one of three researchers involved in the parallel studies. The team member explained survey procedures to the principal. All three researchers recognized the importance of the principal's role in the gathering of the data. The principal's support was critical not only for his/her participation, but was also necessary in gathering teachers' and parents' names for the parallel studies. Therefore, any direction the principal suggested in gathering survey information was taken if it did not compromise the integrity of the study.

Data Analysis

The hypotheses were stated in research format in Chapter 1. All hypotheses were tested in the null format. All data collected were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer program for analysis.

Hypotheses 1 through 3 dealt with principals' perceptions regarding levels of involvement in the budgetary process.

Hypothesis 1 dealt specifically with principals' perceptions of teachers' level of involvement in budgetary decision making. This hypothesis was measured with items 4, 28, 51, 54, 58 and 59 in the questionnaire. Hypothesis 2 dealt with principals' perceptions of parents' level of involvement in budgetary decision making and was measured by items 8, 17, 25, 38, 52 and 55 in the questionnaire. Hypothesis 3 dealt with principals' perceptions of their own level of involvement in budgetary decision making and was measured by items 9, 16, 33, 39, 44 and 48 in the questionnaire.

Hypotheses 4 through 6 dealt with principals' perceptions regarding levels of involvement in staffing. Hypothesis 4 dealt specifically with the principals' perceptions of teachers' level of involvement in decision making regarding staffing and was measured by items 12, 15, 24, 29, 34, 37 and 57 in the questionnaire. Hypothesis 5 dealt with principals' perceptions of parents' level of involvement in decision making regarding staffing and was measured by items 3, 5, 10, 14, 27, 32 and 36 in the questionnaire. Hypothesis 6 dealt with principals' perceptions of their own level of involvement in decision making regarding staffing and was measured by items 1, 18, 22, 26, 41, 50 and 60 in the questionnaire.

Hypotheses 7 through 9 dealt with principals' perceptions

regarding levels of involvement in school curricula. Hypothesis 7 dealt specifically with the principals' perceptions of teachers' level of involvement in decision making regarding curricula and was measured by items 2, 7, 11, 19, 40, 45 and 47 in the questionnaire. Hypothesis 8 dealt with principals' perceptions of parents' level of involvement in decision making regarding the curricula and was measured by items 20, 21, 23, 30, 42, 46, and 49 in the questionnaire. Hypothesis 9 dealt with principals' perceptions regarding their own level of involvement in decision making regarding curricula and was measured by items 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 53 and 56 in the questionnaire.

Since the data were ordinal in nature and involved dependent samples, the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to test hypotheses 1 through 9. The alpha level for each hypothesis was set at .05.

Instrument Reliability

Prior to the testing of hypotheses, researchers conducted a reliability study of the returned questionnaires. The questionnaires were subjected to a test of internal consistency using the statistical analysis procedure which produces the reliability coefficient Cronbach's Alpha. Question groups that formed the basis

for 18 separate constructs were tested for internal consistency in order to improve the reliability measure of each construct. Questions were dropped where necessary to increase the reliability coefficient.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of teachers' actual involvement in budgetary decisions (H_1) utilized responses under "presently occurs" on survey items 4, 28, 51, 54, 58, and 59. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .6507. Dropping question 28 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to .6746. Further analysis resulted in the deletion of question 4 which increased the alpha coefficient on this construct to a maximum of .6808.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of teachers' ideal level of involvement in budgetary decisions (H_1) utilized responses under "should occur" survey items 4, 28, 51, 54, 58, and 59. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7445. Dropping question 28 resulted in an increase in the coefficient .7640. Further analysis resulted in the deletion of question 51 which increased the coefficient to .7788. Question 54 was also deleted which increased the coefficient to a maximum of .7830.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals'

perception of parents' level of involvement in budgetary decisions (H₂) utilized responses under "presently occurs" on survey items 8, 17, 25, 38, 52, and 55. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7270. By deleting question 55 the coefficient increased to a maximum of .7411.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of parents' ideal level of involvement in budgetary decisions (H₂) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items 8, 17, 25, 38, 52, and 55. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7272. This coefficient could not be increased by deleting any of the questions in this construct.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of their actual level of involvement in the budgetary process (H₃) utilized responses under "presently occurs" on survey items 9, 16, 33, 39, 44, and 48. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .6244. The deletion of question 44 increased the coefficient to .6723. Question 16 was also deleted, bringing the coefficient to .6825. The coefficient was increased to a maximum of .7058 by deleting question 39.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of their ideal involvement in the budgetary process (H₃) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items 9, 16, 33,

39, 44, and 48. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7694. Question 16 was deleted which increased the coefficient to .7787. The coefficient was increased to a maximum of .7826 by deleting question 39.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of teachers's actual level of involvement in personnel decisions (H_4) utilized responses under "presently occurs" on survey items 12, 15, 24, 29, 34, 37, and 57. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7318. Deleting question 29 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum coefficient of .7429.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of teachers' ideal level of involvement in personnel decisions (H_4) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items items 12, 15, 24, 29, 34, 37, and 57. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7057. The deletion of any of the questions in this construct would not increase the coefficient.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of parents' actual involvement in personnel decisions (H_5) utilized responses under "presently occur" on survey items 3, 5, 10, 14, 27, 32, and 36. Analysis of this construct revealed a

Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7503. Deleting question 3 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum coefficient of .7580.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of parents' ideal level of involvement in personnel decisions (H_5) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items 3, 5, 10, 14, 27, 32, and 36. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8276. The deletion of any of the questions in this construct would not increase the coefficient.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of their actual involvement in personnel decisions (H_6) utilized responses under "presently occur" on survey items 1, 18, 22, 26, 41, 50, and 60. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7740. Question 26 was deleted to increase the coefficient to .7768. Deleting question 50 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum coefficient of .7997.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of their ideal level of involvement in personnel decisions (H_6) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items items 1, 18, 22, 26, 41, 50, and 60. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7600. Question 50 was deleted to increase the coefficient to .7700. Deleting question 1 resulted in an

increase in the coefficient to a maximum of .7904.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of teachers' actual level of involvement in curricula decisions (H_7) utilized responses under "presently occur" on survey items 2, 7, 11, 19, 40, 45, and 47. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7621. Deleting question 11 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum of .7663.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of teachers' ideal level of involvement in curricula decisions (H_7) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items 2, 7, 11, 19, 40, 45, and 47. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .6233. Deleting question 11 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum of .6532.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of parents' actual involvement in curricula decisions (H_8) utilized responses under "presently occurs" on survey items 20, 21, 23, 30, 42, 46, and 49. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7393. Question 23 was deleted to increase the coefficient to .7581. Question 49 was also deleted, which increased the coefficient to .7746. Deleting question 42 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum of .7959.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals'

perception of parents' ideal level of involvement in curricula decisions (H_8) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items 20, 21, 23, 30, 42, 46, and 49. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7526. The deletion of any of the questions in this construct would not increase the coefficient.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of their present level of involvement in curricula decisions (H_9) utilized responses under "presently occurs" on survey items 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 53, and 56. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7734. Question 56 was deleted to increase the coefficient to .8033. Deleting question 13 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum of .8290.

The assessment of the construct relating to principals' perception of their ideal level of involvement in curricula decisions (H_9) utilized responses under "should occur" on survey items 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 53, and 56. Analysis of this construct revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .6931. Deleting question 56 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum of .7099.

Summary

This chapter included the methods and procedures used in this descriptive study. The instrument designed by the team of researchers was validated through a pilot study. The reliability of the instrument was increased through the use of the statistical tool, Cronbach's Alpha. Data were gathered by the team visiting each school in the population.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation of Data and Analysis of Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the differences between elementary principals' perceptions of the amount of involvement principals, parents and teachers have in school decision making, and the amount of involvement they deem as ideal. The population of the study was the principals of the 125 elementary schools comprising the First Tennessee Developmental District. All principals in the population were included in the sample. Data were collected by means of a survey which contained two sections. The first section requested responses to seven demographic questions about the principal. The second section contained a questionnaire which requested two responses on each of 60 items.

Surveys were distributed in person to the principals of each of the 125 elementary schools. Data were gathered over a period of 4 weeks. A total of 95 surveys were returned. This represented 76% of the population.

This chapter analyzes and interprets the data obtained from the survey. The first section reports findings regarding the

demographic data. The second section presents the analysis of the tests conducted for each of the nine hypotheses. All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer program. Data error was controlled by individually entering each questionnaire response rather than using scan cards.

Demographic Data

Principals responding to the survey completed seven demographic questions. The seven questions covered (a) gender, (b) Career Ladder status, (c) age, (d) highest degree obtained, (e) years of administrative experience, (f) the number of years since the last graduate course was taken, and (g) if any training had been received in site-based management. Data results are included in this section. A figure is included to illustrate the results of each demographic question.

Gender

Ninety-five principals responded to this demographic question. Of those responding, 30 were female which represented 31.6% of the return. Sixty-five male principals responded which represented 68.4% of the return. The percentages of male and female respondents are illustrated in Figure 1.

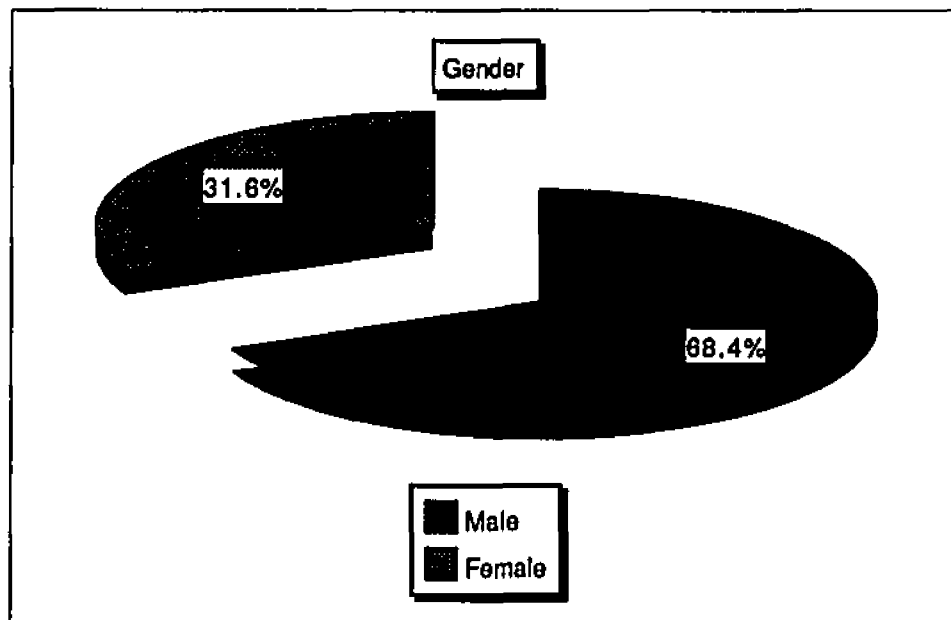


Figure 1. Gender of the respondents.

Career Ladder Status

Principals indicated if they were on Career Level I, Career Level II, Career Level III, or if they did not participate in the Career Ladder Program. Ninety-five principals responded to this item. Career Level I principals represented 44.2% ($n = 42$) of the return. Career Level II principals represented 5.3% ($n = 5$) of the return. Career Level III principals represented 40.0% ($n = 38$) of the return. Principals not participating in the Career Ladder represented 10.5% ($n = 10$) of the return. Career Ladder status of the respondents is illustrated in Figure 2.

