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AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF RESPONSIBLE
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By

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ABSTRACT

AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF RESPONSIBLE AUTONOMY IN THE LANSING PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

By

William Harris Haak

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Lansing School District Model of Responsible Autonomy based on the involvement of building staffs in decision making at the building level. This decentralized organizational strategy was designed to provide decision-making alternatives for building level educators so they could effectively provide viable programs to meet the heterogeneous needs of urban students.

The Responsible Autonomy practices available to building administrators and teachers include: (1) budgeting funds allocated to each school; (2) planning curricula designed for the specific student needs at each building; (3) assisting with the selection of new personnel; and (4) the involvement of parents and community members in educational program planning at each school.

The study focused on how the five junior high staffs accepted and implemented localized Responsible Autonomy decision-making alternatives. Finally, the relationship between Responsible Autonomy and successful educational practices was examined.

In addition to the data from the surveys, achievement data from the Stanford Achievement Test were of value in responding to the following questions:

To what extent is the observed commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy related to the implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices?

To what extent does the implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices relate to student achievement in reading and mathematics?

To what extent does the implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices relate to the implementation of "successful practices?"

The conclusions drawn from this study on the decentralized model of Responsible Autonomy were:

Responsible Autonomy has been accepted to a high degree by junior high school administrators and teachers.

Practices of Responsible Autonomy are being implemented in the Lansing junior high schools.

A significant relationship was found between the implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices and commitment to Responsible Autonomy. The school highest in commitment to Responsible Autonomy was also highest in its implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices. Conversely, the same pattern held for the lowest school.

Student achievement in reading was significantly higher in the school highest in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices than in the school lowest in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices. No significant difference was found for student achievement in mathematics between the two schools.

The implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices did not account for more of the difference in student achievement in junior high schools than did the implementation of "successful practices."

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the loving members of my family--my wife, Eva; and our children, Dave, Karen, Kristi, and Tom.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

American education must see to it that intellectual opportunities are accessible to all societal members on equable and easy terms.¹ John Dewey concludes this concept by stating, "It would be fatal to a society to stratify into separate classes."² This unequivocal declaration is an important goal of our educational process. The antithesis of this goal is to assume our society will be benefited by restricting intellectual opportunities to the children of a privileged class.

Presently, many adult societal members are attempting to follow an ambivalent course in relation to the two conflicting goals above. This ambivalence is frequently exhibited by the verbal support of providing equal access to educational opportunities for all children while these same societal members live in the largely homogeneous environs of the suburbs or send their children to private schools. Speaking on this issue of the elite satisfying their own self-interests, President Carter recently stated:

¹John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: MacMillan Company, 1925), pp. 101-102.

²Ibid.

Too many have had to suffer at the hands of a political and economic elite. . . . When the public schools are inferior or torn by strife, their children go to exclusive private schools, and when the bureaucracy is bloated and confused, the powerful always manage to discover and occupy niches of special influence and privilege.¹

Goldhammer, Candoli, and Cofer further clarify this condition by stating: "Words do not change school systems, actions of people do!"²

Some writers indicate this ambivalent behavior on the part of many adult decision makers is counterproductive and self defeating. Paraphrasing Maslow, as long as adults attempt to enhance the position of themselves and their children by restricting access of culturally different children to educational opportunities, they will in the same measure be admitting they still need to overcome severe limitations to their own self-actualization. He concludes that it is better to live by growth (acceptance of ourselves and others) rather than fear (which manifests itself as anxiety, despair, intrinsic guilt and shame, and lack of identity).³

This societal reticence to associate with culturally different persons has been a problem of long standing. However many

¹Jimmy Carter, "Democratic Nomination Acceptance Speech," New York Times, 16 July 1969, p. 10A.

²Keith Goldhammer, Carl Candoli, and Lloyd Cofer, "A Report on Decentralization of the Detroit Public Schools to the Detroit Task Force," Detroit, 1974. (Mimeographed.)

³Abraham H. Maslow, "Psychological Data and Value Theory," in New Knowledge in Human Values, ed. Abraham H. Maslow (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 127.

culturally different groups were able to take advantage of the occupational demands for their services as our country progressed from an agrarian society to an industrial, technological society. Many of the assimilation opportunities for current culturally different groups have disappeared with the current demand for technological specialists. One perspective on this point is that the "melting pot" theory is presently an euphemism.¹ Inherent in the melting-pot theory is the belief that culturally different children are "inferior" and need to be conditioned to behave normally in a uniculture.²

Dewey refers to Smith's position above with the concept that it is desirable to have individualization on one hand and a broader community of interest on the other.³ This is a very complex goal when it is related to providing educational opportunities for culturally different children. An adult who supports this position needs to have a lot of courage. Presently, many adults choose not to participate in the process of improving conditions in our urban centers. Therefore, leaders in all positions of responsibility, who support association of all societal members, may be high risk takers.

¹William L. Smith, "The Melting-Pot Theory: Demise of Euphemism," in Cultural Pluralism in Education: A Mandate for Change, ed. Madelon D. Stent, et al. (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1973), p. 143.

²Ibid.

³Dewey, op. cit., p. 101.

Some authors believe that educational leaders should be aware of their values. Drucker addresses this point by stating:

Defining the situation always requires a decision on objectives, that is, on values and their relationship. It always requires a decision on the risk the manager is willing to run. It always, in other words,¹ requires judgement and a deliberate choice between values.

The task is clear. Societal leaders need to decide if access to educational opportunities is for all children or for those of the elite. If they decide access to educational opportunities is for all children, then they have to be astute in dealing with strong vested interests which favor disassociation with culturally different societal members. Speaking to this point, W. E. B. DuBois challenges educators "to perceive education as a derivation; and in fact, a drawing out of human powers."² These human powers can be used to meet the needs of all societal members.

By knowing their values and accepting the risks of supporting access of educational opportunities for all students, educational leaders need to continue to look for new solutions to solve current problems. They will be effective as they examine the degree to

¹Peter F. Drucker, "On Making Decisions," Duns Review and Modern Industry (August 1974): 27.

