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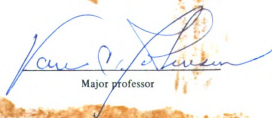
PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY IN THE LANSING PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
A MODEL FOR THE DECENTRALIZATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE
FUNCTIONS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

presented by

Frank A. Throop

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ABSTRACT

PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY IN THE LANSING PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A MODEL FOR THE DECENTRALIZATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

By

Frank A. Throop

The Purpose

The central issue in this study is to develop a descriptive analysis of a model for the decentralization of administrative functions in the Lansing Public Schools.

An examination is made of the vertical and horizontal administrative relationships that operate in the decision-making process. In an examination of the structure of the decision-making process, an attempt is made to gain insight into the part that supportive personnel at the central office level play in developing strategies and operational procedures at the local building level. The new operational pattern, as it is conceived, is designed to be a more responsive system. An important part of the analysis of the plan is a determination of the input that the various levels of administration have in carrying out the management functions of the school district. The influence of input that teachers, parents, and students have within the framework of professional autonomy is an important consideration

of the study. The perception that administrators and teachers have of their role within the organizational structure is also explored. A questionnaire and an interview process were developed to obtain the reactions and insights of those affected by the change in the operational pattern. Central to the study are the questions: Is professional autonomy as an operational plan for the decentralization of management functions proving to be a benefit to the schools' operation? Will the plan provide a more responsive operation at the building level?

Professional autonomy in operation involves not only an administrative pattern but also a functional design for operation. Through a descriptive study of professional autonomy as a pattern of organization in the Lansing Public Schools, an attempt is made to demonstrate the way the various management functions are carried out in a decentralized system.

Methodology

A questionnaire was given to all administrative personnel in the central office, the superintendent and his staff, and the directors and consultants in the various divisions. Also surveyed were the building-level administrators in the nine secondary schools, and a representative sample of teachers in the secondary schools. The questionnaire was developed as a means of determining the effects of the decentralization plan, as viewed by those involved. The survey was also given to determine the perception that the

professional educators contacted have of the extent that autonomy at the building level will, when fully implemented, influence them personally and professionally; and also, their perception of the extent to which the plan will improve the educational program for the youth of the community they serve.

The information collected in this study, the description of the model, and the results of the survey were submitted to four experts in the field of school administration. These theorists were asked to respond and to make judgment regarding the concept and its effects upon the organization and management of an urban school system.

The Findings of the Study

The definition of role responsibilities, professional autonomy, was seen to work through a delegation of decision-making authority, where responsibilities are shared and focus is directed to the local school building level, where the need for sensitivity is more acute and the school staff is in close contact with students and parents.

The analysis of the district's organization showed a centralization of some administrative functions but generally most decisions are forced to the lowest possible level through the philosophy of building autonomy.

Some functions remain centralized because of district-wide policy or the nature of the responsibility. Examples are centrally establishing the budget for the teacher/pupil ratio for building personnel allotment or building maintenance

contracting at the central office, etc. The key to the move to professional autonomy, however, is the overriding philosophy that decisions affecting the activities, organization, and curriculum of a school community (the staff, and parents of that school) may not be made at the central office.

Those at the local school level are free to go in the direction they feel best for their school, without the limitations and restraints of remote-control decision making. They are held responsible and accountable, however, for outcomes through a process of mutually generated evaluation and ongoing planning.

The Lansing plan for decentralization is designed to allow greater ease in developing innovative approaches to program improvement because of greater visibility of the decision-making process and the location of the point of decision. Local needs are made more apparent and those responsible can be held more accountable to those affected by the decisions.

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By

Frank A. Throop

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Woven into the fabric of a great many recent works criticizing American public education is the theme depicting the urban school system as a rigidly structured bureaucracy. The school organization is portrayed as an inflexible and unresponsive hierarchy; an insensitive order that all but drove the creative teacher in Braithwaite's To Sir With Love out of the classroom and sentenced the victims of Kozol's Death at an Early Age to futures as desperate as the slums they inhabited.

Over the past few years the steady flow of criticism directed at the organizational structure of our schools has condemned the inflexibility and insensitivity of the urban school system. Postman and Winegarten's Teaching as a Subversive Activity and Silberman's Crisis in the Classroom both plead for changes that will produce a structure that is more responsive to the human needs of those it serves.

The economics of school finance have had potent influences upon the dilemma that the urban school system now faces. The "flight to the suburbs" has redistributed people; white, middle-class families moving out of the city have changed the cities' financial bases. Rapidly increasing

numbers of low-income whites and an increase in the minority population require new and expensive educational program adjustments.

A mass of evidence indicates that public schools have, in general, failed to adjust to these changing conditions. The Coleman Report found, for example, that Negro students in predominantly Negro schools on standardized achievement tests scored somewhat below white students at the first grade level, were about 1.6 grades behind by the sixth grade, 2.4 years behind by the ninth grade, and were 3.3 grades behind by the twelfth grade.

In evaluating the school system, the report found urban schools to be deficient:

For most minority groups, then, and most particularly the Negro, the schools provide no opportunity at all for them to overcome this initial deficiency; in fact, they fall farther behind the white majority in the development of several skills which are critical to making a living and participating fully in modern society. Whatever may be the combination of non-school factors--poverty, community attitudes, low educational level of parents--which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and non-verbal skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome it.¹

One of the important results of this situation is that a greater proportion of black students than white students drop out of school. The Coleman Report found that in the metropolitan North and West, black students

¹U.S., Office of Education, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 20.

were more than three times as likely to drop out of school than white students (20 percent compared to 6 percent).

Those students who have graduated from ghetto schools also find it extremely difficult, because of the inferior education they have received, to secure decent-paying jobs or to be accepted by institutions of higher learning.

The failure of the school system to provide black students with an adequate education was identified by the Kerner Commission Report as "one of the persistent sources of grievance and resentment within the Negro Community."¹ The report also noted that the hostility of both black parents and students toward the school system was a factor contributing to racial conflict within many city schools, and to the general civil disorders in American cities.

Goldhammer and Taylor summarized the criticism leveled at the educational institutions during the 1960's and 1970's. The critics, in part, focused their attention upon the urban school organization.

Studying the educational problems in the inner city led some educators and citizens to see the human wastage which results from the failure to adopt programs and instruction to the needs of all children regardless of their economic or social antecedents. Daily, children were subjected to studies which were beyond their powers of conceptualization, irrelevant to their needs for learning how to deal with the world about them, and inconsistent with patterns of development open to them. The control mechanisms of the

¹Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 425.

schools attempted to maintain discipline, but resulted in discouraging ingenuity and creativity, developing an humbling conformity and reducing school to a meaningless ritual. Mindlessness, rigidity of control, irrelevance, drive toward conformity and apathetic acceptance; these were the characteristics of the school system particularly identified by the critics.¹

The Centralization of Administrative Power

Potent organizational influences have historically led to highly centralized organizational structures within the urban school systems. In the name of efficiency and the better use of the expertise of specialists in finance, curriculum, and planning, the decision-making process has traditionally been monopolized by the power structure of professional educators, centered around the superintendent and the system's central staff.

Fantini, et al. described the large-city school system as being:

. . . composed not only of vertical hierarchies of supervisors--from the superintendent of schools, at the pinnacle, to assistant principals or secondary school department heads, at the bottom--but also of a horizontal structure of specialists. Specialists preside over dozens of services (such as audio visual services), over curriculum areas (languages, the sciences, physical education, etc.) and, more recently, over involvement in federal aid programs.²

Weber's theory of the emergence of a specialized bureaucracy monopolizing power through its control of

¹Keith Goldhammer and Robert E. Taylor, Career Education: Perspective and Promise (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1972), p. 17.

²Mario Fantini, et al., Community Control and the Urban School (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 69.

expertise characterizes the urban schools' administrative structure. Blau and Scott paraphrased Weber's concept of managerial principles:

Bureaucracy is the most efficient form of administrative organization because experts with much experience are best qualified to make technically correct decisions--these principles maximize rational decision making and administrative efficiency.¹

James Koerner commented on the top-heavy bureaucracy that has developed in urban schools:

American schools are more lavishly administered than any in the world. No other system can come even close to matching the numbers of full-time non-teaching school administrators that run our local school systems, many of whom are more highly paid than state governors, university presidents, or our most distinguished scholars.²

In the larger cities, layers of school officialdom become a discouraging and inflexible barrier to the public and those seeking change. Dr. Gittell described the bureaucratization and professionalization as conditioning elements in the New York City Public Schools:

The public--civic and interest groups--accept the notion of the professional competence of the bureaucracy, but at the same time express a hopelessness regarding their ability to change the system. The result is narrow or closed participation in large areas of decision making restricted to an inside

¹Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott, Formal Organizations: A Comparative Study (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1960).

²Report of the National Advisory Commission,
op. cit.

core of top supervisory personnel in the headquarters staff of the board of education.¹

Resnik's review of the attempts to bring about change in the Philadelphia Public Schools also revealed frustration and distrust of centralized decision making:

Meaningful innovation has also been diluted by the fact that all of the new directions emanate from Central headquarters. This has occurred during a period when community groups are becoming more and more distrustful of the "establishment" regardless of whether it is an old or new regime. When new programs devised by "downtown professional educators" fail to produce quick results, community cynicism toward the system increases.²

The system is composed of people, and the people in supervisory positions also contribute to the inflexibility of the city schools. If the centralized system is by nature unresponsive, then those officials who are protected from the stimuli of daily student and community demands for change are insensitive to their needs. As a matter of self-protection, large-city school systems have successfully isolated and insulated school professionals from outside evaluation. Change in the structure would constitute a threat to many of those whom the structure now protects and shelters.

¹Marilyn Gittel, "Decision Making in the Schools, New York Case Study," in Educating an Urban Population, ed. by Marilyn Gittel (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1967), p. 209.

²Henry S. Resnik, "The Shedd Revolution: A Philadelphia Story," The Urban Review, January, 1969, pp. 24-25.

Fantini characterized promotion to supervisory rank as being defined not so much by genuine merit as by the trappings of merit:

Too often the credentials and standards, presumably designed to assure quality, have hardened into barriers and restraints, limiting promotion to men and women ready to conform to a rule-ridden system and tenacious enough to pass through fixed hurdles that are legitimized more by age than purposes that meet the fundamental needs of the system's clients: the children. The more complex the rules of the game, the more it pays the players who aspire to success, to have been on the scene from the beginning of their careers. Thus, the system does not need to erect formal fences against outsiders although it often does. It is defacto exclusive and inbred.¹

The centralization of decision making creates formidable barriers to meaningful change. Resnik identified the "system's pathological commitment to the status quo" as the greatest obstacle to innovation. He characterized administrators with many years tenure within the system as a "formidable and possibly devastating enemy."²

After long and arduous years of working their way up the system's career ladder, these educators are intensely resistant to any innovation such as merit pay or any other change that would alter the "rules of the game" and put them at a disadvantage. The resources available to them for preventing change are legion.

Francis Moseley was highly critical of the political nature of New York City Schools officialdom:

The political bureaucracy installed in the offices of the Board of Education--in New York where its

¹Fantini, op. cit., p. 70.

²Resnik, op. cit.

personnel numbers in the tens of thousands, or in other places where hopefully it is smaller--should not be merely an object of amused contempt. It should be regarded as a positive evil, as a malignant influence on the lives of young people, as essentially minimal to education. It is the spiritual heir of the Athenian cabal which brought about the death of Socrates.¹

The increasing bureaucratization of school systems and the subsequent bureaucratic strength of the administration have also stimulated teacher organizations to push for a share of the decision-making process. The changing student composition of large-city schools and the supposed decline in working conditions resulting from these changes appear to be the prime reasons for teachers' efforts to participate in policy making.

Gittell described union involvement in policy making as being motivated primarily by a desire to maintain the status quo.² The teacher unions have supported policies which create rigidities in the system and can hardly be considered proponents of change.

Teachers are demanding not only higher pay and better working conditions but involvement in virtually all phases of school policy making.³ An example of the influence that teachers' unions have as a controlling force was

¹Francis S. Moseley, "The Urban Secondary School: Too Late for Mere Change," Phi Delta Kappan, May, 1972, pp. 559-564.

²Gittell, op. cit.

³Philip J. Meranto, "School Politics in the Metropolis," in Metropolitan America: Its Government and Politics, ed. by Alan K. Campbell (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1970).

demonstrated in New York, when efforts to decentralize resulted in a teacher strike. In September, 1968, in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district of New York City, the confrontation between the union and the ghetto community over the community control issue indicated the enormous power that the union could exercise on local and state officials when it felt compelled to do so.¹

The Significance of the Problem

The collective forces of rigidity that exist within the political matrix of the school organization act in concert along a social continuum and demand, as never before, a sensitive, responsive, and dynamic organizational pattern that is attuned to the educational needs of the urban student population.

The failure of the urban school system to respond to the educational and social crises that ferment in the nation's cities has created counter forces that act in strong opposition to an inflexible managerial structure.

The civil rights struggle, unionization, the growing militancy of teachers, and the quest for community control create an environmental setting that makes it more and more difficult for the core decision makers to monopolize the educational decision-making process and to insulate themselves and schools from political conflict.²

¹Fantini, op. cit., p. 75. ²Meranto, op. cit., p. 61.

On these highly explosive issues, boards of education have looked to the superintendent and his staff for guidance. There has, however, been an unwillingness to change because of the inherent threat to their positions of authority. Dentler stressed administrators' unwillingness to jeopardize their authority within the school bureaucracy over highly controversial issues on which they might lose.¹

As the critics have pointed out so well, there is within the urban schools a cultural diversity with needs that have been ill served by an unresponsive system. The low quality of education provided for minority group students still remains the most glaring and pressing problem of the city schools. Supporters of community control say professional educators have maintained a monopoly of control over ghetto schools but have failed by any measures used to produce positive results.

Meranto pointed to the decentralized concept of school organization as a means of bringing about the flexibility that is so desperately needed:

Under a decentralized school system, innovation would be easier to achieve because the points of decision would be more visible and obstacles more readily identifiable--greater community involvement would combat the alienation and distrust many ghetto

¹Robert Dentler, "Barriers to Northern School Desegregation," in The Negro American, ed. by Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), pp. 55-57.

parents and students harbor toward the schools, since the school would be more accountable to community residents.¹

The city is not one neighborhood with common aspirations for its youth, nor is it composed of people with like backgrounds, interests, or resources. Within each school community are needs peculiar to that school alone. Though there may be more similarities within the large urban district than without (as compared to suburban districts), there remains a diversity that can be dealt with only if the organizational pattern is responsive to the variables within its various communities.

As has been evidenced clearly in the literature, the makeup of the student population in the city has changed, and society is gripped by social upheavals. The changing conditions call for response in the system. A highly structured, inbred, and protective system does not change voluntarily. Attention must be cosued upon the community and upon the students. The central staff or the school board is not equipped to be responsive to the diverse needs of the variety of groups within the urban community.

Fantini used the St. Louis Plan for decentralizing the decision-making process as an example of a "bottom-up movement," where agents of change who are closest to the learner have more of a voice in the development of the instructional program and those farthest removed become

¹Meranto, op. cit., p. 71.

facilitators and coordinators. "The reason we're having communication problems in organizations is because the kind of organization most of us are working with is a form of pyramid with power concentrated at the top and with orders percolating down."¹

Featherstone and Hill, in their analysis of the Bundy Report on school decentralization in the New York City Schools, expressed a strong endorsement of the democratic procedure that would allow people in the community to have a voice in the control of their children's testing through community educational systems in the city.

We believe that teachers and administrators in the various learning units of the city should be able to make decisions relating to education and administration without restrictions of a bureaucratic chain of regulations and superimposed subjective judgements made by superiors.²

In their analysis of the Bundy Report, Featherstone and Hill emphasized the issue regarding the diversity in population. The report was strong in its rejection of the concept of uniformity in school programming. The real need was a diversity that would provide for the needs of a widely varied population. The Fort Lincoln New Town project in

¹Mario D. Fantini, "Internal Action Programs for the Solution of Urban Education Problems," in Urban School Administration, ed. by Troy McKelvey and Austin D. Swanson (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1969), pp. 93-105.

²Richard Featherstone and Frederick Hill, "School Decentralization: The Bundy Report--What it Really Means, Part I," American School and University, XLI (October, 1968), pp. 44-48.

the Washington, D.C., schools is an example of an experimental program designed to reverse the usual top to bottom decision-making flow.

The intent of the Fort Lincoln project is to structure a task-oriented system of organization. This calls for educational decisions made by the people who are closest to the action. This organization calls for a hierarchical structure for the purpose of assigning a task-centered organic unit.

The Fort Lincoln design is effective where it is desired that the organization elements be highly interdependent. It is designed to fit the changing needs of the system as conditions or problems vary. The administrative structure must, in this system, be organized to facilitate changes in responsibility from task to task. Administrative personnel and teachers then operate on a task basis, rather than restricting their function to their perception of the role of their jobs. It is not necessary for members of the organization to identify their status role; instead, they address themselves to the task of helping the student.¹

Centralization vs. Decentralization

As the literature has shown, change in the distribution of power in urban school systems is being demanded

¹Mario Fantini and Milton D. Young, "Fort Lincoln New Town Project (FLNT), Washington, D.C.," in Designing Education for Tomorrow's Cities, ed. by Fred Douglas Bernotaviez (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), p. 92.

by community organizations, is being explored by educational theorists, and has been recommended by many involved in action research projects. They all seem to conclude that greater community participation and control is desirable, and that decentralization of administrative authority in the decision-making process is needed to bring about a necessary responsiveness and a sensitivity to the needs of those they serve.

The decentralization of the power of the educational system influences a complex interrelation of responsibilities --systems of accountability, authority for decision making, status, and influence in the community--the controls of the organization structure itself.

Within most state school systems, authority for controlling the educational system is placed in the hands of elected boards of education. These local school boards are delegated the responsibility for governing the schools through the laws of the state government, and are responsible and responsive to the electorate as well. The administrative personnel within the district then have authority as determined either by state law or by the school board. "Michigan school laws authorize boards to delegate their responsibility by stating that they may 'employ such assistants and employees as may be necessary and prescribe their duties and fix their compensation.'"¹

¹John B. Bruce, Handbook on Michigan School Law for Elementary and Secondary School Principals (Lansing: Mich. Department of Education, 1968), p. 76.

Featherstone and Hill contrasted centralization with decentralization in their examination of questions of influence, responsibility, and authority when a decentralized system is proposed as a "cure for the deficiencies of the centralized structure."

. . . A Centralized school is one in which final authority and responsibility for all educational and managerial functions are under one control officer; responsible to one central board.

On the other hand, a decentralized school system is one in which responsibility and authority are distributed among many different local officers, and possibly many local boards or sub-boards.¹

Centralized Authority

Lay responsibility and authority for all policy and/or administrative decisions, as extended by school law, in in the hands of the board of education. Professional responsibility and authority for the execution of policy is extended by state law, and is in the office of the general superintendent of schools or the chief administrative officer of the board.

Influence on the central board is reflected through the efforts of organized and casually related groups of citizens or individuals in a manner chosen by the initiating persons or groups. The central board and the general superintendent are accountable, but the influence of the local groups or individuals is remote, and relatively minor.

¹Richard Featherstone and Frederick Hill, "Urban School Decentralization; Part II, Centralization vs. Decentralization Pros and Cons," American School and University, XLI (December, 1968), 56-59.

Decentralized Authority

Lay responsibility and authority for educational policy decision making are extended to local community boards of control--the number to be determined by some definition of "community." Professional responsibility and authority for the execution of policy is in the offices of the local administrator.

Influence on the local board is reflected through the effort of groups and individuals. The local board and superintendent are accountable, and the influence of the local group or individual is direct, and relatively major.¹

Professor Burton Gorman at Kent State University claimed that changes in the school organization are overdue, and drastic restructuring is needed to meet the demands of today's society.

It is the basic structure of the school program and organization that is most in need of change. Further, it must be changed to something that is simpler, more self-checking, than the present pattern. The weight of the school bureaucracy itself absorbs so much of the psychic energy of all concerned that too little is left to serve the school's purposes. Control, classifying and labeling students, and record keeping may become ends in themselves. When they do, they absorb energy that ought to go into education.

The school must so reorganize itself that many purposes now served only through formal organization are served informally. This means, among other things, that greater autonomy and power of decision must be exercised by smaller subunits of the school, by individual teachers, and by individual pupils. The powers

¹Ibid.

of judgment must be cultivated in all and strengthened by exercise.¹

The Lansing Public
School System

The Lansing Public School System includes those communities within the city of Lansing, Michigan, and some smaller residential areas outside of the city boundaries. The district is surrounded by a ring of smaller suburban school systems that are primarily middle-class bedroom communities which, economically, are dependent upon Lansing.

Lansing, Michigan, is the state capital and is located in the central part of the state. With a population of approximately 131,000, Lansing is an educational and industrial center. A number of large manufacturing plants related to the automobile industry are located in the city. Lansing is the home of Lansing Community College, with an enrollment of 10,000. Adjacent to the city is Michigan State University, with an enrollment of over 40,000 students.

Economically, the city is influenced by the state government payroll; however, the greatest source of income is from manufacturing. The economics of the district are generally stable and the population is primarily blue collar, with a large proportion of lower-middle-class to lower-class families.

¹Burton W. Gorman, "Change in the Secondary School: Why and How?" Phi Delta Kappan (May, 1972), pp. 566-567.

There have been some changes in the distribution of population with a movement of middle-class white families to the suburbs and the influx of lower-class whites and minority families into the city. In the 1972-73 school year, the racial distribution in the schools was: Caucasian--77 percent, Negro--15 percent, Mexican-American--7 percent, and Other--1 percent. These statistics indicate a slight increase in the number of minority students from the previous year.¹

The district is made up of forty-seven elementary schools, five junior high schools, and four senior high schools. After increasing in enrollment steadily for many years, the number of students enrolled in the public schools is showing signs of stabilizing, if not even decreasing. The 1972-73 enrollment was 33,281.

In the 1972-73 school year, the Lansing school system employed 1,700 professionals in the district. The administrative organization included 156 consultants and central staff.²

Administrative Patterns in the Lansing Schools

For seventeen years, from 1945 until 1962, the Lansing schools had as their superintendent Dr. Dwight Rich,

¹Conference with Kenneth Mead, Director of Child Accounting, Lansing Public Schools, November, 1972.

²Conference with Marcus Burkholder, Assistant Director of Personnel, Lansing Public Schools, November, 1972.

a very strong leader, not only in the Lansing schools and in statewide educational circles but also in civic and community activities. Under Dr. Rich's superintendency, the Lansing schools experienced considerable growth, from a student population of 14,052 in 1945 to 27,557 in 1962.

Administratively, Dr. Rich directed from the central office the decision making on most important issues in the areas of curriculum, budget and finance, personnel, and school plant development. This resulted in lower level administrators and school principals deferring most important decisions to the superintendent. Although there were variations from one school to another, the overall result was a great deal of conformity in educational materials and in curriculum, as well as with organizational procedures throughout the district.

Upon his retirement in 1962, Dr. Rich was replaced by Dr. Forrest Averill, Dr. Rich's deputy superintendent. Dr. Averill's appointment was more or less an interim appointment while the school board conducted a search for a suitable replacement for the superintendent, inasmuch as Dr. Averill was to retire two years later. During his short tenure, Dr. Averill maintained generally the same administrative structure that had developed under Dr. Rich. There was some modification in the delegation of responsibility at the central office level; however, little change was made in the decision-making process during these years.

In 1964, Dr. William Manning was named to the superintendency upon Averill's retirement, and brought with him an awareness of the needs of what was now a larger and more urbanized city. The enrollment of Lansing schools had grown to 29,258 students. The suburban development had proliferated around the perimeter of the city and had enclosed the school district with a ring of small school districts that cut off further geographic expansion.

Dr. Manning, who had been superintendent in Peteluma, California, prior to accepting the leadership of the Lansing schools, recognized the need for greater diversification in the school program to deal with the needs of an urban population. At that time, some of the first steps were taken to bring about a greater degree of racial integration in the secondary schools through the busing of black students from predominantly Negro elementary schools to some of the white elementary buildings. West Junior High School, an inner-city school with a majority of Negro students living in its service area, was closed and Negro students were bused to the other five junior high schools.

Among these changes, there was a subsequent expansion in the central office. New programs, federal funding, and specialization of administrative roles all tended to bring about the delegation of administrative authority to expanded central office departments. With authority and a share of the decision-making process, these departments expanded and developed separate and independent

administrative hierarchies. (See Appendix A for the 1964 organizational chart.)

Under Dr. Rich, the deferral of important decisions had been direct and the response often instant and authoritative. During Manning's administration, the power structure was still concentrated at the central office, but now the decision-making process was diffused and insulated in the matrix of a more complex bureaucratic hierarchy.

At the same time that the school organization grew more complex and ponderous in its operation, civil disorder and dissent expanded to affect all of the nation's institutions. Citizens asked men in authority to listen to their needs--to be sensitive to the problems with which urban communities such as Lansing were struggling.

In 1967, Dr. Manning resigned to accept the superintendency in Washington, D.C. He was replaced by his assistant, Dr. Stephen Partington, who held the position until his retirement in 1971. During this period, the Lansing schools faced the same pressures and problems that urban schools across the nation were frantically attempting to resolve. Student disorder and protest were part of the scene in the secondary schools. Racial strife, so much the major problem of the city, was now part of the schools' dilemma. Lansing, a school system that had prided itself on its community support, now found itself in financial difficulty, with parents and other adults in the community failing to vote to provide for adequate financial support.

Lansing's population was changing in composition. The movement of the white middle class to the suburbs and an influx of lower-class whites, southern Negroes, and Mexican-Americans into the city resulted in a growing non-white population in the schools (approximately 22 percent by 1972). The nonwhite population migrated to the older, more run-down sections of the city, and were concentrated in the oldest schools with the oldest, most run-down facilities.

To an urban population who could see a good education as the one way out of the ghetto or the slum neighborhood to which they had gravitated, the Lansing schools could only show the below-average achievement of their students as a result of their efforts.¹ Armed with evidence that the Lansing schools were not educating their children up to their expectations, community groups, minority organizations, and individual parents went to the school board and to the administration asking for improvement. Tremendous efforts on the part of school personnel were made to compensate for the deficiencies that were evident and for the ever-increasing costs that accompanied the changes.

The mechanics for change, however, were through an upward-directed, decision-making process. Important decisions in the area of materials, program, budget and finance, and personnel were made at the central office level. Input

¹Report on State Assessment Achievement Tests
(Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, 1971, 1971).

for these decisions came from the development of citywide committees in subject-matter areas and various other committees made up of teachers and administrators. These committees made recommendations to central office personnel, and through them to the superintendent and his school board.

Community involvement was solicited through the inclusion of parents or other community representatives on citywide curriculum committees or advisory committees set into motion by the board of education.