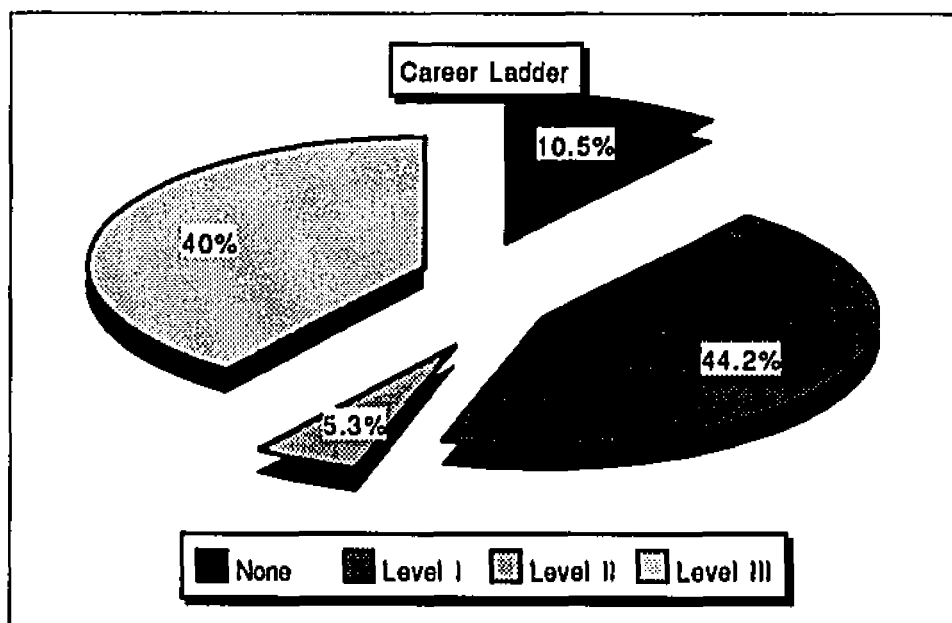


Figure 2. Career ladder status of respondents.

Age

Respondents reported their age in one of the following categories: (a) 20-29, (b) 30-39, (c) 40-49, (d) 50-59, and (e) 60 or older. Ninety-five principals responded to this question. The 20-29 category represented 3.2% ($n = 3$) of the return. The 30-39 category represented 11.6% ($n = 11$) of the return. The 40-49 category represented 51.6% ($n = 49$) of the return. The 50-59 category represented 27.4% ($n = 26$) of the return. The 60 or older category represented 6.3% ($n = 6$) of the return. Age of respondents is illustrated in Figure 3.

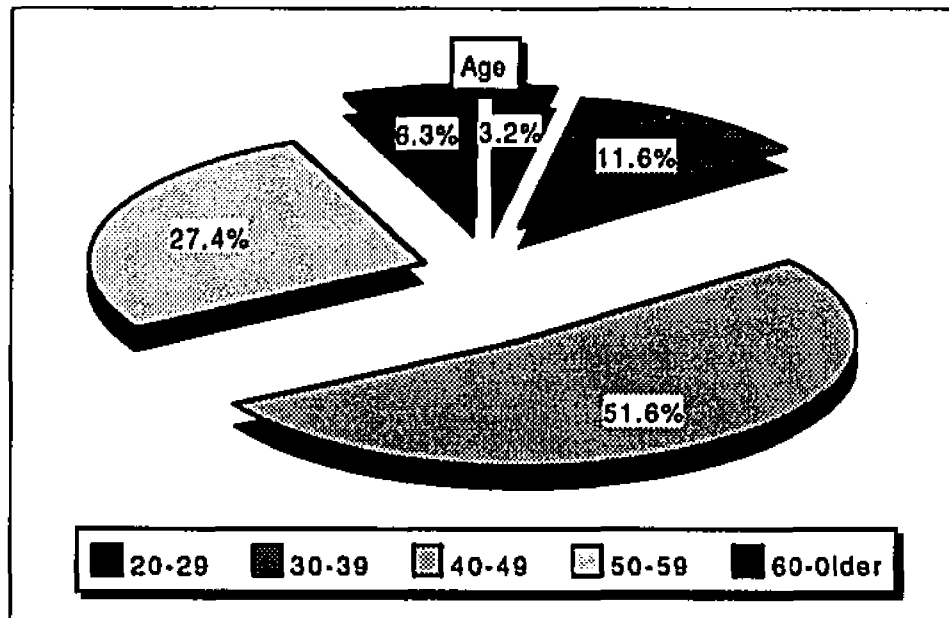


Figure 3. Age of the respondents.

Highest Degree Obtained

Each respondent reported the highest degree obtained as either a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Specialist Degree, or Doctorate Degree. Ninety-five principals responded to this demographic question. Principals with a Bachelor's Degree represented 6.3% ($n = 6$) of the return. Principals with a Master's Degree represented 69.5% ($n = 66$) of the return. Principals with a Specialist Degree represented 20% ($n = 19$) of the return. Principals with a Doctorate Degree represented 4.2% ($n = 4$) of the return. The highest degree obtained by respondents is illustrated in Figure 4.

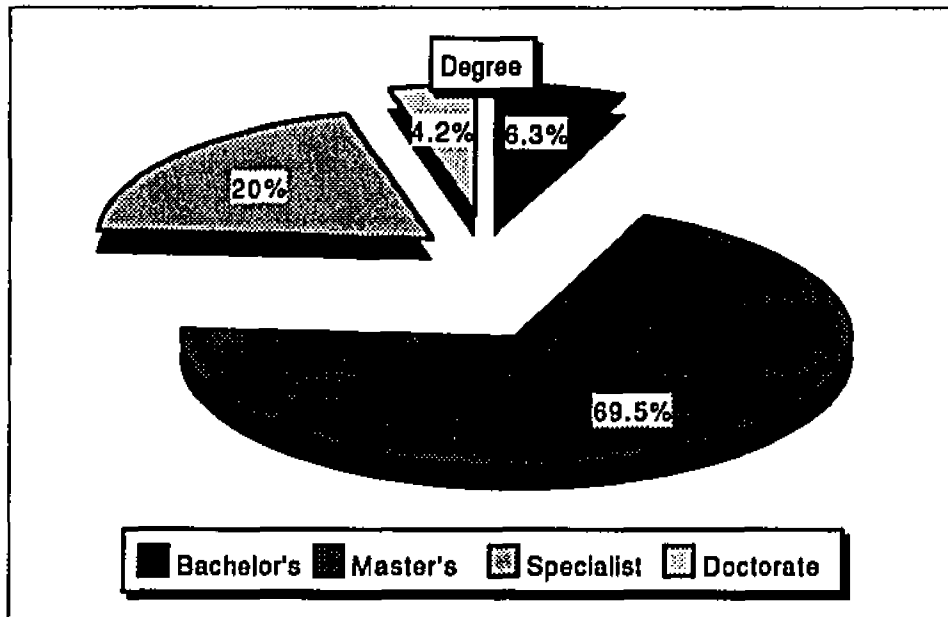


Figure 4. Highest degree obtained by respondents.