²W. E. B. DuBois, The Education of Black People--Ten Critiques 1906-1960, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), p. 9.

which schools meet the purposes for which they are organized and financed.¹

The Problem

The evolutionary development of today's huge centralized educational bureaucracies followed the growth patterns of governmental, business, commercial and industrial organizations in the United States.² As population density increased, particularly in emerging urban centers, the demands upon these organizations multiplied, and they were faced with the challenge of meeting the heterogeneous needs of their clients.³

As educational organizations developed, they also closely paralleled the development of Taylor's classical theory of management.⁴ Candoli and Leu further state:

The influence of scientific management theory led to specialization, to hierarchical structure, to increased efficiency, and to increased depersonization of the educational enterprise. As a result, large centralized school districts featured central office decision making with less and less response to individual student or community needs.⁵

¹Goldhammer, Candoli, and Cofer, op. cit., p. 2.

²I. Carl Candoli and Donald J. Leu, "Planning For Decentralized Educational Programs and Facilities," a position paper, September 1972, p. 1.

³Charles R. Adrian, Governing Urban America (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961), p. 7.

⁴Candoli and Leu, op. cit., p. 1.

⁵Ibid., p. 2.

Related to the above point is the development that, increasingly, over the past several years, charges and counter charges have been leveled against urban schools.¹ Many of the critics, including Goodman, The Open Classroom; Kozol, Death At An Early Age; Jencks, Inequality; and Kohl, 36 Children, directed their charges at the inflexibility and insensitivity of rigidly organized urban schools. These critics insisted that education is a human enterprise and cannot be allowed to become remote and distant from its clients.

The urban schools responded to these charges of organizational rigidity by becoming more centralized in the early 1960's. Instead of adjusting to the demands of serving heterogeneous needs of their clients, many urban schools attempted to deliver traditional services designed to meet homogeneous student needs.

These school systems, spawned and nurtured in the value system of middle class America, were simply unequipped to understand, much less respond to the educational needs of a multi-ethnic, culturally pluralistic clientele. By the mid 1960's the school scene was shifting, as American culture went into a period of dislocation marked by conflicting priorities and dissonance.²

A large amount of research indicates that public schools have not been effective in coping with the pressure of serving the

¹I. Carl Candoli, "The Organization and Management of the Urban School System," Theory into Practice (October 1976): 1.

²Jim Walsh and J. Peter Williams, Jr., "Statewide Reorganization of Education?" Phi Delta Kappan (May 1977): 693.

heterogeneous needs of urban children. The Coleman Report findings indicate that Negro students on standardized achievement tests scored somewhat below white students at the first grade level, were about 1.36 grades behind by the sixth grade, 2.4 years behind by the ninth grade, and were 3.3 grades behind by the twelfth grade.¹

Coleman notes that one of the major implications of his report is that many schools ineffectively provide educational opportunities for minority students which are responsive to their learning needs.² The development of these student skills is critical to their making a living and participating fully in modern society. Whatever may be the combination of nonschool factors--poverty, community attitude, low educational level of parents--which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and nonverbal skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not enabled many urban children to overcome these educational limitations.

One of the critical 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 were more than three times as likely to drop out of school than white students (20 percent compared to 6 percent).³

¹James S. Coleman, et al., Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, U. S. Office of Education, 1966), p. 20.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

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 education institutions during the 1960's and 1970's. The critics, in part, focused their attention upon the urban school organization. Goldhammer and Taylor's summary is:

Studying the educational problems in the inner city led some educators and citizens to see the human wastage which results from the failure to adapt 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.²

Faced with pressure resulting from dysfunctional goals and educational programs, school districts began to make organizational adjustments by the late 1960's. A primary concern of the 1970's has been to effectively accomplish the goal of providing for the heterogeneous needs of urban students.

¹Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 243.

²Keith Goldhammer and Robert E. Taylor, Career Education: Perspective and Promise (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1972), p. 17.

Campbell and his associates strongly support the need for effective urban public schools which derive strength from the heterogeneity of the clients served.¹ In order to accomplish this task, urban schools will need to deal with increasing expectations by clients on one hand and decreasing resources with which to meet client demands for educational services on the other hand. Complicating factors such as physical, social, and emotional needs, which are prerequisites to learning, serve to further dilute the resource base. Many urban youngsters must be supplied with a variety of nutritional, health, psychological, and social services in order to function in an educational setting. These services are important, for without them, the student cannot hope to attain educational success. Yet, they do exert a severe drain on available resources. As urban America becomes the haven for the poor and minority groups, schools in central cities strain and sometimes fail to provide diverse educational delivery systems with appropriate support services.²

These statements about the challenges which urban schools face are a sampling of the many critical and pervasive issues they encounter. Three of the most pressing and consuming issues,

¹Roald F. Campbell, et al., The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Book, Inc., 1970), p. 440.

²U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, Racial Isolation in the Public Schools, I (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 14 and 18.

according to Candoli, are: the desegregation issue; the financial issue; and the decentralization issue.¹

Although the issues of desegregation and finance are important, the major emphasis of this dissertation is on decentralization.

The focal point of this study is to determine the degree to which school decentralization has improved the ability of an urban school district to increase access to educational success by its student-clients.

The Decentralization Issue

One of the problems faced by educational decision makers, as cited by Coladarci and Getzels, is their tendency to rely upon leaders from other disciplines for guidance.² The need for decisive action by educators is required now if the counterproductive developments in urban centers are to be curtailed or eliminated. The Rand Report deals with this problem by suggesting ". . . that research indicated improvement in student outcomes, both cognitive and non-cognitive, may require sweeping changes in the organization, structure, and conduct of educational experiences."³

¹Candoli, op. cit., pp. 3-5.

²Arthur P. Coladarci and Jacob W. Getzels, Use of Theory in Educational Administration (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 11.

³Harvey A. Averch, et al., How Effective is Schooling? A Critical Review and Synthesis of Research Findings (Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand, March, 1972), p. 158.

One such emerging "sweeping change" over the last decade is the plan for decentralization of large centralized school systems. Writers such as Averch and March feel that bigness leads to remoteness and remoteness leads to impersonalization which is inappropriate in an institution (education) that is based on human services.

While the literature abounds with varying definitions of the term decentralization, many efforts are doomed to failure because the implications are not carefully thought through. In many instances, decentralization efforts are really a response to political pressures rather than attempts to effect meaningful educational change to better serve clients. A harsh reality is that often decentralization has been utilized to avoid compliance with civil rights laws in the area of student desegregation. Additionally, decentralization efforts have been resisted by central office administrators who are reluctant to yield authority or to share their power.