If one is to characterize this structure, it must be defined as the distribution of power within the school bureaucracy. If an idea for improvement must be filtered through the hierarchical structure of a complex bureaucracy, it may be attenuated before it can be implemented; hence it may lose its effectiveness. This was the organizational pattern, with all of its dysfunctions, that confronted Dr. I. Carl Candoli when he became superintendent in July, 1971.

Upon the retirement of Dr. Partington, the Lansing Board of Education chose Dr. I. Carl Candoli for the superintendency. He inherited, with the job, an extremely complex set of problems--not only internal ones from his predecessors, but also many external community problems.

Lansing, as well as other urban communities throughout Michigan, was experiencing integration struggles, busing conflicts that led to the emergence of hostile

factions in the community. Financial problems had forced budget cuts to the extent that programs for children were reduced. Teacher negotiations were stalled, and later degenerated into a strike that delayed the opening of school. There existed, too, complex organizational problems within the schools' administrative structure--both operationally and structurally.

In August, 1971, Dr. Candoli introduced a plan for decentralization--a concept that he labeled "Professional Autonomy--A Plan for Decentralization in the Lansing Schools."¹

Professional autonomy, as conceived in the Lansing schools, is a design to bring about a reversal in the flow of power. Decision making is put on operational levels where the most effective and efficient operation can be realized. Systemwide decisions such as raising revenue for the system, or systemwide problems such as racial balance in the schools would be centralized. Decisions regarding curriculum, educational materials, operational procedure, etc. would be made at the individual building level. Educational strategy then could be mapped at the level where the issue was most immediate, with direct input by those affected by the change and by those who would put it into operation.

Dr. I. Carl Candoli, "Professional Autonomy--A Plan for Decentralization in the Lansing Schools," Lansing, 1972. (Mimeographed.)

Superintendent Candoli

Prior to assuming the superintendency in 1971, Dr. Candoli was Professor of Educational Administration at Ohio State University, where he taught Administrative Theory. Before assuming the Lansing position, he had served as an educational consultant, in the area of educational planning, for a number of large urban school systems. Among these were the Chicago, Cincinnati, Dayton, San Jose, Detroit, and Grand Rapids school systems. Candoli, who holds a Ph.D. from Michigan State University in Educational Administration, has previously been Assistant Superintendent in Portage, Michigan, and Deputy Superintendent in Highland Park, Michigan.

Shortly after assuming office in August, 1971, Dr. Candoli introduced the concept of responsible autonomy in his opening speech to the Lansing Administrative Staff.

Responsible Autonomy means achieving a balance between accountability and freedom in all parts of the educational system. Both are essential in public education. Without accountability a system may become self-serving. Without freedom, people lack a sense of personal responsibility, self-worth and involvement. The positive elements of accountability and freedom must be combined.

The central idea is that the greatest possible improvements in the Lansing schools will be attained when local schools are given Responsible Autonomy to solve their unique problems. We believe that each individual school community should have freedom to set educational objectives consistent with school district goals and to act toward the attainment of those objectives.

One strength of Responsible Autonomy is that it stimulates individuality. It also acknowledges diversity. It encourages constructive competitiveness. It relies on the release of the total resources of all

who engage in renewal at the building level. It makes it unequivocal that teachers, administrators, parents, students at the building are the curriculum builders, appraisers of performance and providers of instruction.

It is clear that educational improvements will be achieved only through the collaborating of dedicated teachers, staff specialists, administrators, counselors, parents, and students working in good faith where they are on the problems they have. The evolution of relevant curriculum, for example, and the reorientation of instructional strategies will occur in the field at the building level.

The role of central office in the evolution of Responsible Autonomy is as a support agency. It must assist in planning and development, in providing alternative strategies, in helping to devise appropriate evaluation mechanisms, in procuring resources (both financial and human), and in stimulating local units in their own development. The first concern of the entire system must be for its people--students, paraprofessionals, custodians, teachers, administrators and parents. The Lansing School District exists for people--black, white, brown, yellow, and red--not for materials or things. The quality of the relationship among people will determine the quality of the educational fabric.¹

In August of 1972, Candoli summarized a philosophy of dealing with problems of organizational rigidity. The direction of professional autonomy, as it has developed in the decentralization process in Lansing, is aimed at bringing about a more flexible organization that can respond to the problems of developing an optimum learning environment.

In nine points, Candoli developed objectives designed to maximize learning potential for students.

1. We must continue to vest major authority for administration of programs and objectives development in individual schools. Overall, the functional necessity of centralization of most things that go on in

¹Dr. I. Carl Candoli, speech delivered to the Lansing Administrative Staff, Lansing, Michigan, August 31, 1971.

schools is usually overrated. On the other hand, some balance between centralization and decentralization will help minimize tendencies toward rigidity. For example, centralization facilitates the distribution of resources, forces some competition for scarce resources, provides a mechanism for system-wide diffusion of innovation, allows for more research capacity than local units can justify, and facilitates the coordination of educational objectives and programs with those of other public agencies.

2. Teachers should play a much greater role in setting program objectives and in other school matters. This means that the sources of status schism between teachers and principals would lessen, and that the administrator's role would change from control and unilateral direction to goal integration, articulation, and facilitation.

3. Teacher performance should be measured by product rather than style.

4. Structures need to be developed for articulating objectives at all organizational levels, and serious efforts to determine learning needs must be undertaken.

5. We must develop greater in-house research and evaluation capacity, organized so as to provide research support and training to buildings.

6. We must provide parents and other citizens the opportunity not only to participate more fully in school affairs, but to share certain powers with educators at the school and system level. This might include a role in the formulation and assessment of objectives, in setting priorities, and even consultation in setting criteria for selection of personnel.

7. We must continue to search for and provide alternatives and options to students and parents either within or outside of the system. We have the responsibility to effect learner success.

8. We must press on to the task of true individualization of instruction. This is a task worthy of our complete dedication and attention.

9. We must develop a united posture on the human quality of our profession. We are in the people business and must always remember this.¹

In developing the philosophy of professional autonomy, Dr. Candoli defined the idea of responsible autonomy as a

¹Dr. I. Carl Candoli, "Total Building Autonomy and System-Wide Responsibility" (speech delivered to the Lansing Administrative Staff, Lansing, Michigan, August 23, 1972).

means of achieving a balance between accountability and freedom in all parts of the educational system.

The central idea is that the greatest possible improvements in the Lansing Schools will be attained when local schools are given Responsible Autonomy to solve their unique problems. Each individual school community should have freedom to set educational objectives consistent with school district goals and to act toward the attainment of those objectives. It is clear that educational improvements will be achieved only through the collaborating of dedicated teachers, staff specialists, administrators, counselors, parents and students working in good faith where they are on the problems they have.

The role of central office in the evolution of Responsible Autonomy is as a support agency. It must assist in planning and development, in providing alternative strategies, in helping to devise appropriate evaluation mechanisms, in procuring resources, in stimulating local units in their own development, and in holding local units responsible for meeting locally developed objectives.¹

In a speech delivered to a group of administrators in 1972, Dr. Candoli defined professional autonomy as a shared responsibility:

The concept as it is evolving in Lansing has as its base the making of educational program decisions at the closest possible level to the student. For this reason, the efforts of professional autonomy--shared responsibility--are concentrated at the building level since the principal and his staff have the most direct and continuous contact with the student, the parents and the community.²

¹Dr. I. Carl Candoli, "Working Definition of Terms" (speech delivered to the Lansing Administrative Staff, Lansing, Michigan, November, 1972).

The Problem

The introduction of the plan for a functional decentralization to the school building level (professional autonomy) is in its third year in the Lansing Public School System. Do those affected administrators and teachers who are working within the new framework perceive the changes as an aid to bringing about improvement in the operation of the school or in building better programs? Is professional autonomy, in fact, a model of operation that will cut through the bureaucratic structure of the administrative hierarchy and create a more flexible and responsive institution?

The central issue in this study is to develop a descriptive analysis of the model for the centralization and decentralization of administrative functions in the Lansing Public Schools. The analysis identifies those administrative functions which are centralized and those which are decentralized within the managerial levels of the Lansing schools.

An examination is made of the vertical and horizontal administrative relationships that operate in the decision-making process. In an examination of the structure of the decision-making process, an attempt is made to gain insight into the part that supportive personnel at the central office level play in developing strategies and operational procedures at the local building level. The new operational pattern, as it is conceived, is designed to

be a more responsive system. An important part of the analysis of the plan is a determination of the input that the various levels of administration have in carrying out the management functions of the school district. The influence of input that teachers, parents, and students have within the framework of professional autonomy is an important consideration of the study. The perception that administrators and teachers have of their role within the organizational structure is also explored. A questionnaire and an interview process were developed to obtain the reactions and insights of those affected by the change in the operational pattern. Central to the study are the questions: Is professional autonomy as an operational plan for the decentralization of management functions proving to be a benefit to the schools' operation? Will the plan provide a more responsive operation at the building level?

Methodology

Professional autonomy in operation involves not only an administrative pattern but also a functional design for operation. Through a descriptive study of professional autonomy as a pattern of organization in the Lansing Public Schools, an attempt is made to demonstrate the way the various management functions are carried out in a decentralized system.

The analysis of the plan should provide insight into an understanding of the influences that decentralization has upon such functions as curriculum planning, budgeting, and personnel practices. Also, an analysis of operational matters is presented, as viewed by those involved in central office roles as well as building level administrators in the secondary schools, and by teachers in those schools.

The literature on centralization and decentralization is reviewed through a study of books, articles, and lectures by organization specialists and professionals in the field of administration. The review is directed toward the identification of the advantages or disadvantages attributed to the centralization or decentralization of various organizational functions, as related to the operation and management of the school program.

To gain further insight into the implementation of the innovation, a questionnaire was given to all administrative personnel in the central office, the superintendent and his staff, and the directors and consultants in the various divisions. Also surveyed were the building-level administrators in the nine secondary schools, and a representative sample of teachers in the secondary schools. The questionnaire was developed as a means of determining the effects of the decentralization plan, as viewed by those involved. The survey was also given to determine the perception that the professional educators contacted have

of the extent that autonomy at the building level will, when fully implemented, influence them personally and professionally; and also, their perception of the extent to which the plan will improve the educational program for the youth of the community they serve.¹

In addition to the reactions of personnel in the school district, opinions and reactions from selected authorities in the field of administrative theory are included. The information collected in this study, the description of the model, and the results of the survey were submitted to four experts in the field of school administration. These theorists were asked to respond and to make judgment regarding the concept and its effects upon the organization and management of an urban school system. Hopefully, further insights into professional autonomy as an innovation in a city school system and into the process involved in its implementation may be gained through their responses.

Limitations of the Study

This thesis is intended to describe influences of professional autonomy as an innovation designed to implement the centralization and decentralization of management functions in the Lansing Public Schools. Since the study

¹The instrument for the survey was developed with the aid of Dr. Richard Benjamin, Consultant for Research and Planning for the Lansing School District.

is limited to the Lansing schools, especially the operation of the secondary schools and the central office functions that affect their operation, it is recognized that the study reflects only the setting that constitutes the Lansing School District. It is hoped, however, that generalizations of the concepts and findings of this study will apply to the problems that other school districts have in similar urban settings or even in larger cities.

Definition of Terms

Decentralization: The term decentralization has been used by different authorities to refer to two distinct kinds of school district organization.

The recommendations of the Report of the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Decentralization of the New York City Schools dealt with reorganizing a large district by subdividing into smaller, regional administrative units.¹

Featherstone and Hill, in their analysis of the same report, defined a decentralized system as "one in which responsibility and authority are distributed among many different local or sub-boards."² Lay input to decision making would be facilitated through the smaller regional units.

¹Report of the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Decentralization of the New York Schools, Reconnection for Learning: A Community School System for New York City (New York: The Advisory Panel, 1967).

²Featherstone and Hill, "School Decentralization: The Bundy Report--What it Really Means, Part I," op. cit.

Decentralization means, according to Argyris, pushing down authority and responsibility to the lowest possible level; decisions then would be made at the lowest level.¹

The focus of this study is the decentralization of certain administrative functions through the delegation of decision-making responsibility rather than by geographic location. In this study, the terms centralization and decentralization are considered to apply primarily to a functional assignment of responsibility; a decentralization of management functions to lower levels of administration is directly related to the kind of function to be performed at various levels of management.

Professional Autonomy: Professional autonomy is an organizational pattern developing in the Lansing schools, which places responsibility for operational decision making in the local schools. The plan, as it was conceived, creates an environment that will provide a more positive, flexible working relationship among those at various levels of involvement, from community to the central office and from the various managerial levels upward throughout the various administrative units.

The term responsible autonomy is also used to denote a balance between accountability and freedom to act on educational and organizational matters in all parts of the system.

¹Chris Argyris, Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1962), p. 3.

The term autonomy, as used in the context of this study, is related to decentralized responsibility in an organization; units along the various levels of the organizational structure are free to gather and assess information, and to act independently on situations within their areas of responsibility.

A hierarchy of authority is characteristic of a bureaucratic organization. Weber's description characterized a centralized bureaucracy as:

A great hierarchy of superior-subordinate relations in which the person at the top, assumed to be omniscient, gives the general order that initiates all activity. His immediate subordinates make the order more specific for their subordinates; the latter do the same for theirs, etc. . . . All authority and initiation are cascaded down in this way by successive delegations.¹

Overview

Included in Chapter I were a description of problems in educational organization that indicate a need for decentralization in urban schools.

Chapter II contains an illustration, through a review of studies in the field of educational and business management, of the need for centralization and decentralization of school administrative organization.

In Chapter III is found a description of the administrative structure in the Lansing schools. The

¹Max Weber; From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, trans. and ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 33.

four divisions--Personnel, Planning, Operations, and Budget--as support services to local building autonomy are also discussed in Chapter III.

Included in Chapter IV is an analysis of the survey of administrators and teachers. A report of the findings of the reactions of the various levels of school personnel to the introduction of professional autonomy as a means of decentralizing management functions is included.

The reactions and opinions of authorities in the field of school administration to the model and to the survey of personnel in the Lansing schools are reported in Chapter V.

Chapter VI contains a summary of the findings, conclusions based upon the analysis of the model and the findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is, in part, to lend an historical depth of understanding to current pressures for organizational improvement in the urban public school system. In addition, studies are cited to illustrate a need for decentralizing management functions and problem-solving functions of larger school systems.

Research is reviewed to demonstrate an over-centralization of management, excessive size, and a political tradition that has created an obstacle to effective management within the larger urban centers. Studies are presented that illustrate designs and rationale for the decentralization of administrative functions.

A number of studies have been initiated by school authorities in response to community pressures. Citizens, teachers, students, and building administrators are expressing a strong desire to be included, to be heard on such issues as community needs, curriculum, discipline, personnel, and recreational and school facilities.

Cunningham reported citizens' committees meeting on these issues in Rockford, Illinois; Washington

Community Schools; Philadelphia; Atlanta; and Detroit.¹

The Historical Development of
School Organization

In most cases, today's bureaucratic school hierarchies evolved through compounding unsophisticated, early organizational practices and administrative strategies and applying them to today's complex and intricate school operations.²

The move toward centralization began almost at once with the formation of the early school districts under the direction of the town selectment or school committee in early colonial Massachusetts. Prior to the passage of the school laws of 1642-42, schools were optional and were largely small community units. Later, establishment of these schools became mandatory, and they were supported by taxes.³

A study of early Massachusetts history by Suzzallo illustrated the development of the control mechanisms for schools as the one-room schools gave way to two room, four,

¹Luvern Cunningham, Governing Schools: New Approaches to Old Issues (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Company, 1971), p. 162.

²Henry Suzzallo, The Rise of Local School Supervision in Massachusetts (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1906), p. 20.

³Ronald F. Campbell, Lavern L. Cunningham, and Roderick F. McPhee, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1965), p. 8.

eight, and then even larger. The town selectmen of early Massachusetts formed school committees (school boards), then provided superintendents, later principal-teachers, and finally principals.¹ Suzzallo indicated the development of supervisory powers was a result of the "multiplication of functions" concerning the duties of the teacher. The development of special agencies for school management came about for the same reason.²

The first delegations of power by the town officials to special authorities were the certification of the teacher, inspection of the teacher's work, and the hiring of the teacher.

The General Court of colonial Massachusetts, the legislative body of the Commonwealth, passed a general law requiring the establishment of schools (the Law of 1647). This law placed the responsibility for schools upon the town (township in colonial Massachusetts) as a whole, not on each separate village. Thus the management of the school fell to elected officials of the township; later it was delegated to a special school committee (school board).³

The school district, as a unit of school government, was created in colonial Massachusetts. The General Court (legislature), when it required towns to establish schools

¹Ibid., p. 9.

²Suzzallo, op. cit., p. 20.

³Ibid., p. 67.

in 1647, provided the basis for the principle of state authority in the control of schools.¹

By the end of the eighteenth century, the power to conduct and control schools was held by the school districts, which were subdivisions of the towns.²

The first apparent recognition of the function of direction and supervision of the teacher's work by the state law was in 1826, when a general phrase was passed requiring that each town was to provide a committee to "have the general charge and superintendence of all the public schools." Such general terms are used today as an inclusive provision for the various supervisory functions. The same phrase is used to denote the powers of the school committee. The duty of the modern school superintendent of a Massachusetts town is still given in a similar manner.³

The power to direct and supervise the teachers' activity in the classroom and the power to proscribe curriculum and supervise the financing of the school appeared in connection with the development of the school committees. Later, such responsibilities were delegated to specialized agencies of control and supervisors with the power to

¹Freeman Butts and Lawrence A. Cremin, A History of Education in American Culture (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1953), p. 103.

²Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 86.

³Suzzallo, op. cit., p. 147.

exercise certain more or less well-differentiated functions of school supervision.¹

Butts and Cremin traced the centralizing tendency that grew out of the early definitions of power.² By 1870, thirty-six of the states had created the position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and by 1900 all forty-four states admitted to the Union had chief state school officers. All states since admitted to the Union also have such officials.³

By establishing state boards and state superintendencies, the states clearly established the belief that education is a state function. However, state boards have had a rather weak influence upon educational policy⁴ because much of the authority over the educational operation was delegated and remained in the hands of officials within the local school districts.

In 1911, Ernest Carroll wrote of the complexities that had evolved within the New York City school system. He reported an entanglement of school authority intermixed with city government that had all but rendered the school system inoperable.

The natural difficulties which face the Board of Education are almost insuperable but artificial

¹Ibid., p. 149.

²Butts and Cremin, op. cit., p. 255.

³Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴Ibid., p. 57.

difficulties have been supradadded to its stupendous task, will render it well nigh impossible. The method by which New York City administers its schools is that of the paralyzed arm.¹

The Consolidation of Small School Districts

Early expansion and the thrust for local control by citizens led to a proliferation of small, inefficient school districts. The need for consolidation and reorganization of these small, independent districts has been cited by a number of researchers over a period of years. The N.E.A. Research Division reported that the United States Office of Education records show that there were 127,649 school districts in 1932 and that most of these were small districts.² The effort in most areas was toward greater centralization. During the twenty-six year period between 1932 and 1958, a movement toward consolidation reduced the number of school districts by nearly two-thirds.³

The primary influence on greater centralization through consolidation of school districts was the inadequate

¹Ernest Carroll, How New York City Administers Its Schools--A Constructive Study (Yonkers on Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1913), p. 4.

²National Education Association, Research Division, NEA Research Memo (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 1963), p. 7; AASA Commission on School Administration in Newly Reorganized Districts, School Administration in Newly Reorganized Districts (Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators,).

³U.S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Small Schools Are Growing Larger, A Statistical Appraisal (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 12.

financing of small districts through local taxation. The effect of inadequate financing within the smaller rural districts was a school program that could not meet the educational needs of students, as cited by many researchers advocating school district reorganization.

McIntyre explained that sound reorganization (centralization) can be counted on to remove many obstacles that rob a large percentage of America's children of their right to receive a model education.¹ Roland Strolle, in his 1955 study of Michigan reorganization, recommended that schools be reorganized to achieve a better distribution of state school funding. He stated that there has been no greater influence upon the movement to reorganize school districts than the financing of the local program.² Packard felt that the greatest problem of small schools was inadequate administration and lack of control by the board. On the other hand, he indicated that a lack of communication seems to be the greatest problem of large schools.³

Lieberman explained that local controls, in practice, cannot be reconciled with the ideals of a democratic society. National survival requires policies and programs not subject

¹Kenneth E. McIntyre, "The Kind of Schools We Need," Phi Delta Kappan, CXXVIII (March, 1951), 320.

²Roland S. Strolle, "A Study of School District Reorganization in Michigan" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1955), p. 178.

³John C. Packard, "Local School District, Size vs. Local Control," The American School Board Journal, CXLVI (February, 1963), 9-10.

to local vote. The alternative to this inadequacy, he felt, would be some kind of centralization. In his book, The Future of Public Education, Lieberman was most emphatic in his endorsement of centralization by reorganizing small school districts.

Local control of education has clearly outlived its usefulness on the American scene. Practically it must give way to a system of educational controls in which local communities play ceremonial rather than policy making roles. Intellectually it is already a corpse.¹

In a study of academic achievement of students in reorganized and nonreorganized districts, Hamilton and Lowe found a great deal of evidence that indicated higher achievement is more likely to take place in larger schools. They reported that larger facilities often mean greater possibilities for specialization in remedial work, foreign languages, vocal and instrumental music, industrial arts, citizenship, health education, and a number of other specialized areas. These special services were found to be present in larger school districts, and are regarded by many people in education to be vital in a fully well-rounded and comprehensive program for students.²

Strolle, in his recommendations for Michigan in 1955, called for reorganization of small districts to make them

¹Lieberman, The Future of Public Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 34.

²Deforest Hamilton and Roberta N. Lowe, "Academic Achievements of Students in Reorganized and Non-Reorganized Districts," Phi Delta Kappan, XLIII (June, 1963), 401-404.

adequate. He used the following items as definitions for adequacy:

1. An adequate school district should provide an educational program at least through grade twelve.
2. An adequate school district should have at least 900 enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve.
3. An adequate school district should have a minimum of \$6,000,000 state equalized valuation or a per pupil valuation of \$7,000.
4. An adequate school district maintaining all twelve grades should possess the quality of social cohesiveness.¹

Anderson supported the contention that there is a critical relationship between the school organization and its social setting. The public school is particularly vulnerable to the public it serves. The school, he wrote, is expected to bring its students to a uniform, minimal level of accomplishment. Such a massive socialization can only be accomplished by protecting the school's right to make its own decisions about its methods. He argued that professional educators then could use this reasoning as a rationale to be defensive about maintaining control of the right to make their own decisions.²

Anderson pointed out, however, that excessive size of the organization is a dysfunctional characteristic. As size increases so does the impersonal treatment of students and in general the resistance to innovation. He indicated

¹Strolle, op. cit., pp. 178-180.

²James G. Anderson, Bureaucracy in Education (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 157.

studies that verify the deleterious effect of organizational size on morale, production, and attendance. Organizational dysfunction appears to be an outgrowth of the very structural features that make large organizations rational. This effect is of particular interest to educational administrators because of the trend toward larger schools.¹

In an extensive analysis of school district reorganization in Michigan in 1957, David Wood cited misunderstanding by citizens and organized opposition as factors contributing to complete statewide reorganization. He also felt lack of leadership and self-interest among intermediate and local superintendents delayed reorganization in some areas of the state.²

Factors Necessitating School District Reorganization

The major reduction in the number of school districts in the United States from over 100,000 to approximately 23,000 within less than a half century points to the fact that the problem of school district reorganization is one of major proportions. Certainly, a great number of forces have been brought to bear upon the educational structure to bring about an elimination of more than three out of every four districts within this short period of

¹Ibid., p. 158.

²David Wood, "A History of School District Reorganization in the State of Michigan" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1967), p. 210.

time. Furthermore it is a continuing process in nearly half of the states today. Among the many factors which have contributed to this movement, the following description from the Great Plains Project Report is suggested as being significantly relevant:

1. The scientific and technological revolution has necessitated new programs and new services by the public schools to meet the emerging needs of local, state and national governments, our culture and our society, the individual, and business and industry.

2. The increasingly complex, diversified and expanding needs of our way of life require more knowledge and understandings, more highly developed skills, and a higher level of understanding of one another in order to live and work in peace and harmony.

3. The dimensions of change in our socioeconomic environment demand adjustments in the educational program commensurate with that change.

4. As educational leaders seek more and more money for educational purposes, legislators are increasingly demanding excellence in programs, with increased efficiency and economy of operation.

5. Business and industry now require high-cost vocational training programs for new entrants into the labor force, and the non-college bound pupils need to possess salable skills upon graduation from high schools.

6. Legislators and the general public have come to believe that a better return could and should be secured for the state tax dollar expended for public education.

7. Costs have spiraled for all governmental services, including education.

8. The increasing disparity of wealth and the inequities of educational opportunities as a result of these disparities have compounded the problems of school finance.

9. There is an increasing demand for a larger portion of the school dollar to be assumed by the state.

10. The need has become apparent for an educational system with comprehensive training programs and services which will increasingly attract business and industry in the state.

11. The need for vocational and technical training programs at the high school and post high school levels is rapidly expanding.

12. Costs for specialized areas of education (vocational education, special education, educational services) are escalating.

13. There exists a major competitive struggle for the taxpayers' dollar (local government, state government, federal government).

14. Increasing costs are resulting from a liberalization of policies pertaining to children attending private and parochial schools.

15. The impact of federal programs in education from preschool to adult levels has emphasized the need for new developments in the curriculum, an expanded curriculum, better facilities and equipment, and a better trained professional and service staff.¹

Although it may have been very simple for the Michigan State Legislature merely to have all school districts reorganized into county or other preconceived units, this type of action may not have provided the best units to meet the educational needs of Michigan children. The Michigan Legislature passed legislation that left the initiative to intermediate committees and local citizens to form their school districts into more adequate administrative units. However, some conservative, hard-core administrators and board members fought reorganization and managed to maintain their grossly inadequate school systems.²

Sixteen criteria from the Great Plains Project Report were cited as proposed bases for determination of guidelines for school district organization:

Criterion Number 1

Needs to be met give direction to the total educational program as a service to and as an agency of the people. . . . Programs, services, and the supporting

¹Great Plains School District Organization Project, Ralph D. Purdy, project director, Guidelines for School District Organization: A Project Report (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, National Cash Register Co., 1968), p. 116. (#ED 024155.)

²Wood, op. cit., p. 211.

structure (school district organization) are established for the purpose of meeting the defined needs.

Criterion Number 2

Educational opportunities must be provided by the state for all, regardless of where they may live in the state, and regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Criterion Number 3

Educational opportunities must be equitable for all. Equitable educational opportunities provide for differences in individual pupil needs, interests, and capacities. . . .

Criterion Number 4

Comprehensive educational opportunities must be provided by the state for all the students of the state. . . . Education cannot be equitable unless there is comprehensiveness in programs and services, or in well designed and highly developed individualized instruction. . . .