Administrative Experience

Respondents reported their administrative experience in one of the following categories: (a) less than 5 years, (b) 5 to 9 years, (c) 10 to 14 years, (d) 15 to 19 years, and (e) 20 or more years. The less than 5 years category represented 12.6% ($n = 12$) of the return. The 5 to 9 years category represented 25.3% ($n = 24$) of the return. The 10 to 14 years category represented 22.1% ($n = 21$) of the return. The 14 to 19 years category represented 22.1% ($n = 21$) of the return. The 20 or more years category represented 17.9% ($n = 17$) of the return. Administrative experience of respondents is illustrated in Figure 5.

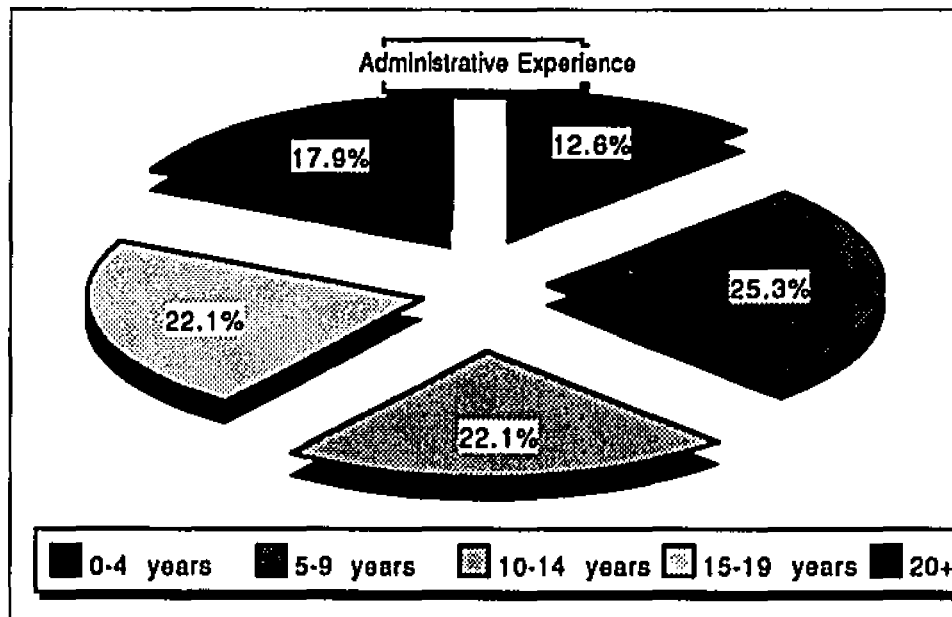


Figure 5. Administrative experience of respondents.

Years Since Last Graduate Course

Principals indicated the number of years since they had taken a graduate level course in one of three categories: (a) less than 4 years, (b) between 4 and 7 years, (c) more than 7 years. Principals indicating less than 4 years since a graduate level class was taken represented 47.4% ($n = 45$) of the return. Principals indicating between 4 and 7 years since a graduate level class was taken represented 32.6% ($n = 31$) of the return. Principals indicating more than 7 years since a graduate level class was taken represented 20% ($n = 19$) of the return. Figure 6 illustrates the categories representing the responses to this demographic question.

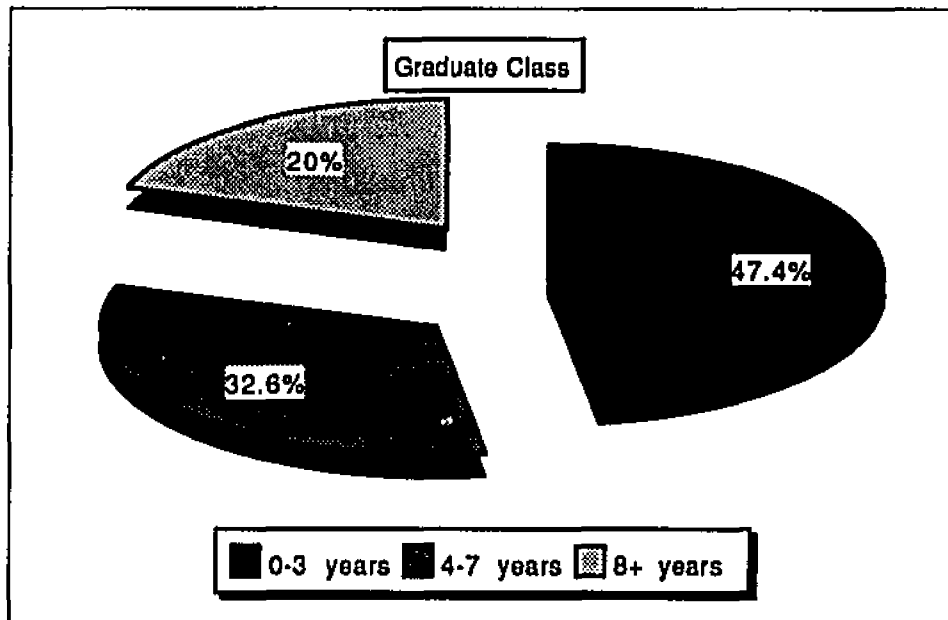


Figure 6. Years since respondents' last graduate class

Training in Site-Based Management

The final demographic question placed principals into two categories, those having received site-based management training and those having received no training in site-based management. Ninety-five principals responded to this demographic question. Principals having received site-based management training comprised 61.1% ($n = 58$) of the return. Principals having received no training in site-based management comprised 38.9% ($n = 37$) of the return. Figure 7 illustrates the return regarding site-based management training.