The real issue is not decentralization, but rather what functions are best highly centralized and what decisions are best made closest to the student.¹ Many writers indicate that the generic educational functions of planning, policy setting, implementation of programs, managing human and financial resources, communications and evaluation often need to be restructured so educational services can be effectively and quickly delivered to students. Individual needs and local resources vary substantially

¹Candoli, op. cit., p. 5.

and are frequently ignored by rigid centralized decision-making patterns. Goodman supported this position in 1964 when he criticized the inability of large rigid school organizations to meet diverse student needs.¹ His thesis is that urban clients feel powerless if it is impossible for them to become engaged in planning or deciding issues that affect them.²

In addition to urban schools responding to diverse student needs and the involvement of community members in decision making, the following needs must be addressed if decentralization is to be effective:

1. The staff of the urban school system needs to be reeducated to the realities of present day urban life.
2. The need for coordinated and comprehensive planning activities related to the effective delivery of educational services to students.
3. Identify and gather resources to accomplish the massive educational task appropriate for urban center.
4. Develop the capacity of educational leaders to deal with emerging power groups. Some community groups have attacked the school system to develop a power base.
5. Deal with bureaucratic stagnation by evaluating programs and policies as they relate to present objectives. The inclination to "add on" without replacing dysfunctional operations has often led to organizational ineffectiveness.³

¹Paul Goodman, Compulsory Mis-Education and the Community of Scholars (New York: A Vintage Book, 1964), p. 11.

²Ibid., p. 12.

³Candoli, op. cit., p. 5.

In conclusion, the urban school system must be flexible and dynamic to an effective degree if it hopes to solve the problems of providing greater access to equal educational opportunities, desegregation, staff training, working with emerging power groups, bureaucratic stagnation, and decentralization.

A Description of the Lansing Public School System

The Lansing School District, similar to other urban centers, has experienced a change in the clientele served. From the late sixties to the present, there have been some changes in the distribution of population with a movement of middle-class majority and nonmajority families to the surrounding suburbs and influx of lower socioeconomic families into the city.¹

The District served over 28,000 students during the 1976-77 school year.² At the elementary level, of 16,059 students, 1% are designated as American Indian, 69% are Caucasian, 10% as Latino, 19% as Black, 1% as Oriental-Asian and 1% as "other." At the secondary level, of 12,528 students, 1% are designated as American Indian, 73% as Caucasian, 7% as Latino, 18% as Black, 1% as Oriental-Asian and 1% as "other."

¹Robert Chamberlain, et al., Comprehensive Planning Report of the Lansing School District (Lansing: Lansing School District Press, Summer, 1977), p. 26.

²Glenn Burgett, "Ethnic Court Report" (Lansing: Office of Child Accounting, June 1977), p. 1.

The district is made up of 47 elementary schools (various K-6 combinations and clusters), five junior high schools (7-9), and four senior high schools (10-12). After increasing in enrollment up to 33,000 students over many years, the district is now experiencing decreasing student population.

The Lansing Public School District includes those communities within the city of Lansing and some smaller residential areas outside the city boundaries. The district is surrounded by smaller middle-class communities. Most residents in the city, as well as the suburbs, are economically dependent upon business, governmental and industrial organizations in the Lansing area.

Lansing serves as the state capital of Michigan and is located in the central part of the state.

Purpose of the Study

This evaluative study has analyzed the Lansing School District's implementation of Responsible Autonomy to determine its capacity to provide educators with the flexibility to cope with and respond to the critical issues of urban education. One of the primary issues is to provide viable educational services and learning opportunities to urban youth with heterogeneous learning needs and life styles.

Definition of Terms

Decentralization is pushing down authority for decision making to the lowest possible level.¹ Stated another way, decentralization is the effort to fix responsibility for educational decisions at the level where these decisions have the greatest impact.²

Responsible Autonomy is the concept of shaping a flexible organizational structure that can be responsive to the problem of developing an optimum learning environment for children with heterogeneous learning needs. This concept is based on the thesis that schools will be most effective when educational participants have the ability to solve their unique problems.³

Centralization is an administrative process in which final authority and responsibility for all educational and managerial functions are under one control officer; responsible to one central board.⁴

Successful Practices are those variables which constitute effective school practices which may be isolated for assessment and evaluative purposes.

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

²Candoli and Leu, op. cit., p. 13.

³Ibid.

⁴Richard Featherstone and Frederick Hill, "Urban School Decentralization; Part II, Centralization vs. Decentralization, Pros and Cons," American School and University (December 1968): 56.

Political Decentralization is an organizational strategy which gives political control over school operations to the citizens of a subpart of the total system.¹

Administrative Decentralization is an organizational strategy which divides the organization into more manageable operating units to encourage the making of significant educational decisions as close to the student as possible.²

Identification of Research Questions

The study consisted of an analysis of the degree of commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy and in fact whether or not practices of Responsible Autonomy were being implemented and at what level in the junior high schools of Lansing. A similar study was conducted earlier by Dr. Duane H. Moore in the elementary schools.³

If one of the implications of Responsible Autonomy was to improve the achievement level of students, it was necessary to examine the relationship of practices of Responsible Autonomy and the achievement scores of junior high school students.

Many identified successful practices exist in public schools which impact the effectiveness of urban school systems. The wide latitude that Responsible Autonomy permits in the decision-making

¹Goldhammer, Candoli, and Cofer, op. cit., p. 2.

²Ibid.

³Duane Moore, "An Evaluative Study of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Elementary Schools" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1976).

process should have a relationship with the level of implementation of these successful practices.

The process used to identify important questions and assumptions of this study is as follows.

Assumptions

- A1: The ideal definition of Responsible Autonomy and its implementation are linked to successful practices in junior high schools.
- A2: Successful practices in junior high schools are linked to the achievement of students.

Research Questions

- Q1: To what extent is the idealized model of Responsible Autonomy, as defined, like the observed commitment to the definition?
- Q2: To what extent is the observed commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy related to the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy?
- Q3: To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to achievement?
- Q4: To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to the implementation of successful practices?

Hypotheses

Based on the above research questions, the following hypotheses were developed:

- Hypothesis 1: The junior high school identified as having implemented more practices of Responsible Autonomy will have a higher commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy than the school identified as lowest in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices.

Hypothesis 2: The junior high school identified as having implemented, to a higher degree, practices of Responsible Autonomy will have students achieve higher results on the Stanford Achievement Test than the school identified as having the lowest degree of implementing practices of Responsible Autonomy.