Criterion Number 5

All educational programs and supporting services must be provided at an acceptable level of quality or excellence. . . . Contributing factors to this quality or excellence include: breadth and scope of program offering; competent, well-trained staff members; availability of appropriate human and material resources at the time when and place where they are needed; and a framework or structure for education that facilitates the contribution of each factor with efficiency of organization and economy of operation.

Criterion Number 6

All programs and services at all educational levels should be appropriately coordinated and articulated, both vertically and horizontally. . . .

Criterion Number 7

The structure for education must provide for an efficient organization and utilization of all appropriate human and material resources in support of comprehensive educational opportunities for all. . . .

Criterion Number 8

Economy of operation, or maximum educational returns on the dollar invested. . . .

Criterion Number 9

Size of attendance units and size of administrative service districts have relevancy to the degree that the number of pupils and the geographic area served have a direct relationship to the quality or excellence of comprehensive educational opportunities. . . .

Criterion Number 10

Education must have stability in structure to ensure continuation of desirable programs and services. The strength and values existing in established programs, services, and organizational patterns should be maintained and preserved to the degree that they contribute

positively, constructively, and optimally to the achievement of the objectives of the educational endeavor. . . .

Criterion Number 11

School district organization must provide the structure and the framework whereby the human and material resources of the state can be brought to bear. . . in the provision of comprehensive programs and services This includes a fair and equitable tax base at each level of government in support of the total educational effort.

Criterion Number 12

Demographic factors influence and give direction to structure (school district organization) for education. . . . Concentrations of people, or lack of concentrations, influence and affect the way in which comprehensive educational opportunities are to be provided for all children. . . . The structural organization must have the capacity for flexibility and adaptability to the mobility of the people it serves.

Criterion Number 13

Time/distance factors influence and affect structure and attendance centers within that structure. . . . Normally, travel time should not exceed one hour one way for approximately ninety percent of transported pupil enrollment. . . .

Criterion Number 14

There must be flexibility for change--change in needs to be met, in programs and services to be provided, and in the demographic characteristics of the state and nation. School district organization must have the capacity for flexibility in adapting to and meeting the changing needs and demands of the times.

Criterion Number 15

There must be adaptability to change. It is not enough to have flexibility for change unless there exists an adaptability to change. . . .

Criterion Number 16

Public education must be responsible to the people. This responsibility should be exercised by and through¹ the elected or appointed representatives of the people.

These criteria may be summarized as factors within several large areas of concern, such as:

- A. Financial concern
- B. Curriculum

¹Great Plains Project Report, op. cit., pp. 113-116.

C. Organization

D. Equal opportunity

E. Participation

Citizen and professional participation emerges in much of the literature as an important factor, affected not only by the size of the district in terms of number of people, but also by community units of purpose and common concern.

In impoverished West Philadelphia, seven schools are representative of a movement toward the decentralization of authority, the involvement of people in their schools, and the humanization of the educational process (the development of creative alternative approaches to traditional schools).¹

The data from Gloria Engel's study revealed that those professionals associated with the moderately bureaucratic setting are most likely and those in highly bureaucratic settings are the least likely to perceive themselves to be autonomous. Bureaucracy, she concluded, is not detrimental to professional autonomy.²

Though a considerable number of writers have indicated a need for consolidation of services, few have been precise in their estimates of optimum size or have given a

¹Young Great Society Building Foundation, Seven Schools. A Story of Community Action for Better Education by the Young Great Society Building Foundation. (Philadelphia: Young Great Society Building Foundation, 1972).

²Gloria Engel, "Professional Autonomy and Bureaucratic Organization," Administrative Science Quarterly, XV (March, 1970), 12-21.

rationale for limiting reorganization. Faber, however, reviewed a number of studies and suggested that a school district between 10,000 and 20,000 pupils would appear to be ideal. No school district can provide efficiently a full range of educational services if it has an enrollment of fewer than 10,000 pupils.¹

Emery Stoops and W. L. Rafferty in 1961 commented upon the optimum size of a school district, but did not address themselves to excessive growth or the need for decentralization of the grossly over-populated districts. They recommended, in the name of effective administrative control over all levels of public education, more efficient use of funds, equalized educational opportunity, greater equalization of funds, and reorganization of smaller districts into larger administrative units. The rationale for this move is primarily financial--taxpayers get more for their money because small units are inadequate. The authors recommended 9,800 to 10,000 students for peak efficiency of operation. In analyzing the resistance to reorganization, the point was made that "The framework of school organization in public education is built on the basic foundation of local autonomy."²

¹Charles F. Faber, "The Size of a School District," Phi Delta Kappan, XLVIII (September, 1966), 35.

²Emery Stoops and M. L. Rafferty, Jr., Practices and Trends in School Administration (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1961), p. 42.

Campbell, Cunningham and McPhee, in viewing the central cities, particularly those over 200,000, stated that we may need to break the large city school district into several legally autonomous school districts. Each of these may contain one or more high schools and several elementary schools. A city of one million, they thought, might be subdivided into five to ten school districts. The writers felt the division of large districts or some other plan for decentralization, coupled with plans to rehabilitate the central city to make it more habitable for all classes of people, would "go far toward eliminating the bureaucratic outlook among the professionals and restoring a feeling of local responsibility among lay citizens."¹

A Need for Decentralization

Cunningham expressed a belief that is seen throughout the recent literature addressed to the needs of the urban centers, that community control and decentralization are popular concerns of increasing numbers of laymen. These concerns issue from a deterioration of confidence in institutions and a desire for involvement.²

Campbell, Cunningham and McPhee recommended a consolidation of small districts--"no fewer than 2,000 pupils and 10,000 would probably be preferable"--but explained that in city districts of more than 40,000 pupils, size becomes a

¹Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 131.

²Cunningham, op. cit., p. 138.

potent variable in creating a bureaucracy almost impenetrable by citizens and unwieldy to professionals.¹

The need for school-building-level citizen participation on such issues as school facilities, curriculum, discipline, and personnel has been expressed by citizens' committees and students.² Cunningham summarized this need:

The inability of the administrative structure of the school to deal with discontent has caused school people to withdraw and to isolate themselves from their constituencies. Evidence of hostility between communities and schools is present at all levels of the school organization. The classroom teacher is frequently fearful of encounters with the public--parents, and even with students.³

Levine and Havinghurst identified five major problems and imperatives associated with metropolitan development:

1. Fragmentation in the structure of local government.
2. Socioeconomic stratification and racial segregation.
3. Inadequate social environments for middle income students in single class sections of the city and suburbs.
4. Weakening of the unifying norms which facilitate productive interaction among citizens in the metropolitan area.
5. Physical deterioration and the crisis in public finance of the metropolitan area.⁴

The concluded by saying:

¹Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 532.

²Cunningham, op. cit., p. 162.

³Ibid., p. 177.

⁴Daniel U. Levine and Robert Havinghurst, "Emerging Urban Problems and Their Significance for School Organization in the Great Plains States," June, 1968, p. 132. (Mimeographed.)

The organization in an independent society is charged with tasks it cannot do alone. The problems which are so severe in the modern metropolis are attributed not so much to lack of technical knowledge for coping with them as to the underlying attitudes and the established political arrangements which prevent us from applying this knowledge to their solution. Here then is a major challenge to the educational system.¹

Some large metropolitan districts such as New York, Chicago, or Detroit have responded to pressures for community control by creating subdivisions of districts or regions with local boards within the city's larger school authority.² This type of division was also defined by the Philadelphia Commission on Decentralization and Community Participation in its report to the Philadelphia Board of Education.

"Community control" is defined as the exercise of autonomous authority over a school system or subdivision thereof by a local school board. In the context of an urban system, it usually refers to control by a board representing a school community. Such a board has complete authority and responsibility in policy and decision making, except as restricted by state and federal laws. A central board becomes a service agency only.³

¹Great Plains Project Report, op. cit., p. 132.

²Ibid., p. 96.

³Philadelphia Commission on Decentralization and Community Participation, Report of the Commission on Decentralization and Community Participation. A Multiple Option Approach to School Community Participation, July 27, 1970. (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, National Cash Register Company, 1970). (#ED 042-843.)

In introducing the report entitled The Relationship Between Decentralization and Racial Integration, Johnson and Usdam¹ indicated a conflict between the development of subdistricts as a plan for decentralization and the movement to desegregate city schools. On the one hand, the federal government and documents such as the Coleman Report and the U.S. Civil Right Commission's Racial Isolation in the Public Schools have stressed the moral and educational obligation to pursue integration policies at all costs. On the other hand, segments of both the white and black communities are now demanding community control. Both white and black foes of integration rally behind decentralization plans for somewhat different reasons; the former because it will tend to preserve the segregated nature of the neighborhood school, and the latter because it will give the distrustful black community control of the education of its young. Urban school policy-makers are confronted with somewhat contradictory cross-currents and strategies inherent in recent proposals to revise political and administrative arrangements for the public schools.²

Large city school districts have recently faced a rising wave of demands for decentralization. Debates for decentralization can be classified into three types:

¹Carroll F. Johnson and Michael D. Usdam, eds., Equality of Educational Opportunity in the Large Cities of America. The Relationship Between Decentralization and Racial Integration (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1968), pp. 4-5. (ERIC #ED 029-388.)

²Ibid.

arguments for policy flexibility, arguments for citizen accountability, and arguments for avoiding riots.¹ Arguments against decentralization focus upon two critical problems inherent in most proposals for decentralization: racial and socioeconomic homogeneity of small units, and differential patterns for resource allocation.

The escalating demands for decentralization of large city systems reflect increasing awareness of the need to make urban public schools more responsive to the communities they serve. This laudable goal, however, often has profound implications upon efforts to integrate schools. To draw school district boundaries around relatively homogeneous areas is to reduce the opportunity for schools to introduce "different" kinds of children to each other. Recognition of this problem leads some to view decentralization proposals as calls for the "balkanization" of a city.

Acceptance of plans to decentralize large city school systems in recent months has subordinated the desegregation thrust propounded by many civil rights adherents who believe in integration as the only ultimate solution to the racial crisis. It is believed by some that proponents of the burgeoning decentralization movement in our cities have not directly faced up to its implications for integration.²

¹Ibid., pp. 4-5.

²Ibid.

Historically, attempts at decentralizing authority have been resisted by central office administrators, who have been reluctant to yield either authority or to delegate responsibility, partly because they want to keep the authority and partly because they are not confident in lower-level administrators' ability to handle it.¹ To allow for the reluctance of either the top administrator or the new recipient of power, the parameters of the new distribution of authority must be spelled out in detail to give full play to the intent and philosophy behind the transition.

The Philadelphia Commission on Decentralization and Community Participation offered plans for reforms on the school and district level in their report in 1920. On the school level, three options were suggested:

1. informal community participation in decision making.
2. advisory participation in the form of an elected or appointed committee from the community.
3. shared authority and responsibility with a local school board.²

On the district level, suggestions were made for parceling out administrative responsibilities to local boards and community groups.

The Commission believed that administrative decentralization must become a reality and that an ever-increasing number of basic decisions must be made at the individual school level with the participation of the public. The

¹Cunningham, op. cit., p. 30.

²Philadelphia Commission on Decentralization and Community Participation, op. cit.

principal and his staff are the individuals in direct daily contact with the students and are, therefore, closest to the point where learning should take place; it is they who must be responsible for educational results. Community support is needed. Communication can only take place effectively at the local level between the school and the community it serves.¹

The accountability that was once thought to have been achieved through centralization, and that is being advocated by proponents of autonomy at the local school building level, must be reconceived. The practice of selling universal, citywide goals must be reexamined, if not abandoned. In the future, similarities between citywide and neighborhood goals may perhaps develop once again. Large-scale, district-wide performance accountings mean little to the parent whose child can't read or get a job. Thus the first order of accountability is to the clients--the students and parents.²

Historically, citizen participation has had an important position. John Dewey called for enlightenment of the masses; opportunities for ideas to take root and spread through the population; and improvement in the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion. He urged the creation of a public which is informed,

¹Ibid.

²Cunningham, op. cit., p. 30.

interested, and articulate on school problems and school affairs.¹

Decentralization and Effective Management of the Schools

Researchers who recognize the need for decentralization to allow for citizen participation have also noted that effective management practices require that administrators at various levels of the organizational hierarchy of large school districts be included in the operational mainstream. A great number of authorities in the field of organizational management have stressed the importance of the delegation of authority for effective organization and the development of a broad basis for decision making throughout the various levels of the administrative structure. If citizen participation allows parents and students to share in the decision-making process at the local level, the local school administrator at the building level must be able to respond; to be unable to act would be intolerable. Decentralization places more of the burden of educational change at the grass roots.

Donald Thomas, in a paper delivered to the American Management Association in 1971, argued that effective school management requires the decentralization of management functions from the superintendent level to that of the building principal. Thomas noted that to an educational

¹John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927).

administrator, survival is related to the ability to deal with conflict. Principals, he noted, must become the major conflict managers. Conflict must be dealt with at its lowest level and change must be produced that is of maximum benefit to those affected by that change.¹

The ability to act, however, allows the immediate solution to a great many frustrating problems at the building level. Johnson and Weiss reported in their study that a positive relationship was demonstrated between psychological participation in decision making and general job satisfaction for secondary school principals.²

Chris Argyris, in discussing the decentralization of large firms, stated:

Fundamentally decentralization means pushing down authority and responsibility to the lowest possible level. The aim is to have decisions made at the lowest possible point in the organization.³

¹Donald Thomas, "Decentralization as a Management Tool" (paper presented at the American Management Association Annual Conference and Exposition, New York City, August 3-5, 1971) (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, National Cash Register Co., 1971). (#ED 057-482.)

²Dale A. Johnson and Donald J. Weiss, Middle Management Decision Making and Job Satisfaction: The Relationship Between Participation in Decision Making, Personality Characteristics and Job Satisfaction of Building Principals (Minneapolis: Educational Research and Development Council of the Twin Cities Metropolitan, Inc., 1971). (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, National Cash Register Co., 1971). (#ED 056367.)

³Chris Argyris, Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness (Homewood, Ill: The Dorsey Press, Inc., 1962).

H. Thomas James noted that responsibility can be delegated by law, by executive action, or even by custom to other than elected officials. He recognized that professionals and technicians are also responsible in their conduct to the standards of their respective professional and technical groups. This responsibility runs concurrently and may be even of higher priority in the event of direct conflict.¹

Argyris pointed out, however, that decentralization occurring within the context of the traditional pyramidal structure does not mean that the people "on top" may delegate their accountability. If someone below makes a poor decision, the people on top are still held responsible.²

For decentralization to be effective, the various levels of the organization must be staffed by technically and professionally competent individuals. The organization must also have solid policies that spell out the lines of communication and authority.³

For decentralization to work, open superior-subordinate relations are required. Where trust between top management and subordinates is high and where conformity, fear, and dependence are held at a low level, experimentation and

¹H. Thomas James, et al., Excellence in Administration: The Dynamics of Leadership, Educational Administration Monograph #7 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, School of Education), p. 35.

²Argyris, op. cit., p. 3.

³Cunningham, op. cit., p. 30.

risk-taking are undertaken by members of the organization.¹ Activity of a highly creative nature then may be generated to bring about solutions to problems facing the organization.

Bernard defined a formal organization as a unit that must be treated as a whole because each part is related significantly to every other part included in it.² Bernard also discussed the importance of the relationship between individuals and the total organization:

The survival of the organization depends upon the maintenance of an equilibrium within the system. This equilibrium is primarily internal, a matter of proportions between the elements, but it is ultimately and basically an equilibrium between the system and the total situation external to it. This external equilibrium has two terms in it. First, the effectiveness of the organization which comprises the relevance of its purpose to the environmental situation and, second, its efficiency, which comprises the interchange between the organization and individuals.³

Klein and Maher viewed the autonomy of the individual within an organization in making decisions to be an important determinant of job satisfaction. They reasoned that since decision making is such an integral part of the leadership role, the concomitants of decision-making autonomy should show up more markedly among the management population. They suggested that lack of autonomy or influence can lead to frustration and conflict for the manager, and indicated that the effects of participation in decision making may

¹Argyris, op. cit., p. 4.

²Chester Bernard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 73.

³Ibid., p. 83.

vary as a function of individual differences in personality and in need fulfillment. The study reported by Klein and Maher in 1970 indicated that (1) decision-making autonomy itself is a critical factor in terms of minimizing perceived conflict, and (2) the relationship between lack of decision-making autonomy and conflict strongly underscores the importance of autonomy to managers in carrying out their assigned duties.¹

The pyramidal organization, as described by Likert, results in tight, hierarchical control. Decisions are made at the top and orders flow down.² Openlander drew a comparison between the pyramidal organization and a decentralized administrative structure. He noted that under the pyramidal structure the authority and responsibility for the operation of the school system are lodged with the superintendent. He delegates to his immediate subordinates some of his responsibility and authority, and holds them accountable for specific performance. They, in turn, delegate part of their authority and responsibility to their immediate subordinates; in this way delegation proceeds down through the organization. Authority and influence are seen as coming from the top downward.

¹Stuart M. Klein and John R. Maher, "Decision-Making Autonomy and Perceived Conflict Among First Level Management," Personnel Psychology, XXIII (Winter, 1970), 481-492.

²Rensis Likert, New Patterns of Management (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961), pp. 97-118.

In the decentralized administrative structure, influence comes from all levels of the organization--up, down, and horizontally. Consequently, various levels in the organization are not as likely to be thought of in terms of a greater or lesser amount of authority.¹

Smith noted a prevalent confusion about the meaning of the terms "centralization," "decentralization," and "delegation." He wrote that the confusion seemed to result from the fact that these words lack precision and definitiveness. Yet they are used to discuss relationships and arrangements that can be understood only if described in most specific terms.² In a further definition of these terms as they apply to the business world, Smith wrote:

. . . Geographical decentralization of physical properties is not necessarily accompanied by a general downward delegation of management powers. These are two separate concepts and the distinction should be observed. Delegation appears to be a better word than decentralization in most instances when reference is made to a distribution of authority, powers and responsibilities within the management hierarchy of a company.³

As a further comparison of the organizational needs of the business world to those of schools, Baker and France listed the following reasons for preferring decentralization:

¹Stuart L. Openlander, "The Development of an Administrative Structure in a Middle Sized City School District" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1968), p. 48.

²George Albert Smith, Jr., Managing Geographically Decentralized Companies (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 18.

³Ibid.

1. Increase in the size of corporations.
2. Increase in number of industries represented in products.
3. Increase in the number of plants with geographical decentralization.
4. To reduce decision-making burden of top management.
5. To permit greater accountability by division.
6. To facilitate daily operation by prompt on the spot decisions.
7. To facilitate adjustments to local conditions.
8. To develop men faster.¹

The question of how much power to delegate down the line has been one of the most debated issues in the business literature. Smith noted that many executives pay at least lip service to the idea of a "democratic" organization, but few are willing to foot the bill they fear may be involved if they give subordinates more authority. He wrote:

The cost of delegation might be regarded as a long term investment in management training, in improved morale, in increased energy and initiative among all ranks that should pay off in an abundance of new yet critically scrutinized ideas.²

Applying these concerns to the school setting, it would seem that an understanding of the relationships between the members of an organization and insight into organizational theory would lead an administrator toward greater sensitivity to successful delegation of authority. Jacob Getzels compared the understanding provided by an appropriate theory to the alternate routes exhibited by a map. This understanding leaves the administrator with the greatest freedom

¹Helen Baker and Robert France, Centralization and Decentralization in Industrial Relations (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 20.

²Smith, op. cit., p. 18.

of movement and opportunity to apply inventiveness and ingenuity to the practice of his art.¹

Openlander commented that the traditional division of line and staff responsibilities is breaking down as organizational problems become more complex. He felt a change to a decentralized organization would allow all members to contribute their specialized knowledge and skills. The contributions of line and staff would vary with the problems and with the resources each possessed. He explained that under decentralization line personnel would not have sole responsibility and authority to make decisions without staff advice. The line personnel would have authority and responsibility for building a highly effective system through which the best decisions would be made with both line and staff contributing.²

Thomas emphasized the need to give the building administrator in a decentralized system the tools he needs to solve problems. He wrote that decentralization must be comprehensive in the school system to allow problems to be solved at the lowest level. He called for decentralization of budgets, personnel selection, curriculum development, contract implementation, policy formulation, and evaluation.

¹Jacob W. Getzels, "Theory and Practice in Educational Administration, An Old Question Revisited," in Administrative Theory as a Guide to Action, ed. by Ronald F. Campbell and James M. Lipman (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1960), p. 39.

²Openlander, op. cit., p. 49.

He made an important point that decentralization of management is possible only when there is decentralization of management resources.¹

Cunningham viewed principals and their aides in the decentralized city school system much the same as superintendents in rural and smaller suburban districts. He predicted that building-level leaders will no longer have places to hide, nowhere to pass the buck; they will only be able to remain on the scene and slug it out. "And that's probably the way it ought to be."²

Cunningham went on to list the following design imperatives for viable decentralization in the urban school setting:

1. IT MUST BE RESPONSIVE TO THE PARTICIPATION IMPULSE. We must find ways to liberate participation and allow it to be productive.

2. IT MUST LEAD TO IMPROVED EDUCATION. Building the community and strengthening education are not conflicting objectives, grass roots support is appealing but it must lead to better learning.

3. IT MUST MEET EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY MANDATE. Society must avoid creating new educational delivery systems which are even more discriminatory than what we have known in the past.

4. IT MUST ACCOMMODATE LAY-PROFESSIONAL ANTAGONISMS. We should be searching for ways to bridge the confidence gap and to re-establish positive images of professional integrity.

5. IT MUST BE FEASIBLE FINANCIALLY. Reforms have financial implications. The school official's role is important in applying judgment to reform ideas.

6. IT MUST BE ACHIEVABLE POLITICALLY. There are genuine political problems to be considered. Some are matters of strategy, others are legal. Chages

¹Thomas, op. cit., p. 4.

²Cunningham, op. cit., p. 29.

that effect participation and control will arouse public interest.¹

Conclusions

Rosenthal added emphasis to these imperatives for decentralization by pointing out that public participation in school policy formulation is attenuated by the lack of information to the public, and little opportunity for participation. While parent organizations are involved in individual schools with local issues, the centralized organization of the school system is a serious deterrent to communication between the public and the policy-makers. Public education policy has become the province of the professional bureaucrat.²

For the education administrator, survival is related to his ability to deal with conflict. The solution of problems and confrontations at the building level strengthens the position of the building administrator, and thereby that of the superintendent and others on his staff. Although the choice is seldom between right or wrong, or win or lose, those in management positions in schools must find answers to problems that reduce the need for conflict, solutions that will meet the needs of the participants and produce changes that will allow the greatest benefits and satisfaction

¹Ibid., p. 191.

²Alan Rosenthal, ed., Governing Education. A Reader on Politics, Power and Public School Policy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Anchor Books, 1969).

to those involved. This task, then, calls for more effective leadership and more sensitive management strategies.¹

A move to decentralize management within the larger districts would seem to serve the needs of the public as well as provide a more sensitive administrative structure. A design is needed that will better meet the needs of professionals within the schools and serve as a vehicle to provide the optimum program needs of their clients--the students.

The literature demonstrates dramatically the historical shift from small, inefficient school districts that were unable to provide adequately for the education of their citizens to larger, more efficient units of organization. Reorganization of small districts was resisted by those who felt a loss of local control. Some authors, most notably Lieberman, did not recognize the desire for input by the lay public as a critical need. His concern focused upon the development of the professionalism of educators.

Writers exploring the dilemma of the large city schools, however, have advocated the development of an organization that could be more sensitive to the pressing needs of the growing urban crisis and more responsive to the complex and diverse society that they attempt to serve.

There was considerable evidence in the literature that the public's demands upon the schools for a voice and

¹Thomas, op. cit., p. 8.

the need for a more responsive and less bureaucratic managerial structure could be met as many city schools experienced some form of decentralization. Many larger cities have acted by forming subdistricts governed by local boards of education. Some, notably Philadelphia, also have advocated some form of decentralization of management functions to the school building level as well as forming local units of control.

Local problem solving and "on the firing line" decision making were determined to be most important factors in creating an effective organizational pattern, not only by Smith, who wrote about decentralization in business, but also by Thomas, who emphasized the importance of giving the building-level school administrator the managerial tools he needs to solve problems.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONAL PLAN
OF THE LANSING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The literature as illustrated in Chapter II indicated a strong support for the concept of professional autonomy as a means of creating a viable decentralization of management functions within an urban school district. In the Lansing Public Schools during the period from 1971-73, under the leadership of Dr. I. Carl Candoli, the organizational pattern of the district was considerably modified to simplify and clarify lines of responsibility. The restructuring also defined the management roles of the various administrative divisions and departments.

As Cunningham indicated, such definition of responsibility¹ is a highly important step in any decentralization of responsibility. During this period of reorganization, Dr. Candoli defined the concept of support services as a means of perceiving the role of the central office personnel in their relationship to building-level operational activities. In this chapter the organizational pattern of the Lansing schools is described--a pattern designed to foster such programs as personnel services, budgeting and finance,

¹Cunningham, op. cit., p. 30.

planning curriculum, building maintenance, evaluative services, and pupil personnel services to be conducted within a pyramidal organizational structure and yet nurture the concept of professional autonomy. The changes in roles are designed to effect a decentralization of management functions within the Lansing schools.

Within the context of professional autonomy, decision making is placed at the lowest possible level in the organizational structure--at the local school building level for most functions--with the raw material for arriving at the best decisions being supplied through the resources of the various support services throughout the district. To describe the delivery system for these services, the organizational plan of the Lansing Schools and the function of each of the major divisions will be described. To gain insight into the way each division operates as a support service to building autonomy, interviews were conducted with division and department heads. These interviews are reported in this chapter as a means of documenting the way professional autonomy is facilitated within the various divisions of the district.

The Administrative Organization of the Lansing Schools

Figure 1 depicts the organizational chart for the Lansing Public Schools.

In an analysis of the organization chart, an outside observer would see only a pyramidal pattern of organization,

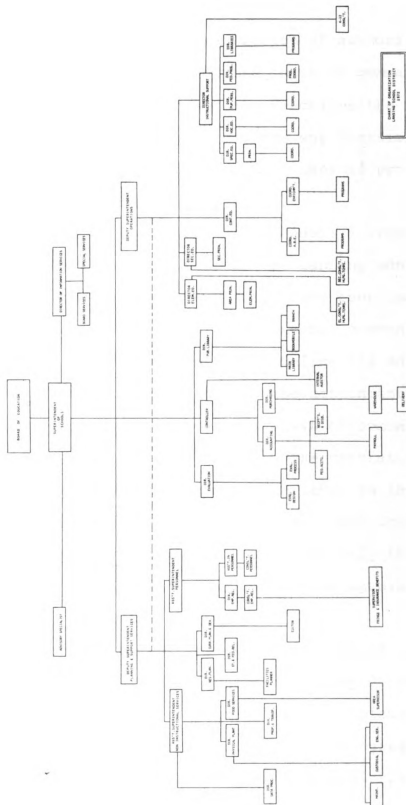


Figure 1.--Organizational chart for the Lansing Public Schools.

one that would indicate a centralization of authority with the superintendent at the top of the chain of command. Only when one looks beyond the titles and describes the roles of the various levels of authority and the way decision making is delegated, may the concept--the core idea of professional autonomy--be perceived.