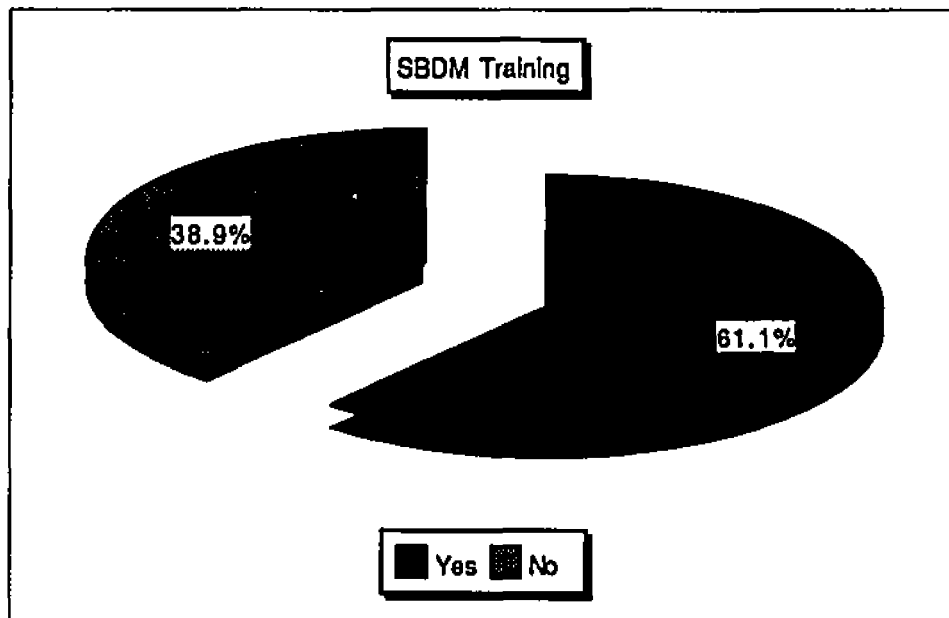


Figure 7. Site-based management training of respondents.

Hypotheses Analysis

The hypotheses were stated in research form in Chapter 1; however, all hypotheses were tested in the null. The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze each hypothesis. Incomplete or missing responses were not used in the analysis of hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test.

Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
93	28.32	13.50	-6.0444	<.0005

Fifty-one positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 28.32. Three negative ranks ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") were reported with a mean rank of 13.50. The z was -6.0444 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated teachers should have more involvement in the school budgetary process. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated there will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal

amounts of involvement of teachers in the budgetary process in elementary schools was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
94	45.87	20.17	-7.9453	<.0005

Eighty-six positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 45.87. Three

negative ranks ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") were reported with a mean rank of 20.17. The z was -7.9453 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated parents should have more involvement in the school budgetary process. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in the budgetary process in elementary schools was rejected.

Hypothesis 3

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of involvement in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. Ninety-four positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 48.47. One negative rank ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") was reported with a mean rank of 4.00. The z was -8.4482 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated they should have more involvement in the school budgetary process. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of

involvement in the budgetary process in elementary schools was rejected. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Their Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
95	48.47	4.00	-8.4482	<.0005

Hypothesis 4

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. Ninety positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 45.50. No negative ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") ranks were reported which resulted in a mean rank of 0.00. The z was

-8.2385 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated teachers should have more involvement in the schools' personnel decisions. Thus the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools was rejected. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
91	45.50	00.00	-8.2385	<.0005

Hypothesis 5

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to

analyze the data. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
93	47.02	16.00	-8.0939	<.0005

Eighty-eight positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 47.02. Three negative ranks ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") were reported with a mean rank of 16.00. The z was -8.0939 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated parents should have more involvement in the schools' personnel decisions. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools was rejected.

Hypothesis 6

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of involvement regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Their Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
94	42.02	28.90	-5.5137	<.0005

Sixty-three positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 42.02. Fifteen negative ranks ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") were reported with a mean rank of 28.90. The z was -5.5137 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated

they should have more involvement in the schools' personnel decisions. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of involvement regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools was rejected.

Hypothesis 7

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
91	32.98	25.25	-6.2796	<.0005

Sixty positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 32.98. Four negative ranks ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") were reported with a mean rank of 25.25. The z was -6.2796 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated teachers should have more involvement in the schools' curricular decisions. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in curricular decisions in elementary schools was rejected.

Hypothesis 8

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. Ninety-three positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 47.00. No negative ranks ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") were reported which resulted in a mean rank of 0.00. The z was -8.3739 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated parents should have more involvement in the schools'

curricular decisions. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in curricular decisions in elementary schools was rejected. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
93	47.00	00.00	-8.3739	<0005

Hypothesis 9

There will be no significant difference between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of involvement in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

N. Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Principals' Perceptions of Their Actual and Ideal Level of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

n	Mean ranks		z	p
	Positive	Negative		
91	45.50	00.00	-8.2385	<.0005

Ninety positive ranks ("should occur" greater than "presently occurs") were reported with a mean rank of 45.50. No negative ranks ("presently occurs" greater than "should occur") were reported which resulted in a mean rank of 0.00. The z was -8.2385 which was significant at the .05 level. Principals indicated they should have more involvement in the schools curricular decisions. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference exists between principals' perceptions of their actual and ideal amounts of involvement in curricular decisions in elementary schools was rejected.

Summary

The demographic information provided by those completing surveys provided information regarding the gender, Career Ladder status, age, highest degree obtained, administrative experience, number of years since the last graduate class was taken, and if the respondents had taken training in site-based management. The null form for each hypothesis was tested and rejected in each case. A significant difference was found to exist between principals' perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of the involvement of principals, teachers, and parents in the decision making areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter consists of a summary of the research and the presentation of the study's findings. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this chapter are drawn from the review of literature and the analysis of the data.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the differences between elementary principals' perceptions of the amount of involvement principals, parents and teachers have in school decision making, and the amount of involvement they deem as ideal. The study was conducted during the 1993-94 school year. The population of the study was the elementary school principals in the First Tennessee Developmental District. All of the principals in the population were contained in the sample.

To accurately sample principals, a questionnaire was developed by a team of three researchers. The questionnaire was designed to be used in this study and two parallel studies which measured teacher and parent perceptions of involvement in school

decision making. Following a pilot study which was done to validate the study, many changes were made to add clarity and simplicity to the questionnaire. The final format consisted of 60 items, each of which was followed by two Likert scales. The first Likert scale measured the respondent's perception of the actual level of involvement while the second scale measured the respondent's perception of the ideal level of involvement. Each scale contained a range of 1 to 5 representing no involvement to total involvement. Principals were also asked demographic questions regarding their gender, Career Ladder status, age, highest degree obtained, administrative experience, length of time since their last graduate course, and if they had received training in site-based decision making.