Hypothesis 3: The implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices will account for more of the difference in student achievement among the selected junior high schools than will the implementation of "successful practices."

These hypotheses indicate that the relationship between the selected schools and the study variables will remain consistently high or low depending on the degree practices of Responsible Autonomy are implemented by these schools (Figure 1).

Level of
Attainment

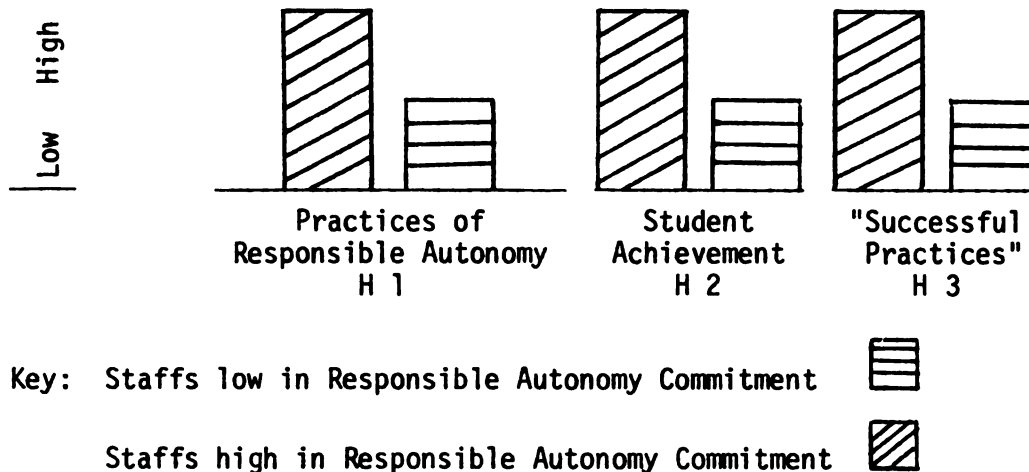


Figure 1.--Hypotheses of the Study Defined

Limitations of the Study

The fundamental limitation of the study was that it did not address causative factors in the junior high schools examined. Factors such as socio-economic status and ethnic composition of students were not considered in selection of the schools nor in the analysis of the data.

Overview of the Dissertation

In Chapter II the literature review provides an overview of two areas: decentralization of urban school systems, and characteristics of schools whose students have demonstrated success in academic achievement.

Chapter III presents the methods and procedures used in the study.

Chapter IV is an analysis of the survey data as it related to the hypotheses presented in Chapter I and other issues that surfaced during the analysis of the data.

Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and implications of this study. Recommendations for future research are also presented.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Two critical topics related to urban students having access to educational opportunities are school decentralization and effective-school practices. The review of the literature focuses on these two educational components.

Up through the mid-fifties, professional school administration offered a tranquil environment in which administrators were treated with deference by their constituency and accomplished daily tasks routinely.

But by 1965, Walsh and Williams observe that the school scene was shifting as the American culture went into a period of dislocation marked by dissonance and conflicting priorities.¹ By the 1970's, very little about schools was either tranquil or predictable. Today, school administration is under assault from a defiant public and remains crisis oriented.²

The traditional role of the schools was to serve particular societal purposes through systems linked to formal government structures with defined units, i.e., school boards, possessing governing

¹Walsh and Williams, op. cit., p. 693.

²Ibid.

responsibilities and serving as mechanisms for legitimizing educational policies.¹ As noted above, when the stress of societal conflict and turmoil emerged in the mid-sixties, school administration became crisis oriented. Virtually every solution, from dollars to court intervention to physical force, has been thrown at the problems of education since Little Rock (1957). In order to survive, school administration needs to make adjustments to effectively manage these societal conflicts, pressures and solutions.² In addition, school administration also faces the criticism of contemporary writers such as Toffler who charges that, ". . . education today, even in our 'best' schools, is a hopeless anachronism."³

In addition to external pressures, school administrators also face the organizational efforts of teachers. During the seventies, professional teacher organizations have emerged as a major force in the educational decision-making process. Lieberman predicted this development as early as 1960. His basic premise was: "Centralization will dramatize the weaknesses of teacher's organizations and put in motion the forces that will eliminate these weaknesses."⁴

¹Campbell, et al., op. cit., p. viii.

²Walsh and Williams, op. cit., p. 693.

³Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, Inc., 1970), p. 398.

⁴Myron Lieberman, The Future of Public Education (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 75.

With school organizations becoming more bureaucratic and teachers becoming more professional, Campbell and Cunningham observe that the need to resolve the conflict between hierarchical and colleague control will intensify in the years ahead.¹

Etzioni denotes that a new relationship evolves in an organization where one sub-unit becomes more professional, i.e., the line-staff relationships may be reversed.²

Collectively, the above environmental components illustrate the complex challenges a school administrator encounters. If the administrator is to be effective, an understanding of school decentralization theory can prove beneficial as diverse client needs are defined.

School Decentralization

As environmental pressures become more complex, March and Simon imply that the need for decentralized planning and decision making is needed.³ The argument for decentralization depends upon the limits of data available to organizational participants and their abilities to apply data to influence behavior and outcomes.⁴ If one of the priorities of a school administrator is to enhance

¹Campbell, et al., op. cit., p. 267.

²Amitai Etzioni, "Authoritative Structure and Organizational Effectiveness," Administrative Science Quarterly (June 1959): 43.

³James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, Organizations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), p. 210.

⁴Ibid.

student access to educational opportunities, Averch proposes that "Research tentatively suggests that improvement in student outcomes, cognitive and non-cognitive, may require sweeping changes in the organization, structure, and conduct of educational experience."¹

Connotations of Decentralization

Decentralization has a variety of connotations. Dale observed that "decentralization, like politeness, means different things to different people."²

Decentralization, Argyris defines, is the ". . . 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

Becker and Gordon saw decentralization as "related to the degree of autonomy across organization units." This decentralization, as they used the term, referred to the "organization of autonomous units around sets of different subgoals."⁴

Baker and France referred to the decentralization of decision making as:

¹Averch, op. cit., p. x.

²Ernest Dale, "A Study of the Problems of Centralization and Decentralization in Relation to Private Enterprise," in The Balance Between Centralization and Decentralization in Managerial Controls, ed: H. J. Kruisinga (Leiden: H. E. Stenfert Kroese N. V., 1954), p. 27.