From the time Superintendent Candoli introduced the concept of professional autonomy to the Lansing administrative staff, definitions of management roles have been tempered with the posture that each individual school community within the system should have the freedom to define its educational objectives and be able to act toward the attainment of objectives without going through the chain of command for decision making or permission to act. The central theme of the thrust for autonomy at the building level is the conviction, held by those implementing the plan, that the educational program for students can be improved only through the collaborating efforts of teachers, staff specialists, administrators, parents, and students.¹

The role of the central office is defined as that of a support agency to the local school community. The central office assists those at the building level in planning and development and in providing alternative strategies to help develop appropriate evaluation, to provide resources, and to hold the local unit responsible for meeting its locally

¹Carl Candoli, "Total Building Autonomy and System-Wide Responsibility," loc. cit.

developed objectives. In this context, professional autonomy is a delegation of authority, a sharing of responsibility focused at the local community--the school building--level, where the building principal and the school staff working in close contact with students and parents are most sensitive to the local school's needs.

Under the superintendencies of William Manning and Stephen Partington, as described in Chapter I, the Lansing schools experienced a proliferation of new divisions and departments. This development came as an attempt to meet the pressing need to accommodate for the ever-increasing demands to meet the educational deficiencies of an urban population. To simplify the organizational pattern and to clarify lines of responsibility, these departments and divisions were reorganized under Dr. Candoli in 1972-73 into three major divisions: Business Services, Planning, and Operations.

An understanding of the organization of these units and the dynamics of their operation is needed to gain insight into the operation of professional autonomy as an innovation to effective management.

The Finance Division

The Finance Division, under the 1972 organizational chart, remained directly responsible to the superintendent through the office of the Controller.

In the past, the school business administrator traditionally acted as an agent of control. The budget

was developed from school year to school year, balancing income and expenditures. The business administrator acted as an overseer of the budget to see that operations were carried out within the structure of the established budget document. The result was a tremendous centralizing effect that gave a great amount of decision-making power to the business administrator, power that affected program changes, and priorities in the acquisition of supplies, equipment, and services. Teachers and principals were frustrated and resentful of the system because of their exclusion from the decision-making process. They and the public they served expressed a strong desire to be included in the process of allocating resources and determining the way in which these resources would be spent.

Prior to the development of building autonomy, much of the information about the budget was guarded by those holding positions of responsibility. Some administrators were so secretive that it was difficult to assess where the district stood financially. To bring about change, it became necessary to break down the old system of managing finance. If those at the building level were left without decision making on money matters, any plan for autonomy and shared responsibility would be doomed to failure. As it stood, so much control was assumed by those at the director level or by departmental consultants in the various subject matter areas that they controlled everything that involved the expenditure of funds, even to the most minute details--

the kind of paper, the brand of paper clips, the color of the construction paper, and teaching supplies and equipment.

It was felt that this rigid control of building needs by central office personnel needed to be broken down. The money had to be taken away from those who had it and given to those at the school level so they could do what they wanted with it without the restraints of remote-control decision making.

Some district-wide wervices were still held at the consultant and director level, such as controlling funds needed to purchase items of equipment that would be shared by several schools or staff development funds to organize in-service activities at the district level.

The idea of building autonomy required a shift in thinking from using funds for the school district program to placing funds at the local level to be spent for meeting program objectives at the building level.

The overriding philosophy of the Lansing schools' move to building autonomy was predicated upon the premise that decisions affecting the activities and program of an individual school or a classroom cannot be made at the central office. This, then, is the philosophy as it was introduced into the business office and is reflected in the way the financial operation within the district is conducted.

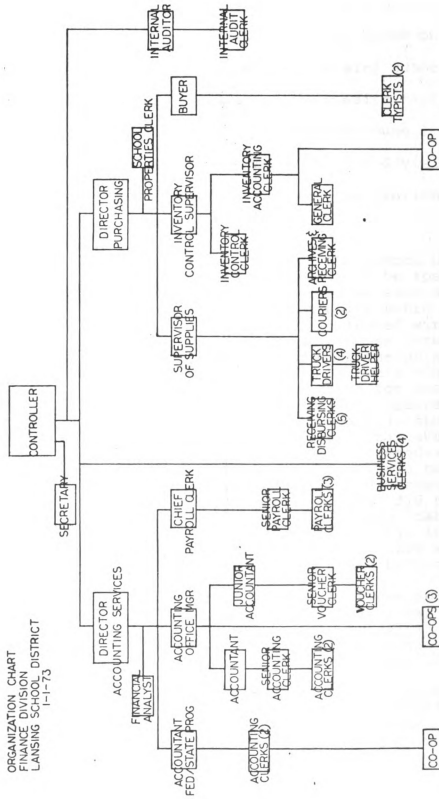


Figure 2.--Organization chart of the Finance Division of the Lansing Schools.

Following is an analysis of the organization and decentralization in the Finance Division, based on an interview with the Controller of the Lansing schools. The writer conducted a taped interview with Keith Kauffman,¹ Controller for the Lansing Public Schools, June 1, 1973. The question discussed was: "How does your division accommodate and promote the concept of decentralization through professional autonomy?"

Money is allocated to each of the school buildings in the district on a per pupil basis to be spent to meet the program needs as determined in each school. This foundation allowance (the school's basic allocation for supplies and equipment) is distributed within the local school through a bargaining process between the teachers and departments working with the principal. Secondary school students and also parents are brought into the process of setting priorities for the purchase of equipment and the funding of various programs.

When the process was first introduced, the staff in the various schools were concerned that available funds would not be sufficient to cover immediate building needs and that little or no money would be available for capital improvements. It was found, however, that as the first year neared an end, schools did have surplus funds to carry over for future use, funds that could be programmed for the future to purchase large items of equipment or to make textbook adoptions that would be too expensive to come from the school's budget in a single year.

Special Education and Vocational Education at the senior high level are excluded from the local school budget because funding is from categorical aid at the State level and, therefore, they do not participate in the basic funding (foundation allowance) of the individual school.

With the change from centralized budgeting to building autonomy, the activity of the business office increased tremendously. Because the teachers in the various schools no longer went through the subject matter consultant for purchasing, almost immediately the various supply houses and vendors were in the

¹Keith Kauffman, personal interview conducted on June 1, 1973.

schools talking to teachers. The business office was flooded with requests to purchase materials from all over the country, many with whom the district had never transacted business previously.

The new challenge was met, however, by the purchasing department with very little reorganization and with no increase in personnel. The change from centralized to decentralized decision making in the budget process resulted in a great increase in the number of separate supply accounts in the district--a change from 2,000 accounts to 11,000 accounts.

Orders for most supplies are still placed out for bids to various vendors as had been the practice previously. Materials are then delivered to the district warehouse and because of the great increase in the number of different suppliers, and the need to distribute to teachers in the individual buildings, the demands upon the supply department were multiplied many times over. It was necessary to add an additional delivery truck to meet the increased demands for distribution.

The Changes in Accounting Services

To facilitate the accounting process, there is an input side of the accounting procedure which records and processes all of the vendors' invoices for the orders that have been placed and delivered. The output to the system tells the schools on a weekly basis how much was spent, how much is outstanding, and what the balance is in each of the accounts.

With the increase in the activity in purchasing and supply, the demands placed upon the accounting department grew as well. There was a demand at the building level for up-to-date reporting of the status of the various accounts for which they were responsible. In the past, the accounting procedure did not include reports to building-level personnel--neither the amount that they were allocated nor the amount that was left throughout the course of a fiscal year.

The accounting process was modified to include reports to the schools that reported current standings on all accounts for which school personnel are responsible on a weekly basis. On a bi-weekly basis, detailed reports are sent from the accounting department to the local buildings. The report details the expenditures made by the school, lists the items that were charged to each account, and gives a summary of the status of the account. The report consists of an account number, an account title, and the amount of the appropriation as determined by the principal and his staff in distributing the funds within the building. The report lists the incumbrance of each account indicating that an order has been placed, an expenditure column which

states the order that have been purchased and have been delivered and, subsequently, paid for. Finally, a balance for the individual account is indicated on the report.

The appropriations within the building are regularly up-dated as information is reported--accounts are adjusted as requested by the principal to accommodate for differences in predicted costs and actual costs as reported by the accounting department. If, for example, a school allocated \$500 for the art department and it was later found that their needs were for \$600, the principal then has complete authority, working with his staff, to adjust the appropriation during the year. This could be done by taking money from a general appropriation or reserve account established in each school's budget or by shifting funds from other accounts within the building. In the science department, where perhaps money was available because of some supplies costing less than were predicted or where some items were not available and thus were not purchased, money might then be available to shift to the art department. However, if adjustments are made, they must be made within the building--all funds for supplies and equipment are out in the buildings and none are available from the central office.

Allocating money to the building for building-level decisions on purchasing is not designed to save the district money. The same money is being spent but it is felt by school officials it is being spent more wisely and for materials that are really needed, and that will afford a better school program for students. Decisions under building autonomy regarding the purchase of instructional materials should be made at the building level where each building's needs differ depending upon the populations of that school's community.

Some areas of expenditure are still held at a district level and remain centralized. Facility maintenance, custodial services, purchase or maintenance of custodial supplies, and equipment repairs are examples of some costs to the district that are still controlled at the central office. It is felt that these can be better controlled centrally and the expertise needed in such areas in most cases is not part of the building principal's experience. Some, however, feel that control of the custodial services should be decentralized to the building level, and perhaps it will be in the future as the district gains more experience with autonomy.

Personnel expenditures are still directed from the central office, although the decisions for hiring are made

at the building level. This will be explored more completely in an interview reported subsequently in this chapter.

The Planning Division

The following description of the structure and operation within the Planning Division is based on an interview with Dr. Robert Chamberlain, Deputy Superintendent for Planning for the Lansing Schools, and on an interview with Dr. David Schulert, Director of Curriculum for the District. They were asked to discuss the question: "How is the concept of professional autonomy promoted within the organization and operation of the Planning Division and within the Curriculum Department?"

The planning function within the Lansing District at the present time as contrasted with the former organization of the district conceives planning as a discrete and separate function with the organizational plan. In a survey conducted by Dr. Chamberlain to explore the concept of planning as a separate function within a school district, it was found that only a few districts in the nation have a separately organized planning division--The Cincinnati School District being one with a high level of development in this area.

In the Lansing district the planning function has been allocated the pre-eminence of a separate division. The major change for planning in the reorganization of the district was to indicate in the structure of the organizational plan that for every situation and for every department there are two functions, a planning function and an operational function.

The system for planning is organized so that each department as well as each school is charged with short-, medium-, and long-range planning. Short range is defined as 0-2 years; medium, 2-5 years; and long-range planning 5-20 years. Departments and schools are to report [to the Planning Division] short-, medium- and long-range planning periodically in the course of a school year. This prompts the school to think about itself as it never has before, to see the direction in

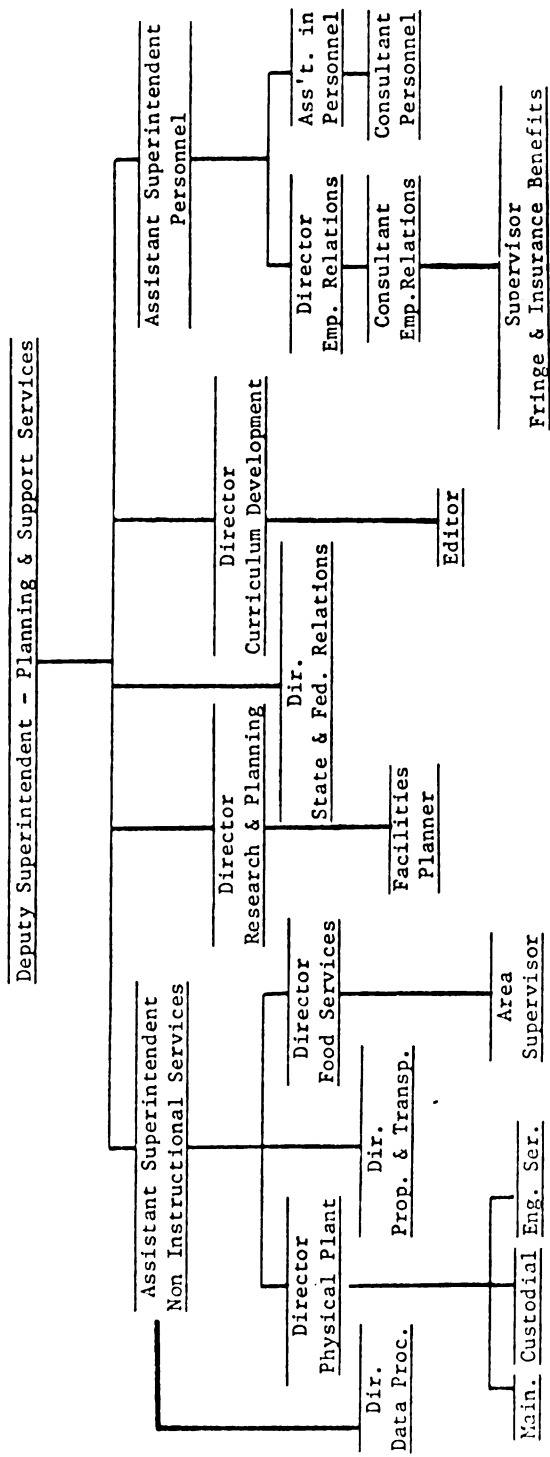


Figure 3.--Organization chart of the Planning Division of the Lansing Public Schools.

which it is going in financing, instruction, staffing, and the student projection for the future; and also, the nature of the enrollment. Schools then may view the way these factors affect the program needs of the school and predict staffing patterns that would be needed to best serve the community as these changes evolve. The planning function in the district, in viewing the needs of an individual school, then extends itself into the local school through a local planning council made up of teachers, students, parents, and building principals.

As the composition of the community is modified or the enrollment increases or decreases or as society itself changes, then the school, through an organized and sensitive planning structure, is able to plan to serve the needs of its clients.

Assessment of the needs of the community by a school staff can be paralleled in the business community where competition dictates a sensitivity to change. No business institution is alive and prospering today that overlooked the value of planning. Those that dropped by the wayside are the ones that were not sensitive to the changes in society, the demands of the public, and the purchasing power of its customers. An example could be drawn from the foods industry as illustrated by the impact of McDonald's or other fast service establishments. Banking, too, is an example, with the introduction of the drive-in bank, or in entertainment with the popularity of drive-in theaters and the supermarket concept. Those who were successful were those who could predict the needs and desires of the public and adapt.

To include such planning as a part of the school organization is a new idea for education. A building principal working with his staff and community can have the focus of such planning at the local school level.

The C.I.C.

The local school, then, through an effective planning system that includes the concerned parties within the school--administration, teachers, students, and parents--can develop a sensitivity to the needs of the school.

The Community Involvement Committee, as the local planning unit is called, ties in with local building autonomy to determine the needs of students and functions in a way to provide input for projecting future needs. This sensitivity, hopefully, then, along with data collected on a district-wide level, will allow a school principal to make decisions on what to do, when to do it, and how it is to be done. If a building principal has this kind of information available to him and can project it into the future, rather than only responding to immediate crises, he will be able to work toward program and staff needs to accommodate for the conditions as they develop.

If a junior high school, for example, draws its population from a changing neighborhood and it can be shown that in the future a predominately lower class, inner-city clientele will be the projected enrollment, then perhaps teachers who will be able to provide instruction in remedial skills in such areas as reading and mathematics should be included in future staffing plans to accommodate for the projected need. The same needs could be further accommodated in planning for building improvement and in future acquisition of teaching materials. The projected change could mean the addition of support services such as social workers and counselors assigned to the school staff.

Centralized Planning Functions

Planning in the area of building changes or in building maintenance remains centralized, with input concerning needs coming from the local schools. Furniture and equipment allocation also remains centralized because of the need to shift classroom furniture from building to building as enrollment changes or as school program practices change. If, for example, a school has a listening center that is not being used it should be shifted to a school where it can be put to use rather than to allow it to remain idle.

Planning for building maintenance and repair remains a centralized function because there is considerable expertise in personnel at the district level that would not be available at the building level. The district has on its staff two engineers whose responsibilities are in the area of maintenance and facility improvement as well as having staff whose assignment is in the area of school plant planning. Construction contracts are let centrally rather than bidding for separate building projects locally. The rationale for this centralized control is simply that costs are held down by planning and contracting several jobs together. Simply the time required to work with contractors and architects requires the use of specialized personnel whose primary responsibility is in the area of school plant planning and improvement.

Planning within the district, then, is viewed as a combination of centralized and decentralized services. As the planning role is conceived within the district, it is a most important role in the total operation of the line operations of the school system and operates as a staff function. As a support service to the school, the planning staff gather information, analyze data, supply information to others in the district, and involve other staff, community, and students to produce long-term and short-term plans for incorporation by personnel in the operation division.

Although the planning function and the operations function can hardly be conducted separately from one another, operations personnel have little time to devote to any concerted effort in planning activities. In the Lansing secondary schools one assistant principal, the assistant for curriculum and instruction, is viewed as a liaison person at the building level to work with the planning division in tying central office planning services to the on-going program within the local school.

The following charts illustrate the planning model as it has evolved within the Lansing District as the needs of the district are identified and priorities are developed through the involvement of community, staff, and students. Short-, medium-, and long-range plans develop and are operationalized as they become feasible. (See Figures 4 and 5.)

The following procedure is included as one illustration of the way local school and community people are included in the process of facilities and school plant improvement.*

Responsibilities for Facilities
Planning and Construction

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Staff</u>
1. Program Identification, Trends, and Projections	Assistant Superintendent for Planning - Director of Curriculum
2. Preliminary Education Specifications, Including Equipment and Furniture Specifications	Director of Research and Planning - Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services
3. Facility Development Program (Includes Working * <u>With Building Staff on Plans for Renovations and Modernization</u>)	Director of Research and Planning - Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services - Community Involvement Committee
4. Preliminary Project Cost Estimate	Director of Physical Plant
5. Bond Application	Controller - Director of Research and Planning

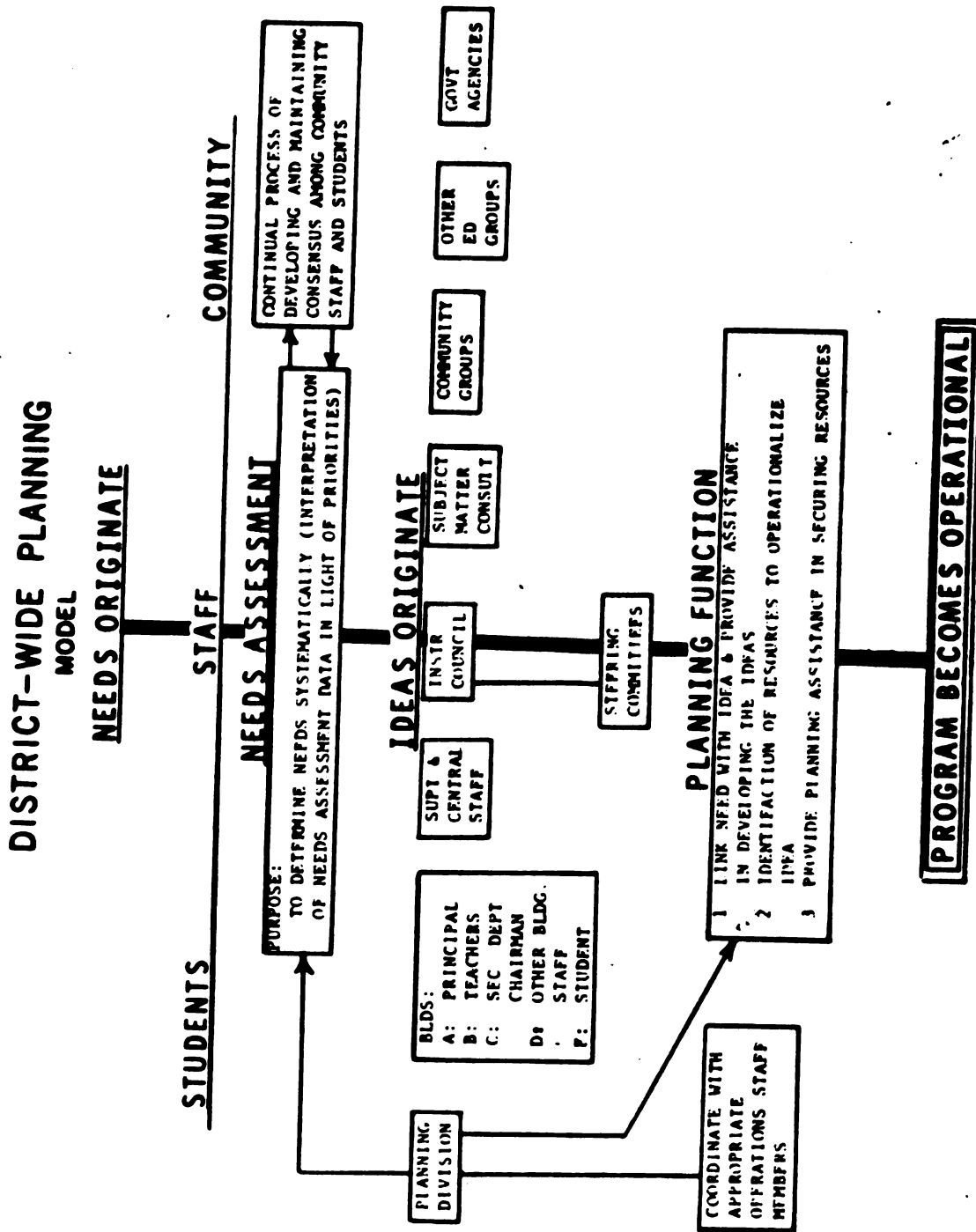


Figure 4.--District-wide planning model.

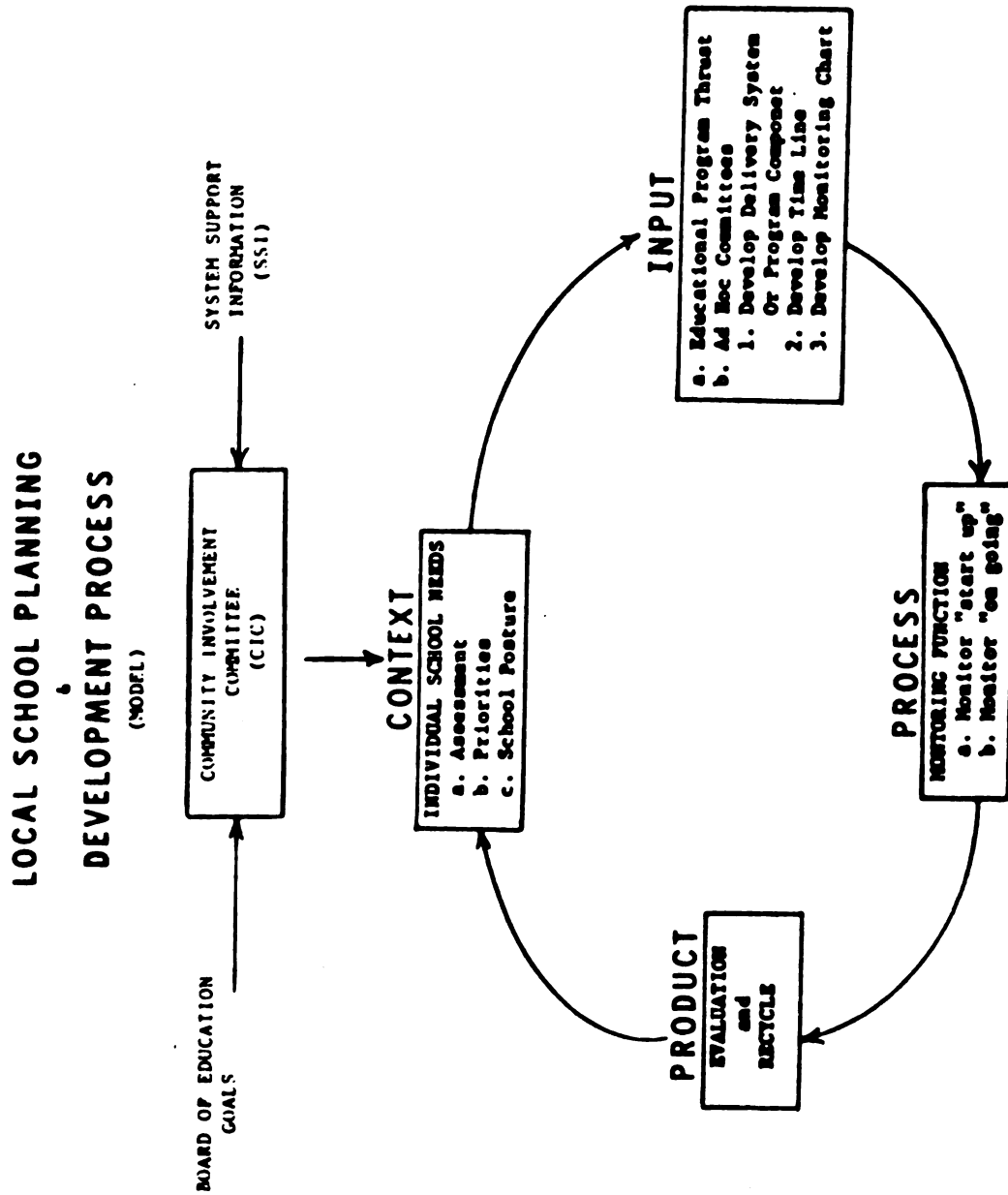


Figure 5.--Local school planning and development process model.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6. Final Education Specifications and Schematic Development; Review of Cost Estimates | Director of Research and Planning - Architect
Director of Research and Planning - Director of Physical Plant - Architect |
| 7. Identification & Verification of Funds | Director of Research and Planning - Controller |
| 8. Presentation of Educational Specifications & Schematics to Planning Division, Superintendent's Staff and Board | Director of Research and Planning |
| 9. Development of Preliminary Plans | Director of Research and Planning - Director of Physical Plant - Architect |
| * <u>Progress Report to Community Involvement Committee and Local School Staff</u> | Director of Research and Planning |
| Budget Verification Presentation | Director of Research and Planning - Controller
Director of Research and Planning - Director of Physical Plant |
| 10. Development of Working Drawings | Director of Physical Plant - Architect |
| Review and Presentation | Director of Physical Plant - Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services |
| 11. Receive and Analyze Bids | Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services |
| Presentation for Board Approval | Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services |
| 12. Contracts with Architects and Contractors (Including Change Orders) | Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services |
| 13. Construction Supervision | Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services - |
| Support Staff | Director of Physical Plant
School Plant Engineer - Clerk of the Works |
| 14. Approval of Construction Invoices and Final Project Acceptance | Assistant Superintendent for Non-Instructional Services |

The Operations Division

The Deputy Superintendent for Operations heads the day-to-day operations for all instructional programs and those other areas that provide various forms of instructional support to local building principals, teachers, and, ultimately, to students.