Data were collected over a 4-week period with a survey return of 76%. Data were entered into an Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer program. The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank tests were used to analyze the data.

Elementary principals in the First Tennessee Developmental District indicated a significant gap between the actual and ideal levels of principal, teacher, and parent involvement in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel. The composite results are presented by area in Table 10.

Table 10

Composite N, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance of Principals' Perceptions of Involvement by Area

Area	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Budget					
Teachers	93	28.32	13.50	-6.0444	<.0005
Parents	94	45.87	20.17	-7.9453	<.0005
Principals	95	48.47	4.00	-8.4482	<.0005
Personnel					
Teachers	91	45.50	00.00	-8.2385	<.0005
Parents	93	47.02	16.00	-8.0939	<.0005
Principal	94	42.02	28.90	-5.5137	<.0005
Curriculum					
Teachers	91	32.98	25.25	-6.2796	<.0005
Parents	93	47.00	00.00	-8.3739	<.0005
Principals	91	45.50	00.00	-8.2385	<.0005

Findings

The nine hypotheses stated in Chapter 1 were tested in the null format for significance at the .05 level. All of the null hypotheses were rejected. Summarized in this section are the three areas of the school setting which were studied.

Budget

Principals strongly believed that teachers, parents, and principals should have more involvement in budget decisions made in the elementary schools. Principals believed that for each of the three groups the difference in the actual and ideal levels of involvement in decision making in budgetary decisions was significant at the .05 level.

Personnel

Principals strongly believed that teachers, parents, and principals should have more involvement in personnel decisions made in the elementary schools. Principals believed that for each of the three groups the difference in the actual and ideal levels of involvement in decision making in personnel decisions was significant at the .05 level.

Curriculum

Principals strongly believed that teachers, parents, and principals should have more involvement in curricular decisions made in the elementary schools. Principals believed that for each of the three groups the difference in the actual and ideal levels of involvement in decision making in curricular decisions was significant at the .05 level.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the analysis of survey data and the review of related literature.

1. Principals want more involvement in the school decision-making process in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel.
2. Principals want more involvement from teachers in the school decision-making process in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel.
3. Principals want more involvement from parents in the school decision-making process in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel.
4. The principal plays the key role in any shared decision-making project.

5. Shared decision making is being implemented in school sites both within and outside of the United States.
6. School size does not appear to have any effect on the success of a shared decision-making project.
7. Training of participants is viewed as critical in a shared decision-making project.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this research.

1. Principals of schools in the First Tennessee Developmental District should have the option of initiating shared decision making projects.
2. Training for all participants in the area of shared decision making should be offered by the Tennessee State Department of Education. Although the focus should be on principals, training should be available for parents, teachers, other staff members, and even students.
3. Project monies should be made available for schools to become pilot models of shared leadership throughout the state of Tennessee. These schools should be geographically located to allow convenient observation for other schools considering participation.

CHAPTER 6

Parallel Studies

Introduction

This study examined principals' perceptions of involvement in school decision making. It represented one of three studies of a more comprehensive research project undertaken to identify perceptions of decision making within the school communities of the First Tennessee Developmental District. Two parallel studies were conducted simultaneously as part of the comprehensive research project. One examined teachers' perceptions of involvement in school decision making and the other examined parents' perceptions of involvement in school decision making. Presented in this chapter are the findings of the two parallel studies, general observations, and a summary of the comprehensive project.

In order to insure a statistically correct compilation of the data, portions of the three parallel studies were completed using similar procedures. Nine hypotheses were tested in each of the studies. Although each study measured a different target population's perceptions, hypotheses were worded similarly and were analyzed with the same statistical test. The questionnaires

used in the three studies were tested for validity through the same pilot study. All questionnaires used the same format and subscales with only minor terminological differences deemed more appropriate for each group of respondents.

Population samples for each study were drawn from the elementary schools in First Tennessee Developmental District. This allowed each of the researchers to generalize findings to educational communities in the same geographical region.

General Observations

Among the most impressive findings for the team of researchers were observations made during the distribution of the questionnaires. Team members conducting the parallel studies personally visited the principals of the 125 schools of this study to encourage the distribution of the questionnaires to the sample subjects in each of the target populations. The team's primary purpose in personally contacting school principals was to gain their cooperation in order to increase returns. The team possessed a combined 42 years of experience as elementary school principals and was well aware that principals would have a great impact on the return of all samples.

The approximately 42 school visits for each team member became both adventurous and professionally stimulating. Starting the travel to schools well before daylight in order to arrive before the busy principal started his/her day and stopping at small stores for directions became the norm for the researchers. Navigating both remote country roads and busy city streets provided equal challenges in locating the target schools. Team members' anxiety was compounded not only by their knowledge of principals' busy schedules but also by the large number of school-related research studies that were being conducted in the schools at this time. After later sharing the stories of the road, the researchers realized their fears of principals reacting negatively had been unwarranted. In almost every case, the principal met the researcher with a smile, an open mind, and a willingness to help in any way possible with the research. Many took time from supervising lunchrooms, doing paperwork, visiting classrooms, and even, in some cases, the responsibilities of teaching to meet with the researchers to discuss survey packets and clarify points where assistance was needed. In all cases the willingness of the principal and the office staff to greet the strangers with a smile was appreciated.

Although the schools had common characteristics, some had a great many advantages that others did not. Throughout the visits,

the researchers discovered that every school was a proud center of active learning for its community, using whatever resources were available to it to build a strong educational program for children.

Although the researchers knew that the remaining task involved long hours of data analysis, they agreed that the visits to deliver questionnaires and solicit help had provided a positive inception to the project. Perhaps just as importantly, the visits had also provided each researcher with a refreshed realization of the individuality of the school populations to be studied.