³Chris Argyris, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴Selwyn W. Becker and Gerald Gordon, "An Entrepreneurial Theory of Formal Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly (December 1966): 337 and 339.

Decentralization is used in this study only in relation to administrative decentralization and is specifically defined as the minimization of decision making at the highest central point of authority and the maximization of the delegation of responsibility and authority in the making of decisions to lower levels of management.¹

For decentralization to be effective, the various levels of the organization must have individuals who are technically and professionally competent. The organization must have policies that clearly spell out the lines of communication and authority.²

In school management, Candoli and Leu state that "Decentralization is, in fact, the sharing of power once held at the central level with a broader variety of share holders in the educational enterprise."³ As decision-making authority is shared at the appropriate organizational level, the organizational leaders "on top" will still be held responsible for the good or poor decisions made autonomously at a lower level.⁴

Decision-Making Parameters

Two of the greatest difficulties faced in decentralization are the determination of the appropriate level in the organization for decision-making and at what point will decision-making ability

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

²Luvern Cunningham, Governing Schools: New Approaches To Old Ideas (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Company, 1971), p. 30.

³Candoli and Leu, op. cit., p. 13.

⁴Chris Argyris, op. cit., p. 3.

encourage participation, initiative, responsibility, and the internalization of organizational goals at the building or classroom level. At what level can decisions be assigned and still carry accountability? Just where is the point of fine balance between centralization and decentralization?

These questions cannot be answered for every organization or for every level. Communities vary; thus, flexibilities with accountability are essential for decentralization. It is critical that with decentralization, parameters must be established and internalized for individual and group decision-making.¹

The establishment of these decision-making parameters should be based on open superior-subordinate relations if decentralization is to work. Where trust between top management and subordinates is high and where conformity, fear, and dependence are held at a low level, experimentation and risk-taking are undertaken by members of the organization.² This willingness to define problems and generate effective solutions is one of the advantages of effective organizational decentralization.

Two Types of Decentralization

Effectiveness in decentralization refers to the degree to which schools meet the purposes for which they are organized and financed. To achieve these specified purposes of decentralization,

¹Candoli and Leu, op. cit., p. 7.

²Argyris, op. cit., p. 4.

school systems can be classified according to two types of decentralization.¹

One is a political decentralization which gives political control over school operations to the citizens of a sub-part of the total system. The large decentralization plans of New York City, Detroit, and Richmond are examples of political decentralization. This point is clarified by Featherstone and Hill in their taxonomy of the New York City school political decentralization plan. Decision making is presented as residing in the hands of the local community boards of control. The professional responsibility for the execution of policy is in the hands of the local community head administrator.²

The second type of decentralization is administrative decentralization. This system divides the organization into more manageable operating units, the purpose of which is to encourage the making of significant educational decisions as close to the student as possible.³ The decentralization plan in Lansing ("Responsible Autonomy") is an example of administrative decentralization.

¹Goldhammer, Candoli, and Cofer, op. cit., p. 2.

²Richard L. Featherstone and Frederick W. Hill, "School Decentralization. Part 1: The Bundy Report--What It Really Means," American School and University (October 1968): 57.

³Goldhammer, Candoli, and Cofer, op. cit., p. 2.

The Need for Organizational Flexibility

The inability of school organizations to respond to their changing environment is often due to organizational rigidity.

Candoli lists the sources of rigidity as:

1. Too much centrality of decision-making.
2. Extreme standardization of organization structures and processes.
3. Routinization and standardization of client relationships.
4. Persistence of structures and procedures.¹

Meranto pointed to the decentralization concept of school organization as a means of bringing about 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 parents and students harbor toward the schools since the schools would be more readily accountable to community residents.²

Gorman also claimed that changes in school organization are overdue, and drastic restructuring is needed to meet the demands of today's society:³

¹I. Carl Candoli, "State of the School System," a speech to the Lansing School Administrators in the M.S.U. Kiva, August 1973, p. 3.

²Philip J. Meranto, "School Politics in the Metropolis," in Metropolitan America: Its Government and Politics, ed. Allan K. Campbell (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1970, p. 71.

³Burton W. Gorman, "Change in the Secondary School: Why and How?" Phi Delta Kappan (May 1972): 566-67.

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 patterns. 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 program.

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 making must be exercised by smaller subunits of the school, by individual teachers, and by individual pupils. The powers of judgment must be cultivated in all and strengthened by exercise.

Thomas emphasized the need to give building administrators in a decentralized system the tools needed 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.¹

Cunningham also lists the following design imperatives for viable decentralization in the urban school setting:

1. It must be responsible to the participation impulse.
2. It must lead to improved education.
3. It must meet equality of opportunity mandate.
4. It must accommodate lay-professional antagonisms.
5. It must be achieved politically.²

¹Donald Thomas, "Decentralization as a Management Tool," an address to the American Management Association, New York City, 3 August 1971.

²Cunningham, op. cit., p. 29.

Community Participation

As the critics have pointed out, there is within the urban schools a cultural diversity with needs that have been ill served by an unresponsive system.

The need for school-building level citizen participation on such issues as school facilities, curriculum, discipline and personnel has been expressed by citizen committees and students.¹

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 and personnel. Cunningham reported citizens community meetings on these issues in Rockford, Illinois; Washington Community Schools; Philadelphia; Atlanta; and Detroit.²

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.

Campbell and Cunningham state that a strong case:

Can be made for heterogeneity in educational thinking--a situation marked by strong leadership representing competing points of view which lead to extended exploration of policy alternatives.

This cannot be a narrow process. The participation of minority groups in educational decision making is long

¹Campbell, et al., op. cit., p. 532.

²Cunningham, op. cit., p. 162.

overdue, and America can ill afford to deny such participation any longer.¹

With administrative decentralization, the goal is to enable organizational participants involvement in decision making at the level closest to the client. Organizational goals are product oriented and are not readily negotiable. The decentralization effort in education is mainly concerned with providing opportunities and assistance for the individual child to grow into a productive, participating citizen in a democratic society. These process objectives can be facilitated best by those adults who are in direct support of the student learner in a decentralized environment.²

Effective School Practices

Introduction

In order to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of responsible autonomy (administrative decentralization), it is necessary to determine what constitutes effective school practices so these variables may be isolated for assessment and evaluative purposes.