The Operations Division is divided into four principal areas: Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Continuing Education, and Instructional Support. Instructional Support is further divided into five departments: Special Education, Vocational Education, Pupil Personnel, Federal Programs, and Libraries.

A description of the organization for the Operations Division was taken from a presentation given by Dr. Matthew Prophet, Deputy Superintendent for Operations for the Lansing Schools.¹

Elementary Education Department

The Department of Elementary Education is directly involved with the programs, plans, and operations of the 49 elementary schools of the Lansing School District, as well as coordinating the teacher training programs in elementary schools.

Secondary Education Department

The Secondary Education Department is directly involved in the planning and operations of the nine secondary schools, the Academic Interest Center, the Re-Entry Program, and the secondary TTT component. There are presently approximately 15,000 students enrolled in the nine secondary schools.

1. There are four senior high schools ranging from Hill at 1,275 pupils to Eastern at 1,968 pupils.

¹Dr. Matthew Prophet, Deputy Superintendent for Operations (mimeographed paper delivered to school personnel, May, 1973).

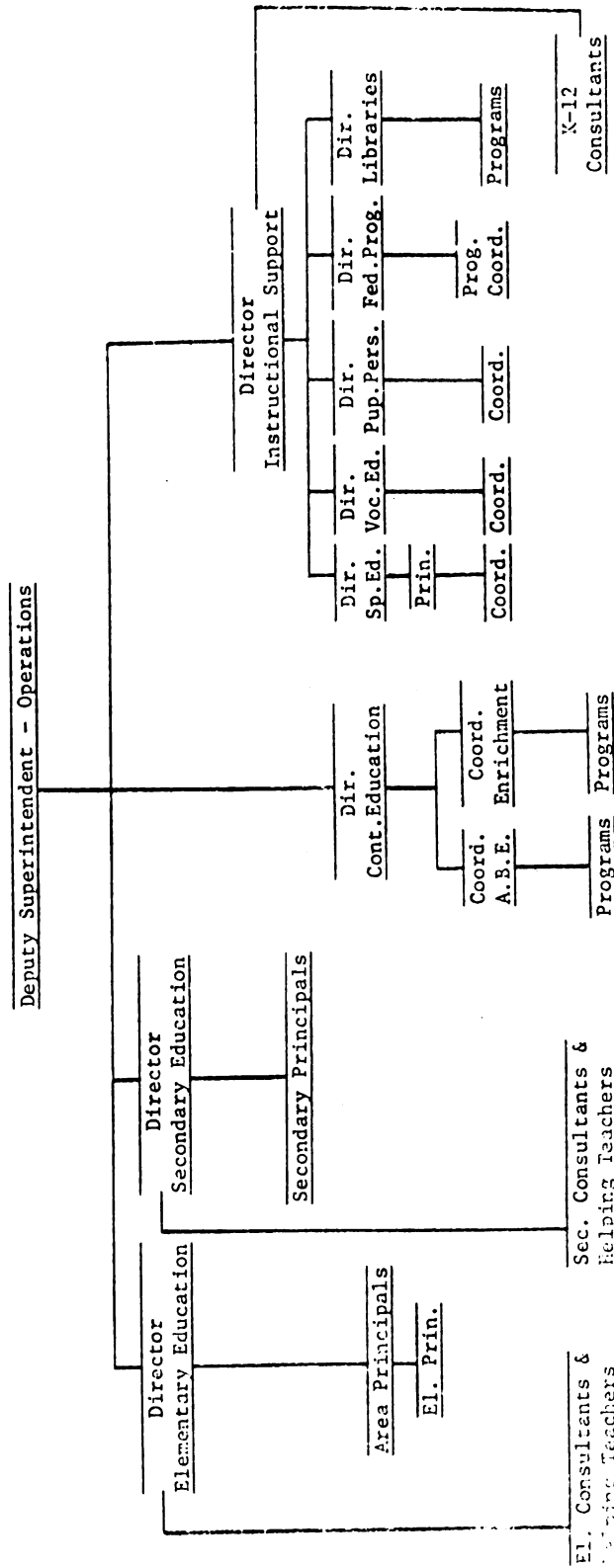


Figure 6.--Organization chart of the Operations Division of the Lansing Public Schools.

2. There are five junior high schools ranging from Walter French at 1,126 pupils to Rich at 1,603 pupils.

3. The Academic Interest Center is an extension of the senior high program in home schools. It is governed by a council composed of home principals, home assistant principals for instruction, home counseling coordinators, and one other home counselor per school plus the Dean of the Center, Director of Secondary Education, and the Director of Curriculum.

4. There are, at present, five centers in the Re-Entry Program--two servicing the needs of junior high and three servicing the needs of senior high. It is an alternative education program supplementing the secondary schools. Its clientele, for some reason or other, do not fit in the regular school pattern. They may be there on a short-term basis and return to the regular program or may be more long range and finish a definite alternative program for the pupil.

5. The secondary TTT component is a joint program between M.S.U. and the Lansing School District with emphasis on improving teacher education.

Examples of a variety of innovations developing in the Lansing Schools are listed below. They are in no way complete or indicative of the wide range of secondary thrust. They are only attempts to show the diversity that results from local autonomy.

1. Total staff differentiated staff patterns at Gardner Junior High and Hill Senior High.

2. Two departmental differentiated staff patterns at Rich Junior High in English and Social Studies.

3. A combination differentiated staffing and individualized instruction mathematics pattern at Everett High School. Note: Each differentiated staff project involves different uses of staff members according to abilities and degree of leadership, paraprofessionals (both instructional and clerical), and team teaching.

4. A new quarter-mester school pattern at C. W. Otto Junior High with more choices and exploration of pupils and staff.

5. A continuation of the seventh grade "school within a school" pattern at C. W. Otto using a core of teachers with a flexible time schedule and flexible subject matter schedule.

6. A new reading project at Walter French Junior High School where all English classes become reading emphasis classes rather than the traditional subject matter.

7. A continuation of modular scheduling at Hill High School.

8. Min-courses in many secondary schools to increase options and experiences for pupils.

9. Reading or learning centers in each secondary school with clinical functions and efforts to help

staff in solving reading problems of any student in his or her class.

10. A project with Central Michigan University, Gardner Junior High School, and Walter French Junior High School to initiate college courses in specific junior high school or middle school training.

11. Teacher Competency Based Programs at Everett, Pattengill, Otto, and Gardner. Coordinators are preparing competencies at the first of the year and will test them in the student teacher program in the spring.

As the district moves more and more into total building autonomy it is expected that the various schools will develop a wide variety of programs that will reflect the needs of that community as determined by the local building principal working with his staff, students, and community.

Continuing Education Department

Continuing Education provides a variety of educational experiences for citizens in the Lansing community. These experiences consist of enrichment classes, high school classes and basic education classes for individuals that did not complete a formal education, and community service projects.

Instructional Support Services

The Department of Instructional Support, under which are five departmental and K-12 consultants. The Director of Instructional Support is responsible for the development, supervision, and evaluation of instructional support services to insure that these services enhance the optimum conditions and opportunities for students to learn.

1. Special Education Department--The basic function of the Special Education Department is to provide education programs and services to the mentally handicapped, the physically handicapped, and the emotionally disturbed. In addition speech therapy is provided for those students with identifiable speech handicaps. Psychological Services provide for the diagnosis of students referred for possible placement in special education programs for the retarded and emotionally disturbed.

Psychological Services provide diagnostic services to all Lansing Schools as well as the parochial schools. These school psychologists handle all referrals for testing to determine eligibility for special education programs. They also have the responsibility for re-evaluating students in the educable mentally handicapped programs. Because of the background and training the school psychologist is often able to help the classroom teacher with the determination of the educational strengths and weaknesses of a child.

2. Vocational Education Department--The primary function of the Division of Vocational Education is to provide for all secondary students within the Lansing School District an opportunity to participate in Occupational Education.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Vocational Education to assure the maintenance of program standards of quality as mandated by the Michigan State Plan for Vocational Education, including the use of advisory committees, performance objectives, job placement evaluation, and follow-up of all students involved in Occupational Education.

The Director of Vocational Education is responsible for the direction of Neighborhood Youth Corps, Special Needs Programs, the Individualized Work Experience Programs, the State of Michigan Work Training Program, Manpower Program, and developing of any future student work-related program with Model Cities.

3. Pupil Personnel Services--Pupil Personnel Services are a group of related services based upon individual attention to the personal needs of each child. They are available to all pupils and arranged to meet their developmental needs as they move through the school system and into the world of work. They provide a helpful set of resources for pupils and also for parents, teachers, and administrators.

It should be noted that Pupil Personnel Services are concerned with all pupils--those experiencing the problems of normal development and those whose problems require more intensive and specialized kinds of help. They are concerned with the developmental, preventative, and remedial services.

One of the primary functions is to provide assistance to the schools in the development and implementation of the discipline code. The various pupil personnel services are made available where appropriate to assist in working with those students who have problems with school adjustment. In some cases students are referred to the Pupil Personnel office for assistance in their educational planning. The Pupil Personnel office is also charged with the development and enforcement of the school boundaries. Requests for exceptions to these boundaries by individuals are handled through the Pupil Personnel office.

The following services are part of the Pupil Personnel Division:

Attendance Services--Two attendance officers function to assist the schools in identifying and working with students who have attendance problems.

Child Accounting--Responsible for the development and maintenance of all student records. Also responsible for the Fourth Friday Count.

Guidance and Counseling--Provide leadership for the guidance and counseling programs at both elementary and secondary level.

School Social Workers--Trained school social workers available to meet the special social, emotional, and educational adjustment needs of certain students.

School Nurses--Assigned to the elementary schools to see to the health needs of students. Also have a responsibility for health education in the elementary schools.

Standardized Testing--Provide for the development, implementation, and meaningful use of the standardized testing program in grades K-12.

Safety--Encourage and provide direction for safety education in the schools. Provide for the systematized reporting of accidents involving students and employees.

Family Helpers--A program providing for paraprofessionals to assist qualified families meet the day-to-day needs of living.

Alternative Education--An individualized study program for youth 14-18 years old, who, for various reasons, do not wish to attend the regular school program.

Homebound Instruction--Teaching service provided to students with physical illness or disability which precludes their attending school for an extended time.

As a support service the Pupil Personnel Services provides assistance to the local school staff. Examples of such projects are: (1) Development of a meaningful and widely accepted code of pupil conduct which includes due process and a recognition of students' rights, and (2) Work for the decentralization of the various pupil personnel services and the development of a team approach to the delivery of those services.

4. Department of School Libraries--School library service as it is now conceived includes all kinds of instructional materials and equipment, regardless of format. These are housed in, and circulated from, what now is called the SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER. Its resources consist of the traditional books, magazines, and pamphlets, plus films, filmstrips, recordings, tapes, transparencies, etc. Its furniture and equipment now include, in addition to the traditional tables and chairs: study carrels, filmstrip viewers, record players, tape recorders, overhead projectors.

There is a school library media center in each of the 58 schools, with a librarian to serve each.

The Director of School Libraries supervises and directs the school library media program in all schools and assumes leadership in seeing that the program aids in carrying out the educational objectives of the schools. She serves as an advisor, a facilitator, and a consultant to all school librarians.

The selection of appropriate and recommended materials is the responsibility of each school librarian, based on the needs of each school. Materials are selected which will enrich the curriculum as well as provide leisure-time reading, viewing, and listening.

5. K-12 Consultants--These persons are considered as a very important resource of instructional support. They are specialists in many of the major instructional areas presented within the school system. These areas include:

- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Instructional Media
- Home Economics
- Music
- Art
- Physical Education and Athletics for Boys and Girls
- Science and Environmental Education
- Mathematics

Our K-12 Consultants, along with special and general helping teachers provide professional assistance, leadership, and advice to the system in general and to the school buildings, as associated with their particular subject area.

The Personnel Department

The following description of the way autonomy is fostered in the area of personnel was taken from an interview with Deward Clark, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel for the Lansing School District.¹ The question discussed was: "How does the Personnel Office accommodate and promote the concept of professional autonomy?"

Previous to the introduction of building autonomy to the district, building principals at least at the secondary level did have the final word in hiring new personnel. Teachers were recruited by the Personnel Office and then building principals interviewed the available teacher candidates and made the final recommendations for contracts to be issued to those selected.

¹Deward Clark, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Lansing School District, personal interview conducted on June 20, 1973.

With building autonomy in personnel, school principals working with their staff and community have the option of filling staff positions as they feel will best serve the needs of the school and the program objectives as they are developed locally. Decisions as to the type of teacher or the nature of the program they serve are made at the building level. Teaching positions may be dropped and the equivalent funds allowed for those positions may be used to hire para-professionals as determined by an agreement between a principal and his staff. As many as three teacher aides may be employed with the funds made available by dropping a teaching position. Decisions at the building level are held only to the parameters established by the teachers' master contract, the school policies in hiring minority personnel, and overall objectives of the district in the area of curriculum and instruction.

The goal of decentralization in personnel also includes development at the local level in the involvement of staff in screening teacher candidates in the interview process. Other components of local decision making include the involvement of students and parents from the local Community Involvement Committees (C.I.C.). Criteria developed in such committees, as to the type of teacher need on the school's staff, are used also as guidelines in the decision making by the building principal and by the local screening committee. With some communities demanding full community control in running their schools and for hiring teachers, the need for including the total school community in meaningful ways in all levels of decision making--including the personnel operation--is an imperative to functional building autonomy.

Principals feed information about the local school's needs, as determined by the community and staff, to the Personnel Office. The personnel requisition includes information that allows personnel office recruiters an opportunity to look for very specific kinds of people to meet the local specifications as to training, personality, background, race, or any other requirements as they are spelled out and submitted by the building principal.

Some aspects of the personnel function remain centralized; such offices as employee relations, fringe benefits, and negotiations with the teachers' organization for the master contract are still a function controlled by the district's central office. In other ways still centralized are teacher transfer requests and placement of teachers returning from sabbatical leaves or other types of leaves of absence.

Decisions such as the number of staff allocated to a school based upon the resources of the district as

related to the enrollment of that school, and the student/teacher ratio that determines a school's allocation are determined at the central office level.

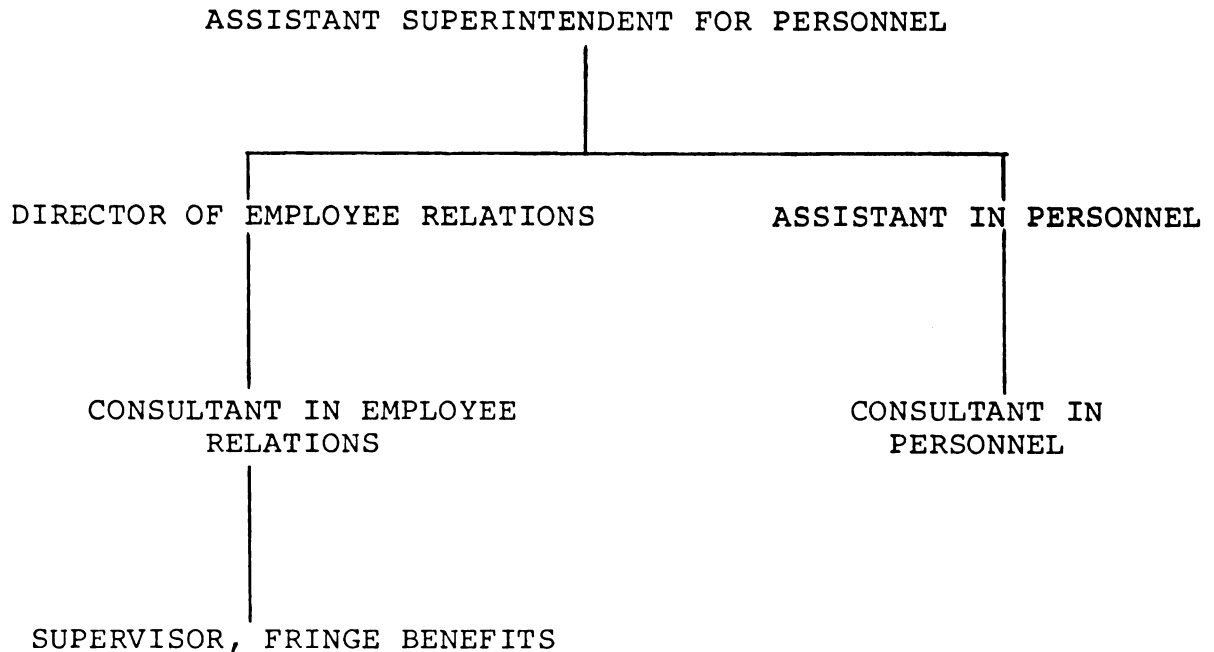


Figure 7.--Organization chart of the Personnel Division of the Lansing Schools.

Division of Personnel Staff

1. Assistant Superintendent for Personnel

Function: Plan, organize and direct operations of the Personnel Division. Be responsible for implementing personnel policies adopted by the Board of Education.

2. Assistant in Personnel

Function: Assist all staff members in meeting personnel needs, maintain an effective substitute staff, supervise office operations, work closely with Director of Secondary Education and Secondary Principals in staffing, act for Assistant Superintendent for Personnel in his absence.

3. Consultant in Personnel

Function: Research personnel needs for current staffing patterns, develop annual recruiting plans, work closely with administrators and staff in planning new teacher orientation and follow up, work closely with Director of Elementary Education and elementary principals in staffing.

4. Director of Employee Relations

Function: Prepare for and direct negotiations with all recognized employee groups, meet and confer with employee groups not recognized under Act 379, implement all agreements, direct the operations of the Fringe Benefit Department.

5. Consultant in Employee Relations

Function: Assist in preparing communications, surveys and proposals in preparation for negotiations, maintain records of proceedings, analyze proposals, prepare counter proposals, assist in the implementation of all agreements, direct internal department operations.

6. Supervisor of Fringe Benefits

Function: Administer the fringe benefit program, the school district general insurance, Workmen's Compensation programs, counsel all employees regarding employee benefits and retirement.

Summary

The analysis of the Lansing District's organization has shown that some administrative functions remain centralized, but for the most part decisions are forced to the lowest possible level under the concept of building autonomy.

1. The Finance Division has decentralized the purchase of supplies and equipment.
2. The budget for Building and Maintenance and for Personnel remains centralized.

3. Planning within the district is organized as a separate function and is viewed as a support service to the local school operation.
4. The curriculum process operates at both the local and central office levels, with heavy emphasis upon local involvement and local decision making.
5. Operation--focus upon the concept of support services directed at facilitating the building operation through a wide variety of support services.

Even though the organizational chart indicates a hierarchy of administration roles, the analysis of the way these functions are carried out clearly indicates that the structure acts as a vehicle for professional autonomy. Each local school and the community it serves has the freedom to define its educational needs, plan for viable alternatives, and act to attain those objectives. At the same time each school can call upon all of the resources of the district as support for its thrust to provide the best possible educational program for its students.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter is composed of descriptions of the methodology of the survey as well as a report of the findings and an analysis of the data collected in the survey. These were combined in this chapter because of the nature of the population and the construction of the survey.

(See Appendix B.)

The Population

The entire central administrative staff of the Lansing Schools and all of the building administrators at the secondary level were included in the population. Therefore, no sampling procedures were used, nor were inferential statistical methods, because the total population was included in the population. Also, of prime importance were the comments made about the items on the survey. It was felt that the expression of personal reactions and feelings was of the greatest importance in assessing the degree of acceptance and support that those responding gave to the introduction of professional autonomy. Teachers included in the survey were selected randomly from the total staff of the nine secondary schools in the district. Randomization was accomplished in selecting the teachers surveyed by sending surveys to every

tenth teacher listed on alphabetical listings of the faculties of the nine secondary schools in the district.

When listed by job titles, the population consisted of five groups:

1. The Superintendent's Cabinet--A group comprised of the Superintendent; the Deputy and Assistant Superintendents, Directors of Secondary Education and Elementary Education; heads of the Business, Maintenance and Curriculum Departments; Directors of Research and of Evaluation; and Special Advisors for Human Relations and Public Relations. This group meets regularly as a group and probably has the greatest input in the background and philosophy of professional autonomy as viewed by the Superintendent.

2. The Central Support Staff--Made up of Departmental Directors and Consultants, directors of various special areas such as adult and Continuing Education; Director of the Academic Interest Center; heads of various support services such as Library Services, Instructional Materials, department heads in both Operations and Planning; and, in the business area of the central office.

This group is less structured as a group than any of the others. They do not meet together, but do meet regularly as divisions or departments. They also have had a great deal of change in their responsibilities as a result of the introduction of professional autonomy. Many had considerable control of finance for their area of specialization and made decisions for supplies and curriculum.

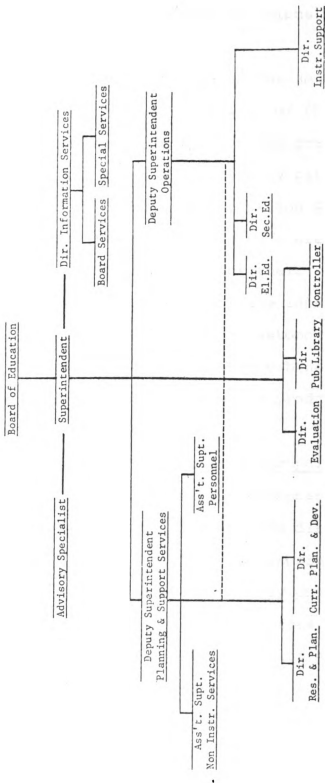


Figure 8.--Superintendent's Advisory Cabinet.

This was changed greatly when such decisions were decentralized.

3. The Secondary Principals--The smallest group in number of the five groups, comprised of the administrative heads of the nine secondary schools. The principals meet regularly and are the group that probably gained considerably greater control of their own operation with the advent of building autonomy as well as gaining a great deal more responsibility and accountability for their schools' operation. The principals gained most of the input of the philosophy background of professional autonomy through interaction with the Superintendent and his cabinet and from mimeographed materials and policy statements produced by their offices.

4. The Secondary Assistant Principals--Three assistant principals are assigned to each secondary school. Members of this group meet regularly and are directly responsible to the building principal. Their job descriptions vary somewhat from school to school, but generally cover the areas of curriculum and instruction, student services, school discipline, and a variety of housekeeping duties as well as working with the public and organizations in the community.

Although their job descriptions have changed little with the introduction of building autonomy, their responsibilities and ability to influence change in the school and its program have increased considerably.

5. The Teachers--As a group, teachers would have less communication with each other than others; however, they have a greater unity of purpose to their job description--that of teaching children.

Of the five groups, they would have gained greater input into improving the education process in Lansing. In their day-to-day operation, however, they may have been less affected than any other group. They had considerable autonomy within the classroom before autonomy and may see little change.

The survey was sent to a total of 169 teachers and administrators, with the following returns:

	<u>Groups</u>	<u>Returns</u>
I	Superintendent's Cabinet	13
II	Central Support Staff	31
III	Secondary Principals	9
IV	Secondary Assistant Principals	17
V	Teachers	59
	Total Returns	<u>129</u>

Procedure for Collecting the Data

The general construction of the survey and methods of collecting and reporting the data were developed through individual conferences with Dr. I. Carl Candoli, Superintendent of Lansing Public Schools; and with Dr. Richard Benjamin, Director of Evaluation Services for the system. The survey (see Appendix) was first tested on a small sample drawn from the total population to gain input for the language and construction of the instrument itself. The survey was sent out to the total population in February, 1973.

A memorandum sent with the survey (see Appendix) explained that the survey was to be used to collect data for a doctoral dissertation, as well as yielding information for a partial evaluation of the newly introduced innovation, professional autonomy. After a two-week period, follow-up surveys were sent to those who had not responded to the survey.

Because of the small numbers in the subgroups and also because of the nature of the responses called for in the instrument itself, it was felt that data would be best represented in reporting the total responses of each group rather than attempting to draw inferential assumptions. Question 1 will be reported graphically, along with an analysis of the comments made in reference to the question by those responding. Responses to Questions 2-6 will be reported as percentages of the five groups surveyed, and an analysis of the comments made on each item and for each group in the population.

It was felt that of prime importance were the comments made in connection with each question on the survey. As much or perhaps more insight into the feelings that those affected by the innovation had about the advantages or disadvantages of professional autonomy may be derived from an analysis of the comments. The degree of personal acceptance of professional autonomy as to the way it has affected their own positions as professionals in the district, as well as their feelings about the advantages or disadvantages for the program or the school community, come from an analysis of the comments.

The comments about each item on the survey were classified and groupings were made to show limiting conditions expressed by those responding or the degree of acceptance and support for the adoption of professional autonomy as a means of decentralizing management functions.

The first question deals with the extent to which those surveyed feel autonomous in their work at the present time or at the present level of the development of responsible autonomy, and is analyzed with a different set of criteria for classification than are questions 2 through 6. Questions 2-6 ask for responses to questions about the innovation as the respondents see it as it will be when it becomes more fully implemented in the future.

Question 1

"As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you presently have autonomy?"

Those included in the survey were asked to respond on a scale of 1 to 5 showing the degree to which they felt they had autonomy in their work. The mean response was calculated for each group, and is represented on the following chart. The chart also shows the N for each group, the high and low response--which illustrates the range of responses for each group. Also indicated are the number making no indications for the degree of autonomy.

I. SUPERINTENDENT'S CABINET (N=13).

(2 returns made no indication for Question 1)

		Low ↓	Mean 4.18 ⇓	High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

II. CENTRAL SUPPORT STAFF (N=31).

(1 return made no indication for Question 1)

		Low ↓	Mean 3.83 ⇓	High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

III. PRINCIPALS (N=9).

		Low ↓	Mean 3.78 ⇓	High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

IV. ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS (N=17).

		Low ↓	Mean 3.59 ⇓	High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

V. TEACHERS (N=59).

(1 return made no indication for Question 1)

		Low ↓	Mean 3.88 ⇓	High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

Group No. 1--Superintendent's Cabinet (N=13)

(2 returns made no indication for question 1)

Question 1: "As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you presently have autonomy in your work?"

		Low	Mean 4.18	High
		↓	↓	↓
1	2	3	4	5
Little Autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

The members of the Superintendent's Cabinet responding to the question indicated they felt they had considerable autonomy, with a mean response of 4.18 on a 1-5 scale of autonomy. In responding to this question, they made the following comments:

"The nature of any position has built-in autonomy."