Comprehensive Findings

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis in each study examined teachers involvement in the budgetary process. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in the budgetary process. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -6.044. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -14.5066. The study of parents'

perceptions revealed a z of -10.4974. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt teachers should be more involved in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 11. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 11

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	93	28.32	13.50	-6.0444	<.0005
Teachers	362	148.34	45.38	-14.5066	<.0005
Parents	457	233.18	117.81	-10.4974	<.0005

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis in each study examined parents' involvement in the budgetary process. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in the budgetary process. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -7.9453. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -9.6215. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z of -4.5864. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt parents should have greater involvement in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 12. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 12

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	94	45.87	20.17	-7.9453	<.0005
Teachers	351	169.88	102.99	-9.6215	<.0005
Parents	460	230.47	179.41	-4.5864	<.0005

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis in each study examined principals involvement in the budgetary process. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of principals in the budgetary process. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -8.4482. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -14.3987. The study of parents'

perceptions revealed a z of -17.5420. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt principals should be more involved in the budgetary process in elementary schools. Table 13 reflects the analysis of data for the third hypothesis.

Table 13

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Principals' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions In Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	95	48.47	4.00	-8.4482	<.0005
Teachers	347	178.32	92.55	-14.3987	<.0005
Parents	464	235.35	95.39	-17.5420	<.0005

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis in each study examined teachers' involvement in personnel decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of

teachers in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 14. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 14

N. Mean Ranks, z , and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	91	45.50	00.00	-8.2385	<.0005
Teachers	350	170.83	40.25	-15.7508	<.0005
Parents	444	200.31	59.79	-16.8146	<.0005

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -8.2385. The study of teachers'

perceptions revealed a z of -15.7508. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z of -16.8146. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt teachers should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools.

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis in each study examined parents' involvement in personnel decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -8.0939. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -12.7871. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z of -17.6133. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt parents should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools. Table 15 reflects the analysis of data for this hypothesis.

Table 15

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	93	47.02	16.00	-8.0939	<.0005
Teachers	350	146.63	88.02	-12.7871	<.0005
Parents	464	213.42	78.42	-17.6133	<.0005

Hypothesis 6

The sixth hypothesis in each study examined principals' involvement in personnel decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of principals in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -5.5137. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -6.3990. The study of parents'

perceptions revealed a z of -5.5594. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt principals should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 16. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 16

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Principals' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	94	42.02	28.90	-5.5137	<.0005
Teachers	347	152.41	116.94	-6.3990	<.0005
Parents	443	219.98	195.91	-5.5594	<.0005

Hypothesis 7

The seventh hypothesis in each study examined teachers' involvement in curricular decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in curricular decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -6.2796. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -15.3785. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z of -14.6642. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt teachers should be more involved in the curricular decisions in elementary schools.

The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 17. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 17

N. Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	91	32.98	25.25	-6.2796	<.0005
Teachers	356	167.92	34.75	-15.3785	<.0005
Parents	459	206.52	127.51	-14.6642	<.0005

Hypothesis 8

The eighth hypothesis in each study examined parents' involvement in personnel decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in curricular decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents' rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -8.3739. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -11.1913. The study of parents'

perceptions revealed a z of -17.6133. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt parents should be more involved in the curricular decisions in elementary schools.

The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 18. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 18

N, Mean Ranks, z , and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean Ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	93	47.00	00.00	-8.3739	<.0005
Teachers	359	150.90	87.51	-11.1913	<.0005
Parents	471	236.63	84.00	-17.6133	<.0005

Hypothesis 9

The ninth hypothesis in each study examined principals' involvement in curricular decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of principals in curricular decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z of -8.2385. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z of -15.9896. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z of -11.8554. All three z values were significant at the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt principals should be more involved in the curricular decisions in elementary schools. The n , mean ranks, z , and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 19. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 19

N, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Principals' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

Group	n	Mean ranks		z	p
		Positive	Negative		
Principals	91	45.50	00.00	-8.2385	<.0005
Teachers	354	178.89	47.11	-15.9896	<.0005
Parents	464	203.62	128.24	-11.8554	<.0005

Summary

Results were consistent in each area examined in these parallel studies. Principals, teachers, and parents of elementary school students wanted to be more actively involved in the decision-making process. Each group also wanted more involvement from members of the other groups. These results strongly indicated that principals, parents, and teachers preferred more stakeholder involvement in decisions which affect the local school, and that shared decision making was perceived by principals, teachers, and parents as their viable opportunity for meaningful involvement in decisions made at the local school setting.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based upon the analyses of survey data and the review of related literature from all three studies.

1. Principals feel that more parent, teacher, and principal involvement is needed in local school decision making.
2. Teachers feel that more principal, parent, and teacher involvement is needed in local school decision making.
3. Parents feel that more principal, teacher, and parent involvement is needed in local school decision making.
4. Shared decision making is seen as a viable alternative to traditional methods of making school decisions.
5. Although shared decision making has perceived advantages and disadvantages, feedback from participants is generally favorable, especially in the area of accountability.
6. Shared decision making can be implemented in a school setting, regardless of the size of the school.
7. The principal plays the role of the key individual in shared decision-making projects.
8. All individuals in a shared decision-making project need adequate training prior to participating.

9. Defining the roles and responsibilities of the participants in a shared decision-making venture increases the probability of success.

10. Support from the administrative levels above the principalship is critical to the successful implementation of a shared decision-making plan.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the findings and conclusions of the three parallel studies.

1. Federal and state guidelines, laws, regulations, and policies should be modified to allow local districts the flexibility to initiate shared decision making projects in the local school settings.

2. The Tennessee State Department of Education should take a leadership role in developing opportunities for shared decision-making projects. Pilot schools should be established in a geographic pattern which allows for convenient observation by principals, teachers, and parents. Training sessions should be planned at various sites throughout the state.

3. Local school boards should modify their policies to allow principals, teachers, and parents the autonomy and authority to

make decisions regarding budget, curriculum, and personnel at the local school site.

4. Guidelines should be published in each school district which define the extent of decision-making authority available to each school site.

5. Local support for the process from administrative positions must be established. The roles and responsibilities of the local board, superintendent, and central office personnel should be modified to support this commitment.

6. Schools considering the implementation of a shared decision-making project must first establish realistic guidelines including adequate training programs for all participants. Time frames, participants' responsibilities, and areas for stakeholder consideration must also be defined.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear Principal,

Having been an elementary school principal for fourteen years, I realize the busy schedule you have. I also realize the many demands you have placed on your time. I truly appreciate your agreeing to help with this study. Only individuals with your expertise could supply the information needed to complete this study. All responses will remain totally confidential.