Neill observed that program evaluators are increasingly looking for hard evidence that a program can work if replicated in another site. Also, changes in cognitive scores or in attitude are

¹Campbell, et al., op. cit., p. 440.

²Chamberlain, et al., op. cit., p. 6.

checked to insure they are not due to Hawthorne Effect or to a particular setting and a particular teacher.¹

The criteria for this "hard evidence" about student learning levels are difficult to define. Christman posits that standardized testing is suspect as long as the issue is how human beings develop and become possessors of skills and facts.² She feels a great deal remains to be defined and analyzed. A corollary evaluation based on student outcomes is the question of how well teachers communicate and create a healthy and respectful learning climate.³ This discussion also raises the larger issue about which determinants have the most influence on student learning. Educational researchers represent a number of viewpoints.

Averch and his associates at Rand completed a synthesis of over 200 studies on educational effectiveness with an emphasis on studies since 1950. Five different categorical research approaches were defined. They are input-output, process, organization, evaluation and experimental.⁴

The "input-output approach" has been used extensively by educational researchers to analyze and explain that a student's educational outcome is determined by the quantities of resources

¹ Shirley Boes Neill, "The National Diffusion Network: A Success Story Ending?" Phi Delta Kappan (May 1976): 599.

² Patricia Christman, "Impact of Educational Research on Teaching and Learning," Educational Leadership (April 1976): 491.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Averch, op. cit., pp. v-vii.

his school makes available to him; by the personal, family and community characteristics that influence his learning. These characteristics are normally grouped under the term "background factors." The administrative strategy and school-classroom organizational patterns are often neglected.

The conflicting viewpoints on the influence of background data versus school factors on student learning are represented by the Coleman-Jencks debate.

Coleman maintains that school factors such as class size, teacher preparation, and per-pupil expenditures did have more of an influence on how minority children achieved than majority children. His overall conclusion was that the two significant factors influencing student learning were: the children's sense of control over their own fate or destiny, or their sense of self-worth; and the kind of socio-economic background of the children.¹

Jencks counters by stating that a comprehensive picture of adult success reveals that schools do not influence this success as much as a child's family background, control over capital and the prevailing political traditions.²

With these introductory comments in mind, the following studies are presented on the premise that professionally, schools still have a responsibility to influence children to become

¹James Coleman, et al., op. cit., p. 22.

²Christopher Jencks, et al., Inequality (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 159.

self-actualizing (and free to accept the innate value of oneself and others).¹

Generic Effective School Practices

Joseph Featherstone postulates that educational research data show that schools make little difference and, by certain crude measures, schools are very similar to one another.² The following practices are presented to indicate how schools have made a difference with their efforts to support their student-clients in the area of academic and affective achievement.

In a comparative study, the Michigan Department of Education identified 11 positive characteristics and five negative characteristics of 33 high achieving and 33 low achieving state compensatory education projects:

Positive

1. A district coordinator who spent time planning compensatory education reading programs.
2. Principals who express satisfaction with methods of decision-making process.
3. Number of hours teachers work at school.
4. Preparation of instructional materials selected by the teacher.
5. Use of periodicals as basic reading materials.

¹Herbert Kohl, 36 Children (New York: The New American Library, 1968), p. 11.

²Joseph Featherstone, "Measuring What Schools Achieve," Phi Delta Kappan (March 1974): 449.

6. Training provided to teachers at onset of project.
7. Degree to which compensatory education students like school.
8. Teacher knows percent of students absent on a given day.
9. Number of classroom observations by reading specialists over last 12 months.
10. High teacher morale.
11. Commercial reading tests supplementary.

Negative

1. Paraprofessionals helped the teacher.
2. Non-paraprofessional tutorial part of the subject.
3. Professional tutorial part of the project.
4. Difficult reading material.
5. Teacher spending time on miscellaneous.¹

In 1973, Klitgaard and Hall reported on the short comings of achievement scores as a measure of school effectiveness, and chose to concentrate their study on searching for effectiveness in the exceptional school instead of the average.² Methodologically, they emphasized getting away from central tendencies and became concerned instead with the importance of outliers. They asked the question, "Do some schools consistently produce outstanding students even after allowance is made for the different initial endowments of

¹Michigan Cost-Effectiveness Study: An Executive Summary,
Michigan Department of Education, 1975.

²R. E. Klitgaard and G. R. Hall, A Statistical Search for Unusually Effective Schools (Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand, 1973), pp. 69-70.

their students and for chance variations?" Part of the results of their study indicates that outstanding Michigan schools tended to be rural and white, even after controlling for region and racial composition. Even after eliminating rural schools from consideration and using a minority enrollment dummy, the top Michigan schools were found to have:

1. Smaller class sizes;
2. More teachers earning \$11,000 or more annually;
3. And more teachers with five or more years of experience.¹

Earlier this year, Trump presented questions related to the performance of teachers in a school designed to meet a wide variety of student needs. Over time, he indicates that a school should respond to the programmatical questions with significant data:

1. What curriculum changes have occurred?
2. Is there more precise evaluation of pupil progress?
3. Is there increased use of community resources?
4. What different teaching materials has the staff developed?
5. Do teachers spend less time on clerical duties?
6. Have teachers been released for more productive work through the help of instructional assistants?
7. What new materials, professional articles, new methods, and the like, have teachers produced?
8. Have teachers found and are teachers using their own special interests and performance in areas where they have special talents?

¹Ibid.

9. How much time do teachers spend with individual students as contrasted with groups of students.¹

Goalsetting has been associated with effective school practices by Manning. His research indicates that six concepts related to increasing school effectiveness are:

1. Engage in some form of major goal-directed activity.
2. Use a multiple-offense approach.
3. Produce demonstrable results.
4. Reaffirm its concern for the well-being of each child.
5. Demonstrate a flexible and enlightened administrator.
6. Report student progress.²

Supportive Practices for Affective Development

Miller proposes that effective practices promotive of cultural pluralism (increase student affective skills) in suburban schools are:

1. Providing in-service experiences for all staff to include the modeling of desired behavior characteristics by them in their support of students.
2. Hire staff who represent different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
3. Examine existing instruction materials to verify fair representation.
4. Initiate intensive curriculum revision efforts aimed at including the concept of cultural pluralism at all grade levels and in all content areas.

¹J. Lloyd Trump, A School for Everyone (Reston, Va.: NASSP, 1977), p. 220.