"A Board changes, the amount of autonomy changes."

"My autonomy on central staff is reduced as building autonomy increases."

Although the mean for the Superintendent's Cabinet was the highest of the five groups surveyed, there was, surprisingly, a considerable range, from "moderate" to "a great deal" of autonomy, felt by this group; two members did not show any indication of a degree of autonomy.

The comments of the Superintendent's Cabinet seem to illustrate that although they feel considerable autonomy because of the nature of their positions, there are restricting factors. The school board is a limiting factor, as is increased autonomy of others lower on the organizational chart.

Group No. 2--Central Support Staff (N=31)

(1 return made no indication for Question 1)

Question 1: "As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you presently have autonomy in your work?"

	Low		Mean 3.83	High
	↓		↓	↓
1	2	3	4	5
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

The mean for the Central Support Staff was 3.83 on the 1-5 scale of autonomy. The responses fell in a range from 2 to 5, from "limited" to "a great deal" of autonomy.

Comments fell into three categories:

(a) General statements about autonomy or about their responsibility as an administrator:

"The Public Library has always had its own budget prepared by the Director."

"Program autonomy when several buildings are used for classes."

"Most duties and assignments relate to coordination, idea development and persuasion in any event. Decisions have to be mutually satisfying and hopefully would never or seldom be unilateral."

"Vocational Education overlays the total district, therefore the program affects the district and not pockets within the community."

(b) Their autonomy was limited by job description:

"Much of my work involves meeting State requirements for reports, counts, etc."

"Difficult to identify. In certain programs and areas 'a great deal of autonomy'; yet with building programs, as supportive staff, very little."

"In terms of the allocated budget I have considerable autonomy. As central staff member I'm more in an advisory capacity with only slight amount of autonomy."

(c) Their autonomy was limited by people in the hierarchy--a superior or even by subordinates (with building autonomy).

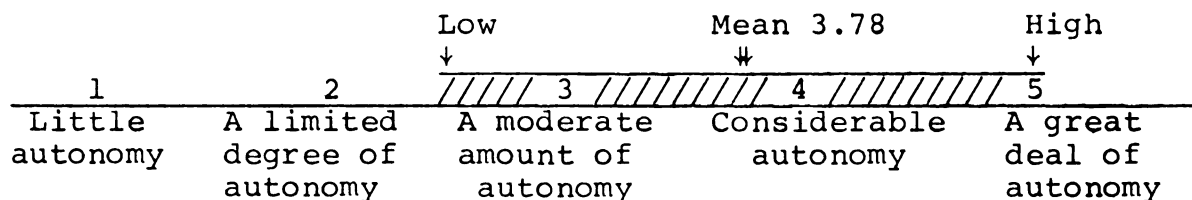
"Since the Academic Interest Center operates within the area permitted by the AIC Council, the degree of autonomy is 'moderate.'"

"Shared autonomy and responsibility. Autonomy in building. Still financial control from Central Administration."

"I am in a position to make decisions 'at this level' of our Lansing School District organizational pattern, but I usually check with my immediate superior."

Group No. 3--Secondary Principals (N=9)

Question 1: "As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you presently have autonomy in your work?"



The mean for the nine secondary principals was 3.78; all those reporting made a response for Question 1. The range for the group was surprisingly wide--from moderate to high. One would expect that with building autonomy, the principals' responses to this question would be very high; this was, however, not the case, as illustrated by the chart above.

Comments fell into two categories:

(a) Central administration still held restrictive limits:

"Important decisions are still made at Central. Response with little time is requested and there isn't time to follow the involvement model requested of us. The foundation allowance is working well."

"Limits need to be established and central administration needs to become comfortable with this pattern."

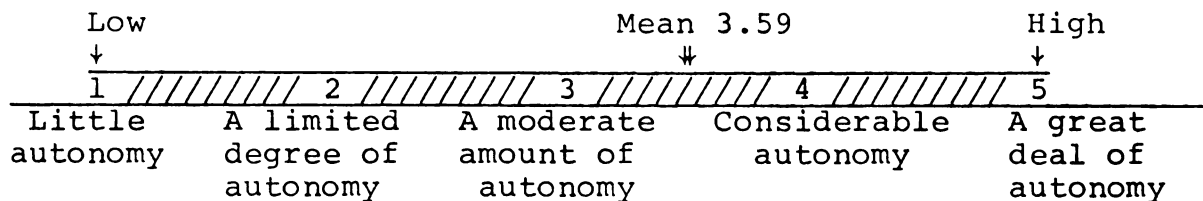
(b) They were free (or freer) to act with more latitude than before:

"The ability to make decisions, within the parameters of board policy and administrative directives, report to proper authority and be held accountable for decisions."

"We are much less restricted by those who previously held the decision-making powers over segments of the professional staff. Professionals can now be much more creative in their work."

Group No. 4--Secondary Assistant Principals (N=17)

Question 1: "As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you presently have autonomy in your work?"



On the 1 to 5 scale of autonomy, the mean for the secondary assistant principals was 3.59. The range consisted of the entire scope of the scale, from little autonomy to a great deal of autonomy. The mean for this group was the lowest of the five groups in the population. The comments fell into three groupings:

(a) General comments about autonomy:

"Glad the millage passed so we can hopefully continue to operate with at least our present level of autonomy."

"Probably adequate for my purposes."

(b) Autonomy limited by job description:

"The school district has defined my responsibility in the building by a job description."

(c) Autonomy limited by others in the organization (in this case the building principal):

"As an assistant principal, my freedom to act is always under the principal's scrutiny."

"Within guidelines established by the principal."

"Job is locked in by dumb decisions of principal which must be executed. Is often inconsistent!"

"In cooperation with my building principal, I have been free to develop new courses, and pursue funding for special projects."

Group No. 5--Teachers (N=59)

Question 1: "As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you presently have autonomy in your work?"

	Low ↓		Mean 3.88 ↓		High ↓
1	2	3	4	5	
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy	

The mean for the teachers included in the population was as expected--a rather high 3.88. As a group included in the population, they were exceeded only by the Superintendent's Cabinet. One might speculate that they also had been highly autonomous before the adoption of building autonomy. Comments fell into four categories:

(a) General noncommittal comments about autonomy or their job:

"This kind of procedure utilizes professional judgment which is good!"

"Who needs autonomy outside of the classroom?"

"As a classroom teacher, I am more aware of the needs of my students, and feel better able to prescribe for each than a theorist."

"Less adherence to the district curriculum and more responsive to the needs of area school."

"I have not noticed any change due to autonomy."

(b) They felt limitations by their job description or by their responsibilities:

"There are certain requirements placed upon my department by the Board of Education and by State law."

"The budget is about the only thing we don't have autonomy over. This has severely limited the Industrial Arts program."

"My classes have never been interfered with, and in that sense I'm autonomous. On the other hand, though, I feel an imposed framework that I don't entirely agree with."

"I'm free within the budgetary limitations."

"A great deal in terms of general policies, etc. Little autonomy in terms of what is taught and how because of State and local Vocational Education requirements."

"In physical education a moderate amount of freedom is given to the instructor, but in my case a limited amount of facilities are available."

"Mainly budget and supplies."

"Opinions are considered--decisions are made within the framework of policy we have helped to establish."

"We have always had a great deal of autonomy in regards to curriculum; however, the straight schedule locks us into a program that lacks flexibility."

(c) The felt limited by their superiors or others in the organizational structure:

"This is limited only by receiving permission for activities out of the ordinary."

"To the extent that school administrators seem to trust my professional judgment and back me accordingly."

"Too many chiefs for the Indians served in the field to have to go through unless you by-pass some. There are too many in-between endorsers, red tape delays to approve/disapprove; i.e., building administrators, lead teacher and/or building vice principal of instruction or another principal or assistant, an intermediary liaison person, central administration, etc., etc., to the top--which involves Ingham County Intermediate School District too, often--so, wow!"

"Same old 'hassle,' new name."

"'Moderate,' compared against what we could have, if Lansing did not insist on parity among similar schools."

"With the employment of professional judgment, considerable autonomy has been extended to me. Viewed through the eyes of someone less conservative, the choice might be different."

(d) They were free to act without feelings of restriction
--highly autonomous:

"We have had this for many years."

"My style and way of relating to students is pretty much up to me. The basic requirements of the job as it stands are not likely to change much."

"I feel free to try anything that might work to fulfill the needs of students."

"I am free to use materials and methods of my choice."

"We have developed course changes. Each department has the expenditure of a considerable amount of money with no strings attached."

"Of course Art has always been an individual situation."

"Even though I may have to explain my reasons for doing some things, I have been able to implement any of my ideas and have been able to order anything I need."

"I am free to use my own judgment in curriculum and planning."

The following are summaries, in tabular form, of the responses of all five groups to Questions 2-6:

Question 2: "Do you feel that, as professional autonomy is fully implemented, the educational opportunities for students in the Lansing Secondary Schools will be improved?"

Group	Supt. Cabinet	Central Support Staff	Secondary Principals	Sec. Asst. Principals	Teachers
Yes	100%	71.0%	77.8%	70.6%	62.7%
No	0%	19.4%	22.2%	17.6%	23.7%
Undecided	0%	9.6%	0 %	11.8%	13.6%

Question 3: "Do you feel as the program of professional autonomy is more fully implemented that you personally will be more effective in your job?"

Group	Supt. Cabinet	Central Support Staff	Secondary Principals	Sec. Asst. Principals	Teachers
Yes	76.9%	58.4%	77.8%	47.1%	64.4%
No	15.4%	38.7%	22.2%	52.9%	20.3%
Undecided	7.7%	2.9%	0 %	0 %	15.3%

Question 4: "Do you feel that as the program of professional autonomy is more fully implemented, you will be more satisfied with your job?"

Group	Supt. Cabinet	Central Support Staff	Secondary Principals	Sec. Asst. Principals	Teachers
Yes	84.6%	61.3%	55.6%	41.2%	61.0%
No	7.7%	16.1%	33.3%	52.9%	25.4%
Undecided	7.7%	22.6%	11.1%	5.9%	13.6%

Question 5: "In your opinion, will the transition from centralized decision making to building autonomy result in an improvement in the operation of the district?"

Group	Supt. Cabinet	Central Support Staff	Secondary Principals	Sec. Asst. Principals	Teachers
Yes	92.3%	64.5%	66.7%	70.6%	61.0%
No	0 %	22.6%	22.2%	11.8%	16.9%
Undecided	7.7%	12.9%	11.1%	17.6%	22.1%

Question 6: "Do you feel that building autonomy will allow the parents and students a greater voice in the decision-making process for the Lansing Schools?"

Group	Supt. Cabinet	Central Support Staff	Secondary Principals	Sec. Asst. Principals	Teachers
Yes	92.3%	80.0%	100%	76.5%	62.7%
No	7.7%	6.7%	0%	23.5%	16.9%
Undecided	0 %	13.3%	0%	0 %	20.4%

Summary for the Total Population

If a "yes" answer for Questions 2-6 is assumed to indicate support for professional autonomy and the influences that the concept has upon the total operation of the school system, the following total response may be used as an indicator of support for autonomy. The following results were derived by combining all five groups in the population (N=129).

Question 2--Will autonomy improve opportunities for students?

70.5 percent of the total population answered yes.

Question 3--Will you be more effective in your job?

61.2 percent of the total population
answered yes.

Question 4--Will you be more satisfied in your job?

60.5 percent of the total population
answered yes.

Question 5--Will autonomy improve operations?

60.5 percent of the total population
answered yes.

Question 6--Will building autonomy provide better community involvement?

72.9 percent of the total population answered
yes.

The total "yes" response for all groups combined for the total questionnaire was 65.1 percent.

Questions 2-6 are reported in percentages (to the nearest tenth) for each of the "yes-no" responses. The comments made for each item are categorized for the five groups in the survey using the following four-point scale:

1--Supportive

A supportive statement about the advantages of autonomy vs. centralized authority indicates a high degree of acceptance of the innovation.

2--Moderate

A moderately supportive statement but with reservations, or is skeptical about advantages either about their own job or about the concept.

3--Negative

A statement indicating or inferring opposition to autonomy--feels that it is detrimental or personally threatening.

0--General or Noncommittal

A general or noncommittal comment, but not a positive or negative statement about autonomy.

Only selected comments are listed for each group.

Because of the great number of responses and some repetition, it was not practical to list all of the comments that were made. The number of responses in each category is indicated in each case.

Summary of Comments Made About Autonomy in Connection With the Questionnaire

Question 2: "Do you feel that as professional autonomy is fully implemented, the educational opportunities for students in the Lansing Secondary Schools will be improved?"

Group 1--Superintendent's Cabinet (N=13).--The Superintendent's Cabinet responded to the question, "Will autonomy improve student opportunities?"

Yes, 100% No, 0%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	10
2--Moderate	1
3--Opposed	none
0--General	none

Examples of the comments made by the Superintendent's Cabinet:

1--Supportive

"We should be better able to respond to individual student needs."

"Local administrators will be more responsive to needs."

"Because the staff who knows the student or student body best will address problems and work to carry out their solutions."

"Staff, students and community will share in expressing needs and concerns. The results should improve delivery to youth."

"Because of increased morale of the staff which leads to greater involvement and commitment."

"It's my conviction that people who perform a task should be relatively free to make decisions about that task."

"Quick, effective decisions can be made. Specific learner needs can be addressed."

2--Moderate

"Hopefully greater involvement plus clearer accountability will lead to improvement."

Group 2--The Central Support Staff (N=31).--The Central Support Staff responded to the question, "Will autonomy improve student opportunities?"

Yes, 71.0% No, 19.4% Undecided, 9.6%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	17
2--Moderate	5
3--Opposed	2
0--General	3

Examples of the comments made by the Central Support Staff:

1--Supportive

"Individual schools with community input can determine the thrust of the educational program."

"We have a very competent staff and, if reasonably applied, professional autonomy will obtain good decisions by administration, teachers, students, and community."

"It decreased the time between formulation of idea and its implementation."

"Working through a 'shared decision-making' process, involving consensus and adequate preparation for making decisions, should have considerable impact on how students approach all decision-making situations throughout their lives."

"It is with little doubt, that as the 'practitioners' (professional teachers) are given the responsibility for making decisions concerning curriculum and educational experiences in their building for their students, the opportunities for learning will be improved. The performance of the teachers must be accountable also."

"Competent people, dedicated, operating at the grass root level with an adequate budget can best meet this objective."

2--Moderate

"Personal attitudes of school administrators--and key staff members--certain aspects of the school curriculum and programs could be eliminated. Priorities might 'deny' as well as provide 'opportunities.'"

"It may provide for greater accountability but I do not feel there will be any educational opportunity advancement."

"With reservations, however; not all principals and teachers seem to be able to effectively cope with decision-making responsibilities. Experience should help."

3--Opposed

"Because I feel I am the expert in public library services."

"One school can't possibly do what a complete school system can do."

Group 3--The Secondary Principals (N=9).--The principals responded to the question, "Will autonomy improve student opportunities?"

Yes, 77.8%

No, 22.2%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	6
2--Moderate	none
3--Opposed	2
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the principals:

1--Supportive

"Meet individual needs better."

"It cuts red tape in decision making. Permits decisions to be made that are unique to the community served."

"Decisions can and will be made at the school level."

"Greater involvement, more flexibility in securing supplies and equipment. In some areas (curricula materials) purchasing needs to be made at the school level."

"Monies can be spent for the priority items and programs can be immediately implemented and not 1 or 2 years later when materials come."

"The local school setting is much more sensitive to the needs of students in that community."

3--Opposed

"At present programs are limited by the wishes and desires of the 'professional educators.' This group may be seeing educational opportunities through the jaundiced eyes of their own experiences and training."

"Equal opportunities will decrease."

Group 4--The Secondary Assistant Principals (N=17).--

The assistant principals responded to the question, "Will autonomy improve student opportunities?"

Yes, 70.6% No, 17.6% Undecided, 11.8%

They made the following comments:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	7
2--Moderate	4
3--Opposed	1
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the secondary assistant principals:

1--Supportive

"Schools will be able to do what they think best for their students. Needs do vary--interests vary--in different parts of town and on different levels."

"Decisions can be made at a building level which apply to our student make-up."

"It is impossible for Central Administration to know the needs of all children in all schools. The district is too large and too diverse."

2--Moderate

"Responsible professionals who possess integrity will provide educational opportunities of a high level regardless of organization. Opportunities will be improved if a staff possesses creativity, and a deep concern for the welfare of students."

"Theoretically, building staff and administration should be freer to be more sensitive to the needs of the community they are serving."

"I have mixed feelings. I see a need for some degree of standardization."

3--Opposed

"Not significantly--I do not believe that Professional Autonomy is the major area of importance. What happens in the classroom is what makes the difference."

Group 5--Teachers (N=59).--The teachers in the survey responded to the question, "Will autonomy improve student opportunities?"

Yes, 62.7% No, 23.7% Undecided, 13.6%

They made the following comments:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	28
2--Moderate	13
3--Opposed	7
0--General	2

Examples of comments made by the teachers:

1--Supportive

"Judgments about management and curriculum are best made by those closest to the situation. People with freedom to make these decisions see themselves more clearly as professionals. Teachers who see themselves as professionals are better teachers."

"It will bring education closer to the needs of the students, rather than something superimposed by someone 'out there' not familiar with their immediate needs."

"Innovative programs and program flexibility can be instituted without bureaucratic feet dragging."

"Students will be able to progress educationally at a pace that will allow more learning. They will not be lost in educational progress and stop making an effort to learn."

"Teachers could work together on a cooperative basis in identifying more clearly the needs of children in their communities."

"Ultimately the community served by a particular school will have input and action involvement from grass roots levels--adults, parents, students and staff and administration of school servicing them."

"As each building works toward semi-autonomy, the parents and community in the school's attendance area should become more actively involved in school matters, supplanting the bureaucracy of central administration. The assumption is that if the immediate community is involved, it will be more responsive to the needs of students, and thus the community can work its will on the school, to the benefit of students. However, it remains to be seen whether parents, etc. are more sensitive to students' needs, or educators."

"Professional autonomy as I perceive it would allow the people in each school building to determine their own needs and spend the allotted money accordingly. By doing this we can fill more of the needs of the student body at each school."

2--Moderate

"Im not sure that I see any relationship between P.A. and opportunity for students. In some schools the P.A. philosophy could prove to be highly creative. In others it could degenerate to irresponsibility and buck-passing."

"It will depend entirely on the degree of initiative shown by the teachers in that student's school."

"It is conceivable that opportunities will vary greatly within an educational goal depending upon the philosophy of a particular building or administrator."

"I don't think that P.A. stimulates educational advancements. It does permit such. It really depends on the staff."

3--Opposed

"I do not believe professional autonomy will ever be an effective reality as long as: 1. The district has people spending large amounts of time seeking dollars thru State and Federally supported programs which tie strings to the use of the dollars for programs that must be structured according to State and Federal specifications."

"Not really because in all the different schools there will be as many ways to accomplish objectives. I believe that in one school system there should be one standard for all students."

"As long as the instructors have the tools needed to facilitate learning, no autonomy is needed."

"An ultra progressive teacher with far-out values could implement a program that might cause far-reaching negative repercussions. I feel we need to answer to someone and be unified in some ways."

Question 3: "Do you feel, as the program of professional autonomy is more fully implemented, that you personally will be more effective in your job?"

Group 1--Superintendent's Cabinet (N=13).--The Superintendent's Cabinet responded to the question, "Will you personally be more effective in your job?"

Yes, 76.9% No, 15.4% Undecided, 7.7%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	6
2--Moderate	3
3--Opposed	none
0--General	3

Examples of the comments made by the Superintendent's Cabinet:

1--Supportive

"Because I'll be able to make decisions on a more rational basis."

"Because it will give better direction to planning."

"I will be helping people do what they want to do which to some degree insures greater effectiveness."

"As decentralization of responsibility progresses the Personnel Division can more truly become the support service needed for effective operation."

"Greater opportunity to meet the needs of staff and teachers rather than 'perceived' needs."

"Time lag between recommendations and implementation should be reduced."

2--Moderate

"In a more limited way, however, than would be true of a building administrator. Central support services are less affected by autonomy, I think, than is building decision making."

"As long as autonomy is understood to mean that we are autonomous in the way we meet the needs of children."

"I hope so, anyway. I anticipate that I can then be a facilitator, advisor, consultant, etc.--and many small, detailed tasks will be eliminated."

0--General

"I am already operating on my own basis as far as decision making and other forms of autonomy are concerned."

Group 2--The Central Support Staff (N=31).--The Central Support Staff responded to the question, "Will you personally be more effective in your job?"

Yes, 58.4% No, 38.7% Undecided, 2.9%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	11
2--Moderate	4
3--Opposed	5
0--General	8

Examples of the comments made by the Central Support Staff:

1--Supportive

"To the end result of serving the student. There will be quite a bit of internal reorganizing (departmental) however to meet the changes."

"In the past, decisions which affected my work were made by persons who were not fully informed about my job. They couldn't make the decisions I would have made."

"As good leadership develops in each of the secondary schools. I feel a departmental chairman will be most effective within their building (curriculum, budget, etc.). Elementary school classroom teachers continue to require much assistance in developing a continuum of physical education activities."

"If you are competent, the constant need to waste time checking, getting ok's, following channels and the like are not needed. Within reason, the freedom to act and the knowledge when to call for help is the apex of decision making."

2--Moderate

"Not necessarily. I do not believe we can nor should be making decisions isolated from all factors involved --never in a vacuum! Responsible decision making demands recognition of all factors involved. But Professional Autonomy vs. autocratic decision making, then obviously P.A. is a more satisfactory route."

3--Opposed

"Conflict of ideas and personalities could well affect the acceptance of supportive staff. Supportive staff could be placed in a very frustrating position, thereby stifling enthusiasm. Could be placed 'on the outside looking in' position."

"As long as our financial support remains low, professional autonomy will reduce my effectiveness as a support agent."

"Will make it more difficult as a central office person to coordinate with different building setups."

"Need to have control of money."

"I'll have no job."

Group 3--The Secondary Principals (N=9).--The secondary principals responded to the question, "Will you personally be more effective in your job?"

Yes, 77.8% No, 22.2%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	5
2--Moderate	2
3--Opposed	none
0--General	1

Examples of the comments made by the secondary principals:

1--Supportive

"Enhances the confidence in one's self and his faculty in that decisions made stand unless they are in conflict with Board policy and/or administrative directives."

"Others will share in decision-making responsibilities, thus allowing for varying input in problems faced by the schools."

"Greater responsibility and freedom to act and interact."

"Because building and community priorities can be dealt with."

"Personally I feel much more in control of my destiny and that of my staff. It has made a difference in the general climate of the school."

2--Moderate

"Local decision making should in theory be more effective."

"Effectiveness will vary with the degree to which autonomous decisions are acceptable to the next higher echelon."

0--General

"I feel this way already."

Group 4--The Secondary Assistant Principals (N=17).--

The secondary assistant principals responded to the question,

"Will you personally be more effective in your job?"

Yes, 47.1% No, 52.9%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	7
2--Moderate	1
3--Opposed	none
0--General	2

Examples of comments made by the assistant principals:

1--Supportive

"Because I won't have to spend time checking out with higher levels before a decision can be made."

"Freedom to make decisions without close supervisory constraints should help morale and, consequently, help effectiveness."

"I'll be more involved with my work."

"The more autonomy buildings receive, the more freedom I will have to develop new curriculum."

"Being able to put any creative ideas I might have into effect without having to go through 'downtown' personnel, will certainly make me more effective."

2--Moderate

"Only to the extent that the individuals involved have input and a say in the decision-making process."

Group 5--Teachers (N=59).--The teachers responded to the question, "Will you personally be more effective in your job?"

Yes, 64.4% No, 20.3% Undecided, 15.3%

Because of the number of responses to this question, not all are listed. The total number in each category is indicated and sample comments are listed.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	30
2--Moderate	9
3--Opposed	2
0--General	8

1--Supportive

"It's a more efficient management system, I think, if it goes beyond just fiscal autonomy."

"It will allow me to use ideas that I may not have been able to use in the past."

"As with most teachers, I will probably accentuate more those areas in which I am strongest. Doing something that is enjoyable and insures security goes for greater effectiveness."

"I can design and use courses of study that make sense to me, rather than ones I can't have any faith in the rationale behind."

"Because I will personally feel directly or indirectly seen or unseen the community support and backing for programs they feel having had a part in developing."

"We can now order books and other materials we need without waiting."

"When teachers have the opportunity to determine more of the factors relating to the educational opportunities available for students in their building, I believe that I will be in a better position to reach students because I will know and have a part in the decisions. Also, I will feel more satisfied with the job."

"The more freedom of the decisions made for my job, the more effective I can be because I know what I have in mind and with this freedom the easier it will be to carry out my objectives."

2--Moderate

"If not burdened with too many nonteaching details."

"Depends on how the system is administered and the degree of backing I get in my decisions. Anarchy would be just as much a barrier as totalitarianism."

"I feel I stress 'my interest' more. I think this is natural with everyone, which may cause a failure to provide proper and thorough instruction. Also, as a department chairman, I find autonomy has increased my work load significantly."

"We have already had some adverse comments about people now showing up for city-wide steering curriculum meetings. As they are only interested in what they are doing and not all of us; it will hurt the overall program."

3--Opposed

"Because I see no change over what has been."

Question 4: "Do you feel that as the program of professional autonomy is more fully implemented you will be more satisfied with your job?"

Group 1--Superintendent's Cabinet (N=13).--The Superintendent's Cabinet responded to the question, "Will you be more satisfied with your job?"

Yes, 84.6% No, 7.7% Undecided, 7.7%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	8
2--Moderate	2
3--Opposed	none
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the Superintendent's Cabinet:

1--Supportive

"Because my professionalism will be recognized and I'll be more able to utilize my expertise."

"Because I believe in it as a concept."

"I believe in the concept and think it will be effective."

"The satisfaction will come from being able to better satisfy the students' needs as a true support service."

"It would be hard for me to be more satisfied with my job. However, since it is in part to extoll the successes of the district, I expect a better story to tell, a more satisfied clientele, and a better school image."

"When each building is more satisfied because of its joint ownership more time can be spent in improving instruction."

"Because helping people do what they want is more satisfying to me than laying something on others."

"Priorities will have been made by persons to be affected and thus should reduce the number of conflicts in terms of goals and objectives."

2--Moderate

"This answer must be qualitative. To the degree that autonomy provides more individual flexibility to meet the goals of the total district is the degree to which my job is a satisfactory one. The understanding that autonomy is 'everyone does his own thing' will make the job difficult. The understanding that everyone 'does his own thing to meet the district's goals' is satisfactory."

"Not sure. Yes, if it results in greater effectiveness."