The survey is divided into two parts. The first is a series of seven demographic questions about you. The second part is a questionnaire which asks for two responses to each statement. The first column of five numbers represents the level of involvement which presently occurs in your school. The next column of five numbers represents the level of involvement you believe is necessary to make the best school decisions. Use the following rating scale for your responses:

- 1 - No Involvement**
- 2 - Little Involvement**
- 3 - Some Involvement**
- 4 - Much Involvement**
- 5 - Total Involvement**

You will notice there is not a category labeled "I don't know". Since the study is identifying principals' perceptions, please mark the category which best describes your knowledge and beliefs regarding each statement. Once again, thanks very much for your cooperation and assistance.

**Sincerely,
Steve Dixon
Bristol, Tennessee**

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please complete the following items by checking the appropriate response.

1. GENDER: Female Male

2. CAREER LADDER STATUS: None Level I Level II Level III

3. AGE: 20 to 29 30 to 39 40 to 49 50 to 59 60 or older

4. HIGHEST DEGREE OBTAINED:
 Bachelor Degree
 Master Degree
 Specialist Degree
 Doctorate Degree

5. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE:
 Less than 5 years
 5 to 9 years
 10 to 14 years
 15 to 19 years
 20 years or more

6. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU HAVE TAKEN A GRADUATE LEVEL COURSE?
 Less than four years
 Between four and seven years
 More than seven years

7. HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY TRAINING IN SITE BASED DECISION MAKING?
 Yes
 No

Elementary School Involvement Survey

Please rate the level of involvement that you believe actually occurs at the present time and also the level you believe should occur using the scale:

- 1 - No Involvement
- 2 - Little Involvement
- 3 - Some Involvement
- 4 - Much Involvement
- 5 - Total Involvement (Makes Decision)

Circle the number that represents the the level of involvement that the:

	<u>Presently Occurs</u>	<u>Should Occur</u>
1. Principal has in the selection of teachers	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
2. Teachers have in determining grading policies	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
3. Parents have in the selection of custodians.....	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
4. Teachers have in the purchase of classroom equipment.....	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
5. Parents have in evaluating teacher aides	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
6. Principal has in determining what skills are taught in the classroom	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
7. Teachers have in setting promotion and retention policies	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
8. Parents have in determining how funds are raised.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
9. Principal has in determining what is purchased for classroom instruction in the school	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
10. Parents have in the evaluation of the principal's performance	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
11. Teachers have in how students are assigned to their the classroom	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
12. Teachers have in the selection of new teachers.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
13. Principal has in determining how teachers teach in their classrooms	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
14. Parents have in the evaluation of teachers' performance	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
15. Teachers have in the evaluation of custodians	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
16. Principal has in determining how money from fundraisers will be spent.....	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
17. Parents have in determining what is purchased for classrooms	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
18. Principal has in evaluating teacher aides.....	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
19. Teachers have in determining the skills taught in their classrooms.....	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
20. Parents have in setting homework policies and guidelines	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1

Elementary School Involvement Survey

Please rate the level of involvement that you believe actually occurs at the present time and also the level you believe should occur using the scale:

- 1 - No Involvement
 2 - Little Involvement
 3 - Some Involvement
 4 - Much Involvement
 5 - Total Involvement (Makes Decision)

Circle the number that represents the the level of involvement that the:	<u>Presently Occurs</u>	<u>Should Occur</u>
21. Parents have in determining grading policies.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
22. Principal has in the selection of teacher aides.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
23. Parents have in determining how students are assigned to classrooms.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
24. Teachers have in evaluating teacher aides	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
25. Parents have in selecting the materials purchased for classrooms.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
26. Principal has in the evaluation of teachers	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
27. Parents have in the selection of teacher aides	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
28. Teachers have in determining how funds are raised.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
29. Teachers have in the evaluation of principal performance	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
30. Parents have in determining the teaching techniques used in the classroom	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
31. Principal has in setting homework policies and guidelines	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
32. Parents have in the selection of teachers	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
33. Principal has in the purchase of instructional equipment	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
34. Teachers have in the evaluation of other teachers.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
35. Principal has in the setting of promotion and retention policies.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
36. Parents have in the evaluation of custodians.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
37. Teachers have in the selection of teacher aides	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
38. Parents have in determining how money from fundraisers is spent	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
39. Principal has in determining how funds are raised.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
40. Teachers have in setting homework policies	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
41. Principal has in the selection of custodians	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
42. Parents have in the selection of textbooks	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1

Elementary School Involvement Survey

Please rate the level of involvement that you believe actually occurs at the present time and also the level you believe should occur using the scale:

- 1 - No Involvement
 2 - Little Involvement
 3 - Some Involvement
 4 - Much Involvement
 5 - Total Involvement (Makes Decision)

Circle the number that represents the the level of involvement that the

	<u>Presently Occurs</u>					<u>Should Occur</u>				
43. Principal has in determining grading policies	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
44. Principal has in the selection of student furniture	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
45. Teachers have in determining how they teach in their classrooms	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
46. Parents have in setting promotion and retention policies	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
47. Teachers have in the selection of textbooks	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
48. Principal has in the purchase of classroom teaching equipment	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
49. Parents have in determining what skills are taught in the classroom	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
50. Principal has in evaluating his/her own performance	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
51. Teachers have in determining how money from fundraisers will be spent	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
52. Parents have in the purchase of instructional equipment that is used in the classroom	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
53. Principal has in the selection of textbooks	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
54. Teachers have in the purchase of teaching materials	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
55. Parents have in the selection of student furniture	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
56. Principal has in determining how students are assigned to classrooms	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
57. Teachers have in the selection of custodial personnel	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
58. Teachers have in determining what is purchased for instruction	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
59. Teachers have in the purchase of classroom furniture	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
60. Principal has in the evaluation of custodial personnel	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

VITA

STEVEN F. DIXON

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 Place of Birth: Bristol, VA
 Marital Status: Married
 Children: James Matthew, Joseph Franklin,
 Rebecca Kate

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 Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN;
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 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City,
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 Bristol, TN, 1973-79 Principal, Central
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 Bristol, TN, 1981-92
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