²Duane Manning, The Qualitative Elementary School (New York: Harper Row, 1963), p. 143.

5. Provide shared learning experiences in which children with different cultural backgrounds can work together to solve common problems.¹

Administrative support of staff development can enhance the teaching of critical and creative thinking by staff in several ways.

Pinkney proposed that a program can be open, dynamic, and conducive to student learning at all levels with the implementation of these points:

1. Encourage administrators and teachers to end social and economic segregation, both in the classroom and in school activities wherever they exist.
2. Encourage educators to obtain community participation in decision making.
3. Encourage administrators and teachers to have more respect and maintain a high level of expectations for low-status students.
4. Encourage the implementation of more meaningful planning, thereby improving instructional methods in the classroom by:
 - a. Killing the lecture method.
 - b. Nurturing individual instructional techniques.
 - c. Building openness in the traditional classroom.
 - d. Being flexible in class requirements.
5. Encourage and plan for administrators, teachers, and students to become directly involved in the planning and evaluation of educational programs.
6. Encourage administrators and teachers to become more sensitive to racial and social differences.

¹William C. Miller, "Fostering A Commitment to Cultural Pluralism," Educational Leadership (December 1976): 225.

7. Encourage administrators and teachers to become builders of human relations in the classroom and school environment.
8. Encourage educators at all levels to utilize their listening skills.¹

Supportive Practices for Cognitive Development

Proposed criteria for recognizing a successful school include the following six questions by Thomas:

1. What are the schools basic measurement purposes?
2. What degree of respect for children does the school exhibit?
3. What alternatives in learning opportunities does the school offer?
4. What kinds of self-concepts do the children exhibit?
5. How positive are the attitudes exhibited in the school toward the school?
6. What kind of home-school relationship does the school maintain?²

Related to these questions is a study of two high achieving and two low achieving high schools in Chicago. Powell and Eash identified the following characteristics in this study:

Positive

1. Focus and emphasis on instruction.
2. Active programs of instructional leadership.

¹H. B. Pickney, "Decentralization and Staff Development," in Staff Development: Staff Liberation, ed: Charles W. Beegle and Roy A. Edelfelt (Washington, D.C.: ASCD, 1977), p. 220.

²M. Donald Thomas, "How to Recognize a Gem of a School When You See One," American School Board Journal (March 1975): 98.

3. Concern for maintaining a climate free of disruption.
4. Remedial work emphasized.
5. Atmosphere where students are treated with respect.

Negative

1. Each student separately determined direction.
2. Students seemed to have little understanding of what was expected of them.
3. Inadequate attention to student attendance.¹

Due to the unique developmental patterns of pre-adolescent children, a junior high school or middle school program should relate to these developments. Romano observes that:

Flexibility in grouping, in schedules, in planning, and in any other activity related to teaching and learning is the key word. The teacher no longer stands before the group to lecture, but becomes more a diagnostician, one who studies the needs of each student and then provides a stimulating learning environment.²

Romano suggests this dynamic learning environment can be developed by using the following guidelines for program planning by staffs:

1. Learn how to plan in a team situation.
2. Define objectives behaviorally.
3. Learn to use pre-assessment and post-assessment tools.

¹Daniel Powell and Maurice J. Eash, "Secondary School Cases," in Evaluating Educational Performance, ed: Herbert J. Walberg (Chicago: McCutchan, 1974), pp. 291-92.

²Louis Romano, "A Revolution in Middle School Education--Individually Guided Education," in The Middle School, ed. Louis G. Romano, et al. (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Co., 1973), pp. 308-09.

4. Learn the techniques employed in critiquing the work of the teaching team.
5. Learn how to ungrade the skills taught in reading, mathematics and spelling.
6. Develop a unit based upon the ideas listed above.¹

Middle-year schools need to be flexible to respond to diverse pre-adolescent student needs. At the same time, these schools need to be adaptive to the K-12 educational program articulation needs. The expectations of elementary and senior high school staffs often differ and middle-year schools should coordinate programs related to both levels.

Finally, John Porter suggests the following "Accountability Model" to serve as a guide for the development of responsive educational practices:

1. Establish educational goals.
2. Translate goals into specific performance objectives.
3. Conduct a needs assessment.
4. Develop instructional programs and delivery systems.
5. Evaluate the program of delivery system.
6. Make recommendations for improvement.²

¹Ibid., pp. 305-08.

²John W. Porter, "Better Education Through Accountability, Research, Program Budgeting," Michigan Challenge (Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, April, 1973), p. 8.

SUMMARY

One of the major challenges confronting urban school districts is responding to the diverse learning needs of its student-clients. The review of the literature has disclosed the need for school organizations to be flexible in order to cope with shifting societal developments and expectations.

School decentralization is one strategy designed to provide decision making at the lowest organizational level where client services are delivered. If policies are properly planned, decentralization can result in a higher degree of organizational flexibility supportive of organizational survival and effectiveness.

In order to verify the influence of administrative decentralization strategies in this study, literature was also reviewed on effective school practices. The characteristics of effective school practices are used for the survey on "successful practices." The major conclusions for successful practices included goal setting, staff participation in decision making, community involvement and evaluation.

In summary, Goldhammer, Candoli, and Cofer observe that since children are often the victims of adult conflicts, children will be helped when adults put their efforts together in a cooperative and coordinated fashion to improve the education of all children in the community.¹

¹Goldhammer, Candoli, and Cofer, op. cit., p. 1.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purposes of the study procedures were to determine the degree to which junior high school teachers and administrators: (1) had a commitment to Responsible Autonomy; (2) implemented Responsible Autonomy practices; and (3) utilized "successful practices" in their school programs.

Population and Sample

The population study consisted of personnel from the five Lansing School District junior high schools:

Principals (5)

Assistant Principals (14)

LSEA¹ Teacher Representative (21)

Central Office Administrators (10)

Sample of Junior High Teachers (142)

All schools were assigned a code number for retrieval and reporting purposes.

¹(LSEA) refers to the Lansing Schools Education Association.

Procedures for Testing the Hypotheses

Procedure 1

All junior high administrators and LSEA teacher representatives were surveyed. The purposes of this survey were: (1) to determine the degree of commitment to Responsible Autonomy by these staff members; and (2) to determine the degree of their implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices.