Group 2--The Central Support Staff (N=31).--The

Central Support Staff responded to the question, "Will you be more satisfied with your job?"

Yes, 61.3% No, 16.1% Undecided, 22.6%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	8
2--Moderate	9
3--Opposed	6
0--General	3

Examples of comments made by the Central Support Staff:

1--Supportive

"Being able to introduce a program and see it through to a logical conclusion, personally is more rewarding than performing tasks set forth by others."

"As a subject matter consultant one will know that when one works with a building staff it is because they want the input rather than the feeling they have to put up with it."

"Decisions can be made without having to go through so many 'middle men'; decisions may not then be reversed without consultation with you and others involved."

"I will have a stronger feeling of being an integral part of the organization."

2--Moderate

"I am waiting to see what happens--probably it will work well in most buildings."

"Again, I hope so. But I'm not dissatisfied now."

3--Opposed

"Foresee duplication of efforts...and eventual elimination of city-wide directors and consultants. Would anticipate, with the elimination of supportive staff, added costs to a school district because additional positions would be created in each school, i.e., assistant principals, lead teachers, etc."

"Undecided. This could cause problems in priority selection of money spent on special programs if the parents and students have demands that are not consistent with the administration."

"I view autonomy as a dividing factor--school against school--our departments are small and need group input and support."

"Not satisfied even at present level!"

Group 3--The Secondary Principals (N=9).--The secondary principals responded to the question, "Will you be more satisfied with your job?"

Yes, 55.6% No, 33.3% Undecided, 11.1%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	7
2--Moderate/ Skeptical	none
3--Opposed	1
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the secondary principals:

1--Supportive

"One feels free to be creative within the guidelines in (3) above: enhances the confidence in one's self and his faculty in that decisions made stand unless they are in conflict with board policy and/or administrative directives."

"Present pressures and stress will be spread among various stockholders for decision-making accountability."

"I can live easier with school level decisions."

"Can be more effective. Less frustration with school getting its fair share."

"There is merit and there is strength in group decision making. Participation in decision is more gratifying and defensible than isolated decision making."

"It can only improve the school's program--a successful experience yields greater job satisfaction."

3--Opposed

"Because there will be other operational methods and communications that will need to be addressed and updated."

Group 4--The Secondary Assistant Principals (N=17).--

The secondary assistant principals responded to the question,

"Will you be more satisfied with your job?"

Yes, 41.2% No, 52.9% Undecided, 5.9%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	3
2--Moderate	3
3--Opposed	none
0--General	5

Examples of comments made by the secondary assistant principals:

1--Supportive

"Freedom to make decisions without close supervisory constraints should help morale and, consequently, help effectiveness."

"I like making decisions rather than having them made for me."

"Job satisfaction comes from (among other things) being able to put your own ideas into operation."

2--Moderate

"I suppose this could be true. People like to feel they are capable and can do things without always asking someone else as long as it is within policy."

"Same as (3): only to the extent that the individuals involved have input and a say in the decision-making process. Also, communication between people in a building should be easier than from a central organization; however, it is only as good as everyone and each one handles it."

"Presently not dissatisfied. I would, however, like to know when the decision can be made here and resent being given the power and authority and then having it taken away."

0--General

"I have been fortunate in having a good working relationship with my immediate superior. I have not felt hampered."

Group 5--Teachers (N=59).--The teachers responded to the question, "Will you be more satisfied with your job?"

Yes, 61.0% No, 25.4% Undecided, 13.6%

Because of the number of responses to this question, not all are listed. The total number in each category is indicated and sample comments are listed.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	15
2--Moderate	14
3--Opposed	3
0--General	14

1--Supportive

"The satisfaction of helping someone learn something they feel a need for, rather than something they feel forced to take."

"When decisions of importance are your own responsibility, your self-image will certainly be improved."

"When you take part in the decision process, you are much happier."

"The buck could not be passed out of the building."

"I will feel even more involved and, hence, more satisfied."

"Anytime I can make most of the decisions for my classes the more satisfaction I can get. If someone else is making all the decisions for me I may feel that they don't know what my students' needs are."

"I believe true professionalism will show, and the locked-in structure will dissipate. The true teacher will be able to teach."

2--Moderate

"Depends on how the system is administered and the degree of backing I get in my decisions. Anarchy would be just as much a barrier as totalitarianism. (I have been very happy under the 'old' system.)"

"If I am able to do it, yes. If I get too harried and spread too thin, no."

"I think so--the original rivalry and competition for money that seemingly can alienate enemies instead of influence friends will eventually be subsided to a concept of the total good as against a natural self-interest departmental and self good."

"Possibly. It will depend upon philosophy of my administrator toward Vocational Education."

"If we are allotted time to perform our new functions and responsibilities."

3--Opposed

"I am quite satisfied with the amount of autonomy I have now. I am given much freedom to create and develop my programs. I do feel there are some areas such as accounting and discipline that should have a city-wide policy established and that standard maintained."

"I feel that Professional Autonomy, as it now exists in this district, is a nebulous and badly confused concept. I feel that nearly everyone has a different impression of what is meant by this concept. Again, we see a distinct communications barrier!"

Question 5: "In your opinion, will the transition from centralized decision making to building autonomy result in an improvement in the operation of the district?"

Group 1--The Superintendent's Cabinet (N=13).--The Superintendent's Cabinet responded to the question, "Will the operation of the district be improved with autonomy?"

Yes, 92.3% No, 0% Undecided, 7.7%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	8
2--Moderate	2
3--Opposed	1
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the Superintendent's Cabinet:

1--Supportive

"Decisions will be moved closer to the spot where they affect students."

"It will provide better planning opportunities to local buildings."

"Better decisions should result. Also, should have greater accountability."

"Responsible decisions will be made where the action is."

"Better communications should result if planned well. This should cut down on detail work and central staff can be more service oriented."

"More and more accurate information can be brought to bear on each decision."

"Greater involvement and commitment."

"Local needs will be more fully identified and solutions will be dependent upon local management."

2--Moderate

"In the long haul it will as we learn what functions should remain central and which are more appropriate at the building-community level."

"It should result in more satisfaction about the operation of the district. At least that part which is locally controlled. To the degree that the components of the district understand the parameters of autonomy will predicate its smooth operation."

3--Opposed

"Not sure. It could produce duplication and loss of efficiency."

Group 2--The Central Support Staff (N=31).--The Central Support Staff responded to the question, "Will the operation of the district be improved with autonomy?"

Yes, 64.5% No, 22.6% Undecided, 12.9%

Because of the number of responses to this question, not all are listed. The total number in each category is indicated and sample comments are listed.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	12
2--Moderate	10
3--Opposed	7
0--General	1

1--Supportive

"Yes, in speed of decisions and meeting educational needs of students and employees."

"As long as your program is within the framework of Lansing Policy it seems redundant to have to check all actions with Central Administration."

"Because it should make the entire program more sensitive to the needs of your building and students. Therefore, more effective system-wide."

"It makes each building a productive member of the whole. It also places the products on the building level--giving teachers a direct say in curriculum."

2--Moderate

"It should--but we must admit that some on the central staff are not too happy to have decision making taken out of their hands! And, not all principals and teachers seem to be able to effectively cope with decision-making responsibilities. Experience should help."

"Only if building autonomy is clarified--what decisions must still be made by central personnel for many reasons. Greater involvement of parents, youth, community can build greater support for educational progress (understanding, common goals, etc.)."

3--Opposed

"Unless guidelines are established by a centralized source, in the area in which I am concerned, I believe operations would not be as efficient."

"Recognizing many 'positives' resulting from Building Autonomy, I must at this time react 'No.' I am not convinced that Autonomy will improve the total educational process. It may identify 'accountability' and 'provide a freedom to act,' but it could create a divided community, a lack of continuity, and additional costs."

"It is another method of operation, which provides for more accountability but not necessarily for improved operations."

"Difficult to answer from my viewpoint. Centralized operations are easier but realizing the final goal I will have to realign."

"Some buildings will try 'foolish things,' others will drag their feet too much."

"Administration must remain a republic. We must have central final responsibility and local freedom to participate, take acts, influence and direct."

"How can it? We are heading pell-mell for the little Red School House day. This is progress??"

Group 3--The Secondary Principals (N=9).--The secondary principals responded to the question, "Will autonomy improve the operation of the district?"

Yes, 66.7% No, 22.2% Undecided, 11.1%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	5
2--Moderate	1
3--Opposed	1
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the secondary principals:

1--Supportive

"Strengthen the ability to make the unique decisions necessary for efficient and effective operation of local buildings."

"More individuals will assume leadership roles that involve a larger stake in the success of the whole operation."

"Already has."

"This can be a step toward more local control."

"In my opinion, local decision making will be a better and more sensitive way to solve the problems of our schools. It can only improve operations."

3--Opposed

"There is merit and there is strength in group decision making. Participation in decision is more gratifying and defensible than isolated decision making."

Group 4--The Secondary Assistant Principals (N=17).--

The secondary assistant principals responded to the question,
"Will autonomy improve the operation of the district?"

Yes, 70.6% No, 11.8% Undecided, 17.6%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	7
2--Moderate	3
3--Opposed	1
0--General	2

Examples of comments made by the secondary assistant principals:

1--Supportive

"I think that the money will be more equally distributed."

"When one is responsible for their actions, they cannot 'pass the buck.'"

"There is tremendous talent among the teachers of Lansing. New ideas need to be aired and explored. 'Red tape' stifles creativity."

"Many more new ideas will be born and carried out at the building level. As each school is allowed to try out new ideas of their own, the individual school and the entire district will benefit."

2--Moderate

"Yes and no. Some things will be better--some will really be mixed up for awhile."

3--Opposed

"There are some decisions that need to be centralized it seems to me. Communication with the Central Staff would need to be assured so that they will be of help and not judges over all. The one room rural schools had autonomy and the education in some of these was excellent, because of enlightened school boards and excellent teachers. Most one room schools have consolidated because of benefits accrued by consolidation. We should be sure that by autonomy we do not lose benefits and the positive outcomes accrued by centralized organization."

Group 5--Teachers (N=59).--The teachers responded to the question, "Will autonomy improve the operation of the district?"

Yes, 61.0% No, 16.9% Undecided, 22.1%

Because of the number of responses to this question, not all are listed. The total number in each category is indicated and sample comments are listed.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	13
2--Moderate	13
3--Opposed	14
0--General	9

1--Supportive

"Do not want some administrator, trained in coaching, for instance, telling me (trained in my field) what I should be doing in my classes."

"In working on the budget committee, I felt that priorities were set in ordering equipment and materials; everyone was concerned of each department's needs so it was kind of give and take."

"Centralized decisions must be very explicit for them to be uniformly executed--even then, teachers don't believe in the decision all the time and subvert the decision in one way or another."

"Each building will be able to develop programs and make decisions according to their students in their particular building."

"My belief is that the people in the classroom have a lot to offer. They are a lot closer to the kids than the consultants."

2--Moderate

"Supplies and equipment may cost more. This will limit continuity between programs."

"It should eventually, when its potential is realized, but at present there are many people who feel they are cheated if they don't get exactly the same thing everyone else gets. There would also be a 'transfer' problem."

"Hopefully central administration will see themselves as facilitators rather than directors."

"It would seem that there would be less paper work, less need for personnel to second-guess teachers' requisitions, and that current needs of students could be better met. There are some liabilities, such as duplication in equipment or possibly small losses when materials are not ordered in large quantities, but I think overall that the new system is an improvement."

3--Opposed

"I do not believe this will materialize in any truly meaningful way."

"Some schools will become stronger--some will become weaker. There is going to be less continuity between programs, policies, and procedures."

"It will result in a 'Tower of Babel' with everybody doing his own thing with no central standards for everyone. Some will make it and some will fail badly."

"Because of the 10% that will control, No."

"Presently it is harboring and fostering misunderstanding--misgivings between departments of different schools, departments and cluster groupings within a school all seeking top share of the almighty \$ for themselves and their department."

"What has really changed? Ultimate decisions are still made at Central and delegated. The decentralized decisions must fit the total centralized pattern."

"There is no opportunity to shift resources freely, to areas where they might be more effectively used. There seems to be more red tape now than ever before and more jousting for resources between buildings as well as between the academic departments within the buildings!"

Question 6: "Do you feel that building autonomy will allow the parents and students a greater voice in the decision-making process for Lansing schools?"

Group 1--The Superintendent's Cabinet (N=13).--The

Superintendent's Cabinet responded to the question, "Will parents and students have a greater voice?"

Yes, 92.3%

No, 7.7%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	5
2--Moderate	5
3--Opposed	none
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the Superintendent's Cabinet:

1--Supportive

"Because the power will be diffused to all segments of the school system."

"It will create a need for community, teacher, and student, planning jointly."

"When a general understanding of Building Autonomy is achieved, people will insist on having input."

"I feel that you will not be making decisions in isolation, without sound basis for such decisions and this translates to student and parent involvement."

"A component part of the autonomy model is the provision for shared decision making (or should be)."

2--Moderate

"It will in theory and it will in practice if we truly open communication."

"The answer is positive only if a staff, parent, student model is used in decision making."

"If principals and teachers learn to do cooperative problem solving and feel secure enough to open the process up to parents and students."

"If the building staff is willing to share their autonomy with students and community, then the answer is yes. If the building staff is not willing to share responsibility, then the answer is no."

"If building staffs are serious about the concept there will have to be significant involvement of students and parents."

Group 2--The Central Support Staff (N=31).--The Central Support Staff responded to the question, "Will parents and students have a greater voice?"

Yes, 80.0% No, 6.7% Undecided, 13.3%

Because of the number of responses to this question, not all are listed. The total number in each category is indicated and sample comments are listed.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	17
2--Moderate	7
3--Opposed	1
0--General	4

1--Supportive

"This is the main advantage in my opinion. Building administrator will not shift decision to central, thus will weigh parent and student opinions more."

"Their needs and desires will place demands on their own budgets thereby creating and necessitating consensus."

"When the firing line is the building, fewer people are involved in decisions. Parents and students are closer to the deciding body. That body in turn must be more sensitive and responsive to them."

"They will have more direct access to the decision maker."

"For the same reason administrators need it. Small school systems centrally administered face few problems that the large centralized systems face. I lay this on lack of contact, being more removed and making no relevant decisions to specific groups."

"Community Involvement Committees (CIC) or any group can exert influence and pressure on the principal or staff--no more passing the buck downtown."

2--Moderate

"It should--if we learn more effective ways of working with people (adults and youth)."

3--Opposed

"Principals and staffs will still rule the roost. Obviously this is a biased viewpoint. I make no apologies for it. I do not believe in Building Autonomy and fully believe that carried to its full potential there will only be individual school kingdoms!"

Group 3--The Secondary Principals (N=9).--The secondary principals responded to the question, "Will parents and students have a greater voice?"

Yes, 100% No, 0%

The following comments were made:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	3
2--Moderate	5
3--Opposed	none
0--General	none

Examples of comments made by the secondary principals:

1--Supportive

"Strengthen the ability to make the unique decisions necessary for efficient and effective operation of local buildings."

"Decisions affecting the local school can be actually made and put into practice by total involvement."

"It allows greater participation--school personnel will aggressively solicit honest involvement and make it a full partnership to decision making--community and the school working together."

2--Moderate

"Ultimately, yes. In the near future administrators and teachers will hold onto their interpretations of building autonomy which do not include making efficient use of parent and student inputs. Later on the 'professionals' won't feel as threatened, thus opening the decision-making process up to parents and students."

"When administrators get serious about parent and student involvement. A problem will be parental involvement by a representative group."

Group 4--The Secondary Assistant Principals (N=17).--

The secondary assistant principals responded to the question,
 "Will parents and students have a greater voice?"

Yes, 76.5% No, 23.5%

Because of the number of responses to this question, not all are listed. The total number in each category is indicated and sample comments are listed.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	8
2--Moderate	3
3--Opposed	1
0--General	none

1--Supportive

"This could be accomplished through the Community Involvement Committees."

"Schools will be able to do what they think best for their students. Needs do vary--interests vary--in different parts of town and on different levels."

"More community involvement in decision making as we define our building goals."

"Because decisions will be made at a lower level they can be more effective participants."

"Parents need to know that they are being listened to as do students. Each building needs the autonomy to satisfy the community needs."

2--Moderate

"Only to the extent parents and students want to be and will be involved, and only to the extent that a building staff allows them to have a voice. Again communications is the key. Also, I believe educators, because of their training and experience, should be the educational leaders."

"It can, if the faculty and administration carry out the true intent of building autonomy."

3--Opposed

"It does not necessarily follow that because building staff have autonomy, parents and students will be invited into the decision-making process."

Group 5--Teachers (N=59).---The teachers responded to the question, "Will parents and students have a greater voice?"

Yes, 62.7% No, 16.9% Undecided, 20.4%

Because of the number of responses to this question, not all are listed. The total number in each category is indicated and sample comments are listed.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
1--Supportive	15
2--Moderate	13
3--Opposed	12
0--General	3

1--Supportive

"Definitely, that is why I'm for it wholeheartedly, long-range goal wise, even though I can fault it and see seeming inequities presently in the growing pains short-term goal stages."

"Each building will have the ability to respond to the needs of the parents and students that they serve."

"If decisions are to be made by the people most closely affected, parents and students will have a greater voice because often they are the ones whom the decisions directly affect."

"Parent input can be received at the building level and implemented easier than Board of Education and Central Administration."

2--Moderate

"But they will have to (1) exercise initiative at times not convenient to themselves, and (2) become better informed (educated?) about school affairs."

"A good balance of P.A., B.A. and Centralized fatherhood should be more to the advantage all around."

"A lot of it depends on how much the administration of the building will let the parents and students help. I can see that the parents will find it easier to voice their opinions with the staff of the building their child goes to than it would be to communicate with the staff at the Board of Education."

3--Opposed

"This will depend on the administration. The more voice you give them the more they will take. Especially students. Administrators and teachers were hired to do the job and I think they should do it. Not to the exclusion of parents and students, but I feel students have so much freedom of choice now that they are confused as to what they should be doing. They need more direction by those hired to educate."

"Who is to run a school? Parents, with no training, or teachers who are prepared to cope with everything."

"Parents could care less and students don't know."

"The doctor prescribes medicine rather than the patient--the patient's job is to tell of and describe his or her ills."

Summary

The Superintendent's Cabinet indicated the greatest feeling of autonomy in their work of all the groups surveyed. Also, they responded most positively to the questions about the effects of professional autonomy upon the district and upon their jobs. The most positive response for this group was to the question regarding the effect autonomy has upon educational opportunities for students (100 percent). The least positive response was to the question about the effect autonomy would have on their personal effectiveness (76.9 percent). This may have been due, in part, to the

feeling that the change would have little or no influence on their effectiveness. Members of the Cabinet made almost universally supportive statements about autonomy in their comments. This would be expected because of their position as well as the fact that they meet regularly with the Superintendent and receive the greatest input on the philosophy and implementation of the innovation.

The Central Support Staff showed considerable diversity in their feelings of autonomy, although the majority indicated "considerable" to a "great deal" of autonomy. Their responses to Question 3, "personal effectiveness" (58.4 percent, yes); and Question 4, "job satisfaction" (61.3 percent, yes) with professional autonomy were the lowest. Their responses to Question 6, "community involvement" were the highest (80 percent, yes).

Comments made by members of the Central Support Staff indicated a somewhat different picture than their responses to the questions. Negative comments and expressions of skepticism or doubt were very frequent. Moderate and opposition statements exceeded supportive statements for Questions 4 and 5, with many statements indicating a feeling that autonomy had reduced the importance or effectiveness of their position in the district.

The secondary principals showed a surprising spread in their feelings of autonomy. Although with building autonomy one would expect the principals to have a high feeling of autonomy in their work, the mean for Question 1 was 3.78.

The lowest response to the questions was for Question 4, with 55.6 percent answering "yes" to the question dealing with job satisfaction with professional autonomy. The highest positive responses for the principals were for Question 2, "Will autonomy improve educational opportunities for students" (77.8 percent, yes); and for Question 6, "community involvement" (100 percent, yes).

In contrast to the response to the questions, however, the comments made by the secondary principals were generally supportive to the concept of autonomy, with supportive statements exceeding the others in most cases. Only on Question 6 were there more moderate statements than supportive comments.

Of all the groups in the population, the secondary assistant principals had the lowest feelings of autonomy in their work and also were most negative in their overall response to the five questions about the effects of autonomy. They were also the lowest group in their response to the questions dealing with personal effectiveness and job satisfaction (47.1 percent, yes; and 41.2 percent, yes, respectively).

The assistant principals' comments indicated a strong feeling of dependence or subordination to the actions and philosophy of the principal. There was a strong feeling expressed that professional autonomy has had little effect upon their work or upon their personal feelings of job satisfaction. Overall, however, their responses to the questions

and the nature of their comments were supportive of the concept of autonomy and its influence upon the educational program of the district.

The teachers' group in the survey was the largest group (N=59) when compared with the other groups individually, but approximated in size the total number of administrators in the population. They indicated a moderate to considerable feeling of autonomy and showed a moderate to low support for the concept of professional autonomy, with all of their responses for Questions 2-6 falling in the low 60 percent range.

Comments made by teachers were very interesting, and indicated a strong feeling that they were the least affected by the concept of professional autonomy. Although the comments were generally supportive of the concept, many expressed doubts that anything was really going to change. Many moderate comments expressed considerable opposition to Question 5, "Will autonomy allow greater participation of parents and students?" Moderate and negative responses exceeded supportive comments in both cases. Many teachers expressed in their comments a feeling that indicated greater community and student involvement was somewhat threatening to their professionalism.

Overall, the questionnaire indicated a moderately positive feeling toward the value of professional autonomy as a means of improving the educational opportunities for

students and providing a better way of including parents and students in the decision-making process.

Considerable negative feeling was expressed by those responding to the questionnaire about their personal effectiveness, job satisfaction, and the improvement of operations under professional autonomy. Even in this area the response was generally positive, however, with positive responses falling in the low 60 percent range for questions in this area.

CHAPTER V

REACTIONS TO THE LANSING MODEL

FOR DECENTRALIZATION

Excerpts from this dissertation were sent to four experts in the field of administrative theory for their reactions to both the Model and its implementation, as indicated by the analysis of the questionnaire. The materials were sent to Dr. Luvern Cunningham, Dean of the School of Education, The Ohio State University; Dr. Donald Leu, Dean of the School of Education, San Jose State University; Dr. Richard Featherstone, Professor of Education, Michigan State University; and Dr. Mark Smith, Associate Dean of the School of Education, Wayne State University in Detroit. These distinguished educators have all written extensively, have consulted widely in the field of school decentralization, and are recognized leaders in the field of educational administrative theory.

The selections included the demographic description of the Lansing Public Schools, the history of administrative patterns in the Lansing district, and the description of the Model for Decentralization developed in Chapter I. Also included were all of Chapter III, the organizational and

operational plan of the system, and the analysis of the survey included in Chapter IV.

The four experts were asked to review the materials and react to them in a taped interview. They were asked to give their reactions to the following propositions:

- I. The organization of the administrative structure in the Lansing Schools as a vehicle for professional autonomy--a decentralization of administrative functions; and
- II. Reactions to the findings of the survey of administrative personnel and teachers in the Lansing Secondary Schools.

Interview with Dr. Donald Leu

In an interview on August 31, 1973, Dr. Donald Leu, Dean of the School of Education, San Jose State University, responded to the two propositions.

- I. The organizational plan of the Lansing Schools as a vehicle for decentralization.

Dr. Leu stated that he was "amazed at the degree of decentralization that Lansing has made operational." He has worked with a great number of urban schools on decentralization, and stated that, "In my opinion, most are paper decentralizations or are quite different than Lansing in the way the decentralization is carried out." He showed his perception of the ways the Lansing Model for Decentralization differed from other, more traditional forms with which he was familiar.

As an example, he cited Chicago's decentralization as representing the type that consisted of breaking the district down into areas or regions, a kind of decentralization that is very common throughout the United States. This type of decentralization has an area superintendent administratively heading a region or subdistrict. When this type of division is analyzed, it is not really a decentralization in the sense that a change in the decision-making process takes place. Power still rests with a chief administrator. This type of breakdown is the most common model for decentralization. A second model described by Dr. Leu is the New York City model, with the formation of area or local governing boards. In his judgment, this has resulted in anarchy because no clear understanding of the role of the parent in relation to the local board was developed or defined for any of the participants or actors in the task of education.

Other models for decentralization simply bypassed central office personnel, and the superintendent worked directly with the building principal. There, Dr. Leu observed, a higher degree of authoritarian administration occurred than with a traditional organization. There is no assurance of community or teacher-student involvement with this type of organization.

In contrast to these various types of decentralization, Dr. Leu found the Lansing model "fascinating in that it is quite different from the so-called decentralization

models that are commonly in effect or that were described in the literature at this time."

The mode of analysis Dr. Leu uses for assessing the degree of decentralization is the determination of the point of decision making. He questioned the writer about the location or point of decision making for different kinds of decisions. Without knowing the level at which decisions are made, he found some difficulty in gaining insight into the extent to which Lansing has accomplished an actual decentralization of administrative power and needed more input on the decision-making process. Dr. Leu discussed the differences in ability of people in positions of responsibility, which affects their capacity to act or to make decisions. He felt that "some principals may have great difficulty in making decisions."

Dr. Leu did not feel that the Lansing model was just a decentralization model, and would have liked to have more information about the degree to which certain administrative functions in the district have been centralized. He used a term "centralized decentralization." Many state laws force centralization--for example, evaluation of specially funded programs. He saw laws and court decisions as causing greater centralization of administration. Also, he felt that some functions are carried out more efficiently in a centralized setting.

II. Comments or reactions to the findings of the survey of Lansing school personnel as analyzed in Chapter IV.

Dr. Leu's comments on the overall findings were:

"I would not have predicted these findings based upon my experience. I would have predicted that there would have been more confusion and opposition to the decentralization than the data indicated." He stated that he does not understand why, when power was taken from people at one level in the Lansing decentralization and shifted to another, and when this was done as quickly as it was without much time for internalization, the administrators affected by the change weren't madder than they were. He would have predicted different results than the survey provided.

In his experience, Dr. Leu explained, cabinet-level people have not historically conveyed the philosophy and the spirit of the move to decentralize to intermediate-level personnel. Real decentralization has been subverted by central office staff in virtually every large city effort to decentralize. The central office staff has built a wall around the superintendent, and effectively blocked him off from the operation. Then they have proceeded to work much the same as they did before the effort to decentralize. This, he feels, has not happened in the Lansing decentralization. He recognized the fact that teachers did not feel threatened by the change, and questioned the extent to which the decentralization was carried into the classroom--to students and to parents. He inquired about the extent to which parents or students were being used, as compared to any previous involvement. He expressed concern as well for changes or improvement in the quality of learning that is taking place

in the new setting. He asked if evaluation was being made of the effects upon the learning situation. Could we demonstrate an actually improved learning environment, and subsequently a better educational program? He suggested evaluation of changes in teaching and learning as part of the evaluation of decentralization: "Administrative organization should facilitate the learning program."

To summarize Dr. Leu's reaction to the materials submitted to him:

I. He found the Model to be the most extensive decentralization plan with which he was familiar. "There are many 'paper' decentralizations and regional or area decentralizations but I have never yet met a decentralization that is as intensive or as extensive as the one in Lansing."

II. "I am very surprised that there isn't more resistance, resentment and subversion of the decentralization than is indicated by the questionnaire returns. Although there are strong negative comments, any time a change is made one could expect negativism from some people, but when a change that has direct impact upon the role, the position and the power of a large number of people, I would have expected a much more negative reaction. I don't understand why, but it is surprising."

III. "I am enthusiastic about the decentralization plan in Lansing. I think it has tremendous implications for other school systems. In my judgment, most other schools are going to have to be forced into a Lansing-type model and

are not going to go into it voluntarily. I have seldom witnessed central office staffs or superintendents who have voluntarily relinquished or have shared power and decision making. All of the forces that are a result of the history of education indicate clearly that more and more teachers, parents and students--more and more building principals--are demanding to be involved in a meaningful way in major decisions that directly import them. That is why teachers and administrators are organizing. I am surprised that it is being done in Lansing voluntarily and I predict that we will find more and more districts being forced to the Lansing model. It is an exciting venture."

Interview with Dr. Richard Featherstone

Dr. Richard Featherstone, Professor of Education at Michigan State University, responded to the two questions in a taped interview on September 20, 1973.

- I. Reaction to the organization of administration in the Lansing schools as a vehicle for professional autonomy--a decentralization of administrative functions.

"I think this is the first time that I have seen the practical steps necessary to decentralize a district that comes close to a true philosophy of decentralization."

Dr. Featherstone used the Detroit decentralization as an example. When Detroit decentralized, all they did was to chop up the district into nine new districts that would be still larger than the Lansing District. Their effort at

decentralization stopped at a hierarchical level, the region; it never got down to where the building principal had not only responsibility but authority and accountability. In a sense, Detroit did have decentralization over what they had before, but they did not change in the philosophical sense of what we are trying to do, get decisions made down where the problems occur, hold people accountable for those things that are their function--for example, the school program, personnel, finance, etc.--and make sure these responsibilities are understood. Featherstone stated, "The Lansing Model for Decentralization is the first one I have seen anywhere that reaches for the philosophy of decentralization the way I understood it to be."

"It seemed to me that decentralization can have its greatest output, a means of relating education back to the people. Decentralization can make education and educational change a part of the people rather than a part of bureaucracy. The Detroit or Chicago system for decentralization is simply going to modify bureaucracy. The organization is Lansing ought to mean that people in the individual schools have something to say about what happens to their children. Therefore, I find the approach to decentralization that is evidenced in the Lansing thrust for professional autonomy a very positive design."

Dr. Featherstone pointed out what he felt to be a weakness in the Lansing design for decentralization. "It seems to me that, although there is a strong effort to

decentralize budget and dollar control, the real control is still at the central office. Perhaps these contracts are necessary, but if I see a weakness in the plan it seems to me that there is not enough autonomy for the individual principal in regard to dollars." Dr. Featherstone explained by summarizing his concept of true decentralization. "It seems to me that the central board should be responsible for the effectuation of democratic principles relating to human rights, and should have authority and responsibility for some aspects of the control of education, particularly in relation to administration of the schools and the development of educational objectives for the district in general."

"Practically all of the aspects of administering schools should be in the hands of the school, with the exception of those things that affect the district as a whole such as civil liberties." Dr. Featherstone observed that the Planning Division was recognized in the Lansing design as an important element of the organization, and this has not been the case previously in organizational structures. Dr. Featherstone felt that an organized planning and predicting service may be essential to successful decentralization.

Today it is important to have a planning division that deals with all of the functions of administration, including finance, personnel, students, program, and organizational structure. Lansing has this structure built in.

Dr. Featherstone summarized: "I think succinctly that the Lansing Plan for Decentralization is a quality organizational design based on good theoretical premises. I feel that it is really based upon a belief in democracy."

Interview with Dr. Mark Smith

In a taped interview on September 25, 1973, Dr. Mark Smith, Assistant Dean of the School of Education at Wayne State University in Detroit, gave his reaction to the decentralization in Lansing and to the responses shown in the questionnaire.

Dr. Smith expressed concern about the relationship of the principal to the Community Involvement Committees that are organized in the local schools in Lansing. He inquired about the part they play in decision making and how they act to have a meaningful part in the process. He felt care must be taken in their formation to ensure a truly representative membership from the community.

Dr. Smith felt that if the C.I.C. has real power it could affect the accountability that might be accepted by the principal. Is it possible that he could escape responsibility for decisions if he extended the power to the C.I.C.? He was very interested in the way the C.I.C. was formed, how decisions are made, or how consensus is reached. He felt it is essential to effective community involvement that the parents and students included through the mechanism of the C.I.C. be given good information to be able to make sound judgments. Dr. Smith stated that

if students and parents are to be drawn into the school in meaningful ways, they need to be informed and perhaps trained in ways that will allow them to be true partners in the decision-making process. He made a strong point that board policy and administrative regulations that set the standards and the perimeters for local autonomy be made available to the C.I.C. so that all parties in the school community work from the same framework with full knowledge of where they are going and understand their limits. He felt it is the local principal's responsibility to make these limits or standards known and make the policies available.

He felt citizen and student involvement is a highly significant ingredient to the Lansing plan, and contrasted it to the regionalization of the Detroit decentralization.

Dr. Smith said the planning function was of special interest, and stated that the thrust to develop a separate division for planning was a critical factor in the success of the decentralization.

Evaluation of the ongoing program and continued input from the local level to the central support staff he felt was critical. "If schools are developing new directions and new curriculum or adopting new materials, central support staffs need to be kept aware and informed. If schools go far afield without coordination or accountability, a strong chance for dysfunctional outcomes exists. It is possible for isolated cases where C.I.C. decisions could

influence a principal into taking directions that lead to nonproductive practices." He expressed the need for central office support and evaluation, but also stated that the local autonomy in evolving the schools' program and the local initiative should be preserved with central office control.

Dr. Smith expressed concern that as school/community differences were interpreted into diversity in program, the mobility of students within the district could be a problem. Students transferring from one school to another and confronting entirely different curricula, textbooks, and other materials could have problems in making adjustments to the new setting. He felt the teaching and counseling staff would need to be made aware of the problem and act to provide for these special needs as students move from one school to another.

II. Response to the analysis of the questionnaire.

Because of the range of responses by the group of secondary principals, Dr. Smith commented that weak administrators at the local level could be a problem. He felt it essential that building principals be well informed on the theory and philosophy of autonomy and well grounded in the district policies and administrative regulations. "It is highly important that principals be well informed and that they are skilled in working with groups of people."

Dr. Smith recommended workshops or training sessions for principals because of the response shown on the survey.

He questioned the input that the central support staff was getting from the superintendent, and called for meetings on a regular basis as remediation for the negativism expressed in the survey. In commenting on the position in which the decentralization placed the superintendent, Dr. Smith stated that he (Dr. Candoli) is putting himself in a most vulnerable position. "Most superintendents would not take this chance. He could very well be putting himself out on a limb and have subordinates saw it off."

He felt many people in the survey were uncomfortable because of the rapidity of the change in status when the decision making moved from central staff to building level administrators and to the C.I.C.

The assistant principals group interested Dr. Smith, both in their reaction to the questions and in their comments. He felt they were negative because of their subordinate position to the principal where they did not have any independent responsibility for planning and organizing and only for operations. He called for their inclusion in the discussions on philosophy. They should have regular and direct input to be fully informed on the planning and decision-making process. "The process could break down if they are called upon to work with teachers, students and parents without having good input on the basic concept of decentralization."

Dr. Smith expressed interest in the great variety of special services and program outlined in the description

of the operations division that the Lansing schools were exploring.

In summary, Dr. Smith felt the Lansing Model addressed itself to the sensitivity to community needs and to the involvement of citizens, in contrast to other plans for decentralization such as the Detroit plan for subdividing the district into regions which really created just "several smaller Detroits."

If the Lansing model for decentralization is to be effective, Dr. Smith felt accountability of local action to the central staff was essential, along with good support in planning and evaluation. He felt the C.I.C. is a critical organization and should be well informed and trained if they are to be effective.

Interview with Dr. Luvern Cunningham

In an interview on October 16, 1973, Dr. Luvern Cunningham, Dean of the School of Education at The Ohio State University, responded to the material submitted to him.

Dr. Cunningham stated that he felt the description of the organizational and operational plan of the Lansing schools in Chapter III yielded a clear sense of administrative organization of the Lansing schools. "One gets a picture of the layers, a picture of what is central, and a picture of what is local and you gain some sense about the fuzziness or the foggyness or the tension that may exist where clarity doesn't shake out the relationship

of central and local. Or, in other terms, a sense of the responsible autonomy that exists in contrast, a set of constraints which reduce autonomy. The organizational chart [of Lansing schools' administration] is in essence a conventional organizational chart which could be interpreted by persons who are strong advocates of decentralization as being top heavy and not really reflecting the philosophy of responsible autonomy just in the way that it is depicted-- it puts the schools and the kids at the bottom. It is as if it were flowing down from the top, just in its presentation. Maybe an inversion of that, in which the schools would be on top and where they would be reaching down for sources of help, etc. would be a better way of putting it."

Dr. Cunningham remarked that the form of the study itself also is a give away, in the sense that it reflects a devotion to hierarchy and centralization rather than responsible autonomy and decentralization. Not that Lansing is not moving toward responsible autonomy, it is just that most people are so trapped by experience and convention that most of what we do is hierarchical and centralized rather than decentralized. For example, the respondents in the survey are listed from cabinet down to lower levels of administration down to teachers, which is hierarchical in the flow of conventional definitions of power and authority. There are other kinds of questions in the study and in the organizational chart which would lead a stranger to believe that, even though there is a strong devotion to

this philosophy, there are many other symbols which support centralization rather than decentralization. In reviewing the survey, Dr. Cunningham said, "Just looking at the raw data and the findings that you have reported so far, it seems to be predictable. I don't find anything surprising in what is reported by teachers and principals, assistant principals, etc. in displaying themselves across the five-point scale in just about the frame that I would have thought would appear."

He felt that despite the strong commitment of the philosophy, the presentation in this paper comes out in terms of its formal design, still to be quite central in its effect, that is, a person looks at it and it appears to be quite central. It is partially the symbols that surround it, the organizational chart which sort of flows from the top down and the mode of inquiry of the research which starts centrally and moves out to the provinces. It is very traditional and almost predictable. But if one is deeply devoted to responsible autonomy--getting as close as possible to where the action is and where the kids are, then just reversing that order would have been a reflection of that conviction.

Dr. Cunningham stated he felt the research was an important piece of work and that he felt many people would be examining it carefully; in his own interest he would like to refer to it from time to time after it is accepted.

"From my point of view," he remarked, "the description of how role occupants view their responsibility within a frame of responsible autonomy is unique and doesn't appear anywhere else to my knowledge. The interviews that you [the writer] have conducted caused people to look at what they do and that act in itself ought to facilitate movement toward responsible autonomy. The interviews caused them to spell out what is viewed as essential to remain centralized and what can, in good administrative practice, be delegated within the framework of responsible autonomy. There is a need for people to believe in it and to think that it is genuine and that it is not a game. The comments made by many people indicate that in many cases people have not accepted it nor are they on their way toward supporting the spirit or philosophy behind responsible autonomy."

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In the introductory pages of this study, several questions were posed: Is professional autonomy (in the Lansing schools) in fact a model of operation that will cut through the bureaucratic structure of the administrative hierarchy and create a more flexible and responsive institution?

Do those affected administrators and teachers who are working within the new framework perceive the changes as an aid to bringing about improvement in the operation of the schools in the district?

The literature clearly directs those in school management to act in ways that will bring schools closer to the people and make schools more sensitive to the needs of their clients.

The literature, too, cites a variety of schemes for decentralization in the larger urban centers that have attempted to regenerate the local community sensitivity needed for making sound program and organizational judgments.

For a multitude of reasons, however, many of these plans for decentralization have been attenuated or are

drifting toward failure. Dr. Mark Smith at Wayne State University remarked that creating the various regional boards in the Detroit decentralization only subdivided that district into nine smaller Detroits and resulted in no real structural decentralization of decision making, nor has it acted to build community responsiveness.¹

Bernard Bard, in his article "Is Decentralization Working?" said the confused and confusing history of efforts to decentralize the New York schools was, if not a total loss, then rendered ineffective by the complexities of special interests of district and union politics. He wrote: "Decentralization by all accounts has yet to achieve a break through in pupil performance." He concluded that, "Between the professionals and the parents there is no match. To expect decentralization to close the gap between them is perhaps to expect too much."²

Allan Ornstein, in his examination of research on decentralization, commented on the needs of individuals and groups in the cities to find ways to live with one another and respect the interest and rights of others. He contended that "We need to put aside our self interests and ideologies to reduce the rhetoric and emotional exchanges and finally, to depolarize. We still have to learn how to

¹Interview with Dr. Mark Smith, Associate Dean of the School of Education, Wayne State University, September 25, 1973.

²Bernard Bard, "Is Decentralization Working?" Phi Delta Kappan, LIV, 4 (December, 1972), 238-43.

communicate with one another." In his review of research on decentralization, he concluded that "There are no typical cities, no typical communities, no typical decentralization plans and no typical community control plans."¹ He stated that we have no research evidence that decentralization and community control improve education, and called for longitudinal studies to supply much-needed data.

Dr. Donald Leu, in reacting to the Lansing plan for decentralization, commented that the Lansing Model for Building Autonomy was the most extensive decentralization plan that he had seen. Further, he speculated that other school districts would have to move to this type of decentralization plan if they were to be successful in accomplishing a real redistribution of administrative power.

Central to this study is the descriptive analysis of the Model for Decentralization of Administrative Functions in the Lansing Schools. To gain those insights needed to respond comprehensively to the questions posed in the study, and to succeed as an effective vehicle for cutting through the bureaucratic matrix of the administrative hierarchy and bring about greater responsiveness and flexibility, the Lansing Model for Decentralization must include features that go beyond those that have simply created subdistricts or have developed administrative subunits.

¹Allan Ornstein, "Research on Decentralization," Phi Delta Kappan, LIV, 9 (May, 1973), 610-614.

The analysis of the various divisions and departments of the Lansing district revealed those administrative functions which remain centralized and those which are decentralized within the managerial levels of the district. The key to understanding those administrative relationships as they exist is to understand the flux of decision making within that matrix.

Although considerable variations were observed in the decision-making process because of personalities or differences in individual willingness to assume leadership roles, the Lansing plan for professional autonomy clearly pushes most decision making to its lowest level. The central office staff acts by filling the role of support staff, assisting in developing strategies, providing resources, and promoting effective evaluation. It is clear to an observer that there is imminent danger of the plan being subverted by those at various levels of administration if resistance to the support role becomes the dominant factor. The danger of subversion is critical, because of the nature of the plan, whereby the decentralization is accomplished through a functional design of various management responsibilities rather than through strictly organizational structuring.

In the analysis of the administrative organization of the Lansing Schools, a perception of the concept of professional autonomy was gained by an examination of the ways those at various levels of responsibility act in

carrying out their job functions. In the definition of role responsibilities, professional autonomy was seen to work through a delegation of decision-making authority, where responsibilities are shared and focus is directed to the local school building level, where the need for sensitivity is more acute and the school staff is in close contact with students and parents.

The analysis of the district's organization showed a centralization of some administrative functions but generally most decisions are forced to the lowest possible level through the philosophy of building autonomy. There are clear indications, however, of considerable variation among schools in their willingness and ability to attain a high level of autonomy.

In the area of finance, decisions for purchasing educational materials and teaching supplies are decentralized to the building level. The curriculum process and the planning function operate at the local level, with support services at the central office level supplying a broad variety of assistance in resources, information, and evaluation.

Some functions remain centralized because of district-wide policy or the nature of the responsibility. Examples are centrally establishing the budget for the teacher/pupil ratio for building personnel allotment or building maintenance contracting at the central office, etc. The key to the move to professional autonomy, however, is

the overriding philosophy that decisions affecting the activities, organization, and curriculum of a school community (the staff, students, and parents of that school) may not be made at the central office.

Those at the local school level are free to go in the direction they feel best for their school, without the limitations and restraints of remote-control decision making. They are held responsible and accountable, however, for outcomes through a process of mutually generated evaluation and ongoing planning.

Although the organizational chart shows the existence of an administrative hierarchy, professional autonomy operates as a functional decentralization of roles and acts as a vehicle for local control. Each school in the Lansing system and the community it serves can plan its program alternatives, assess its strengths and weaknesses, define its objectives and goals, and act to attain them. Parallel to this independence is a structure for support that allows each school to draw upon the total resources of the district to aid it in providing the best educational structure for its community.

The survey given to the central office personnel, the superintendent and his cabinet, the central support staff, the building staffs, principals, assistant principals, and teachers of the secondary schools lent considerable insight into the ways that those affected by the innovation view the plan for decentralization. The survey

revealed widely contrasting ways in which changes in roles and responsibilities influenced the professionals personally, as well as their perceptions of their jobs.

Although there were expressions of strong opposition to the implementation of building autonomy, the overall response was favorable, with a total positive response of over 60 per cent.

The questionnaire revealed a moderately supportive climate for the new plan, and showed that those affected were divided in their personal feelings of their own effectiveness, job satisfaction, and the improvement of operations under professional autonomy. Those closest to the superintendent and those receiving the most input in the theory and philosophy of the Plan for Professional Autonomy indicated the greatest support.

Also of considerable significance is the somewhat negative response and negative comments expressed by the teachers in the survey to question #5, "Will autonomy allow greater participation of parents and students?" The teachers indicated they felt somewhat threatened professionally by the inclusion of parents and students in the decision-making process.

The motivation for any decentralization plan is greater community input to school problem solving and program improvement. Success or failure of the innovation is dependent upon those actors who live and work within the confines of the structure as it is conceived. The

way those in the school community perceive the plan for decentralization and thereby carry out their roles will determine if the plan will flourish or if it will be subverted and die. The survey indicated, through the analysis of the response to the questions and by the nature of the comments, that there exists a generally supportive climate for the concept of autonomy as a vehicle for decentralization and a favorable expression of support for the influence it has had upon the educational program of the district.

Conclusions

It would be fallacious to think that any plan for changing the responsibilities and roles as drastically as has the plan for professional autonomy in Lansing would not meet with considerable skepticism and resistance from those who have lost power within the organization. It may have been such interorganizational influences as these that have caused other plans for decentralization to falter.

In larger city school districts, the centralizing influences of specialization in finance, curriculum, planning, and personnel historically have led to a rigid, complex power structure that has resisted change. These influences have, in the past, led to the development of layers of school officials barring the way of those seeking to bring about needed changes. Also, the structure acted to isolate and insulate the superintendent from the realities of dysfunctionality at local levels. There has, in the

past, been a resistance and unwillingness by school officials to change because of the perceived threat to their positions of authority.

As it is conceived, the Lansing plan for decentralization is designed to allow greater ease in developing innovative approaches to program improvement because of the greater visibility of the decision-making process and the location of the point of decision. Needs are made more apparent and those responsible can be held more accountable to those affected by the decision.

As with other urban centers, Lansing's population is constantly changing, as are the educational needs of its people. These changing conditions, and the volatile nature of the social upheaval that has all urban communities in its grasp, demand a sensitive, responsive school system that is equipped to flex with the diversity of demands within the complex urban community.

As Featherstone and Hill observed in their analysis of New York City's decentralization, there is a need for diversity in communities with widely varied populations; a local decision-making process is needed, in contrast to the concept of uniformity that is generated through central controls.¹

¹Featherstone and Hill, op. cit., p. 12.

Recommendations

The efforts during the past two years--from the time Superintendent Candoli introduced the concept of professional autonomy--to the present have been directed toward replacing an educational bureaucracy with a more responsive system. For success in introducing the plan to decentralize and create a more flexible system, several conditions must prevail:

I. For success, highly competent and committed people are needed at all levels of the organization. True local autonomy involves considerable risk by the superintendent. He must give authority to those at lower levels to make binding decisions, and must be confident enough in their ability to handle authority to give them true autonomy. He must be willing to allow independent decision making to take place, and respect and support action taken at lower levels and avoid tempering them out of distrust.

a. The superintendent (the innovator) cannot be isolated or insulated, but must be highly visible and vocal; he must have significant input to assess the flux of power.

b. Those in positions of high influence in the administrative structure must accept the philosophy and theory of the plan to decentralize.

c. Central office personnel must have continual input on the philosophy of decentralization and accept the concept even though it means a loss of authority and the power of decision making.

d. Those at lower levels of authority must be involved in inservice activities that will prepare them for developing skills in community central decision making.

e. Role definitions or job descriptions must be developed to ascertain the interrelationship of responsibilities, and to outline systems of authority and accountability for points of decision making.

II. The introduction of a plan cannot be viewed as a single act, but as a process that is modified by the conditions of the social setting and by the people involved in the process.

III. Effective two-way lines of communication are essential to full understanding of central office action, as well as effecting good ties between local action and support personnel.

IV. Effective evaluation is of primary importance if responsible autonomy is to have built-in accountability. This is especially important to still the fears of those who feel autonomy leads to anarchy.

V. The concept of universal, city-wide goals must be rejected. Building level goals must be developed and a system of accountability used that focuses the attention upon the first responsibility of the local school--its accountability to the students and parents of that community.

VI. The key to success of the plan for decentralization is the development of true citizen participation to be included as an integral part of the operational mainstream.

Implications for Future Studies

As this study progressed both in the development of the Model and in the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire, it became apparent that there were many areas of concern that could be explored in further research.

Allan Ornstein, in his analysis of "Research on Decentralization," wrote: ". . . There is no empirical evidence that decentralization or community control will reform the schools. Without quality research, we base our claims at best on bandwagon wisdom, at worst on political ideology." He concluded that until the evidence is clear we should proceed (with decentralization) with caution.¹

Ornstein's comment on the need for research is relevant. The literature has extensive material dealing with the need for decentralization, but little dealing with longitudinal studies or hard data on the effects of decentralization on the learning process or upon the achievement of students. Some possible studies which could contribute to the literature in the field of organizational theory are:

¹Allan Ornstein, "Research on Decentralization," Phi Delta Kappan, LIV, 9 (May, 1973), 610-14.

1. An ongoing study of the Lansing Model for Decentralization could be conducted over the next few years to gather the following types of data:

a. Information is needed on the effects of decentralization upon the learning process and upon the achievement of students in the schools. Does the implementation of building autonomy aid learning and raise the level of achievement in a school?

b. A survey is needed on the continued reaction of staff to the plan, similar to the survey in this study. Because the innovation is only in its third year, it may be too early to assess the degree of acceptance or rejection by those affected by the decentralization of power. Further study could assess more thoroughly the degree of success in implementing the plan.

c. Continual study of the Model itself will be useful, because it is an evolving plan that changes with the ongoing influences of those affected by its inception and its implementation.

2. This study focused primarily upon the decentralization and its influences upon the secondary schools and the personnel involved. A study should be conducted along parallel lines at the elementary level. The elementary schools have historically been closer to their communities than secondary schools--What, then, are the effects of the decentralization upon the program and the process for decision making at the elementary level?

3. Does the move to local autonomy build better schools and community, and does it relieve the hostilities and tensions between groups in the community as they are brought together in the schools? An assessment could be made of the success or failure of millage votes in relation to the implementation of community-level decision making.

4. Studies could be made on the relative job satisfaction of school staff members in a decentralized system, as compared to those in a centralized, traditionally administered school system.

5. A study could be generated to show the diversity in organization and procedures that may develop between local units in a decentralized system in such areas as curriculum, instructional practices, or financing.

6. The attitudes and perceptual understandings that are held by various levels of administrators toward the decentralized structure in relation to various functions could be important to the success or failure of a plan for decentralization. The study could include the attitudes of building level personnel toward:

- a. Communications with the central office,
- b. Availability of resources for innovations and study,
- c. Availability of support services,
- d. Responsiveness of central support services.

7. A study of the extent and form of community involvement could be valuable to assess the extent to which there is true inclusion of the local school community in the decision-making process.

The above suggestions made for further research not only could lend further information for the full understanding of the effects and need for decentralization of an urban school district, but also if conducted in the Lansing school system could give much needed data to aid in the evaluation of the ongoing implementation of professional autonomy as a vehicle for the decentralization of administrative functions.

APPENDIX

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

LANSING SCHOOL DISTRICT
LANSING, MICHIGAN

WALTER FRENCH
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
1900 S. CEDAR STREET

FRANK A. THROOP
PRINCIPAL

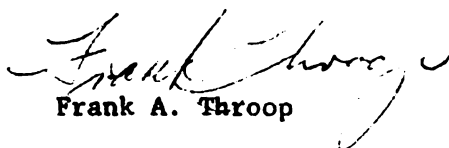
Esteemed Colleagues:

I am gathering information from teachers and administrators about their views on professional autonomy. This data will be used for a dissertation and will also be valuable to the Lansing School District as a partial evaluation of this developing innovation.

I appreciate your contribution and I thank you in advance for taking the time and trouble to respond to the questionnaire.

Please return it to me at Walter French Junior High School at your earliest convenience. I would like to have the data from this survey collected by April 13.

Sincerely,



Frank A. Throop

Enclosure

Professional Autonomy, defined as a functional organizational pattern that is developing in the Lansing School System, places responsibility for operational decision making at the level closest to those affected by that decision. The term **Building Autonomy** as it is intended in this questionnaire is directed at the decentralization of responsibilities within the school organization. Units at the various levels of the organizational structure are free to gather information, assess and to act independently on situations within their area of responsibility. The term **Responsible Autonomy** is also used to denote a balance between accountability and freedom to act on educational and organizational matters in all part of the system.

1. As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you presently have autonomy in your work?

1	2	3	4	5
Little autonomy	A limited degree of autonomy	A moderate amount of autonomy	Considerable autonomy	A great deal of autonomy

Comment?

2. Do you feel that, as Professional Autonomy is fully implemented, the educational opportunities for students in the Lansing Secondary Schools will be improved?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why?

3. Do you feel, as the program of Professional Autonomy is more fully implemented, that you personally will be more effective in your job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why?

4. Do you feel that as the program of Professional Autonomy is more fully implemented, you will be more satisfied with your job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why?

5. In your opinion, will the transition from centralized decision making to Building Autonomy result in an improvement in the operation of the district?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why?

6. Do you feel that Building Autonomy will allow the parents and students a greater voice in the decision making process for Lansing Schools?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why?

Title of Present position _____

Number of years in Education _____

If in administration, number of years in administration _____

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