The questionnaire returns by data source group were:

Group	(N)	Returns	Percent
LSEA Teacher Representatives	21	18	86
Junior High Administrators	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>100</u>
TOTALS	40	37	93

The assessment of commitment to the ideal definition was accomplished by asking the subjects to respond to the following questions.

1. As a professional in your present position, to what extent do you feel autonomy in your work?
2. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy can enhance the educational opportunities for students in the Lansing junior high schools?
3. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy can assist you in being more effective in your job?
4. Do you feel that as a result of Responsible Autonomy you could be more satisfied with your job?
5. In your opinion can Responsible Autonomy result in an improvement in the operation of the district?

6. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy allows you to be a facilitator in the learning process?
7. In your opinion can Responsible Autonomy allow parents a greater voice in the decision-making process for the Lansing schools?

To assess the degree of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy in the five junior high schools, the survey asked the principals and LSEA representatives to assess the level of implementation at their school on the following criteria:

(1) Degree of staff involvement in the budgeting process, (2) Degree of staff involvement in the curriculum decision making process, (3) Degree of staff involvement in hiring of personnel, and (4) Degree of community input in building decision making process. The four criteria were based on the definition of Responsible Autonomy as the basic essentials of this decentralization effort.

Procedure 2

The superintendent and his immediate subordinates (9) were requested to complete a survey on each of the junior high schools based on their degree of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy. All ten central administrators returned questionnaires.

Procedure 3

Based on the data received from the two previous surveys, the highest and lowest schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy were identified. Figure 2 illustrates procedures 1, 2, and 3.

- A. Questionnaire to LSEA school representatives
 - 1. Degree of staff involvement in budgeting process
 - 2. Degree of staff involvement in curriculum decisions
 - 3. Degree of staff involvement in hiring personnel
 - 4. Degree of community input into building decision-making process

- B. Questionnaire to school principals
 - 1. Degree of staff involvement in budgeting process
 - 2. Degree of staff involvement in curriculum decisions
 - 3. Degree of staff involvement in hiring personnel
 - 4. Degree of community input into building decision making

- C. Questionnaire to superintendent and his immediate subordinates for each of the five junior highs
 - 1. Degree of staff involvement in budgeting process
 - 2. Degree of staff involvement in curriculum decisions
 - 3. Degree of staff involvement in hiring personnel
 - 4. Degree of community input into building decision-making process.

Figure 2.--Process for Identification of Schools in the Study

A matrix of the data from the first survey for each school was examined to determine the schools highest and lowest in practices of Responsible Autonomy.

Questions and issues which needed to be addressed in the analysis were: Are all sources of equal significance in the analysis of the matrix? Are all criteria of equal significance? Are the perceptions of one source consistently lower or higher than others?

Procedure 4

Teachers and principals in this survey were those from the highest and lowest schools selected in procedure 3.

The questionnaire to the teachers and principals was a survey to examine "successful practices" operating in their junior high schools. This questionnaire was developed based on the review of the literature and addressed the following topics:

1. Statement of objectives
2. Parental involvement
3. Individualized instruction
4. Planning process
5. Alternatives in learning opportunities
6. Climate
7. Teacher expectations for students
8. Progress reporting of students
9. Perceived principal's expectations for students
10. Program articulation

The questionnaire returns by data source group were:

Group	(N)	Returns	Percent
School #500	72	60	83
School #300	<u>70</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>74</u>
TOTALS	142	112	79

Procedure 5

The achievement data were obtained from the May 1977 Stanford Achievement Test results. The data utilized were the mathematics and reading raw scores of students in the junior high schools highest and lowest in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices. The achievement data were necessary to examine the hypotheses.

Summary

The study processes indicate the survey in Procedure 1 provided data to assess the degree of commitment to Responsible Autonomy in the five junior high schools. From this information, the schools highest and lowest in practices of Responsible Autonomy were identified. Finally, a survey to determine the degree of implementation of "successful practices" was administered to the highest and lowest schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy and analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of data collected in this study. The hypotheses tested are presented in the order they appeared in Chapter I. Data relevant to each hypothesis are presented following the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: The junior high school identified as having implemented more practices of Responsible Autonomy will have a higher commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy than the school identified as lowest in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices.

The data collected on Responsible Autonomy practices in the five junior high schools from teachers, principals and central administrators are presented for each school (Tables 1-5). These data are then presented from the highest school (500) to the lowest school (300) for Responsible Autonomy practices in Table 6. School 500 had the highest mean (4.2) and school 300 had the lowest mean (3.6) on a scale of 1 to 5.

Of the three data sources, the building administrators had the highest mean (4.3). Teacher representatives had the next highest mean (3.8). Central administrators had the lowest mean (3.7) for their perceptions on how the five junior high schools are

TABLE 1.--Matrix for School #500 Identified as the Highest in Practice's of Responsible Autonomy

Criteria*	Source A (Building Administrators)				Source B (Teacher Representatives)				Source C (Central Office Personnel)			
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Very Little
	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	Very Little	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Very Little
1				X					X			X
2				X					X			X
3				X					X			X
4									X			X

*Criteria: 1 = Budget Planning
 2 = Curriculum Planning
 3 = Staff Selection
 4 = Parent Input

TABLE 2.--Matrix for School #200 Identified as Second in Practice's of Responsible Autonomy

Criteria*	Source A (Building Administrators)				Source B (Teacher Representatives)				Source C (Central Office Personnel)			
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Little	Much
1				X				X				X
2				X				X				X
3				X				X				X
4				X					X			X

*Criteria: 1 = Budget Planning
 2 = Curriculum Planning
 3 = Staff Selection
 4 = Parent Input

TABLE 3.--Matrix for School #100 Identified as Third in Practice's of Responsible Autonomy

Criteria*	Source A (Building Administrators)				Source B (Teacher Representatives)				Source C (Central Office Personnel)			
	Very None	Little	Much	Very Much	Very None	Little	Much	Very Much	Very None	Little	Much	Very Much
	None	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Little	Much	Very Much
1				X			X					X
2			X					X				X
3			X					X				X
4			X					X				X

*Criteria: 1 = Budget Planning
 2 = Curriculum Planning
 3 = Staff Selection
 4 = Parent Input

TABLE 4.--Matrix for School #400 Identified as Fourth in Practice's of Responsible Autonomy

Criteria*	Source A (Building Administrators)				Source B (Teacher Representatives)				Source C (Central Office Personnel)			
	Very None	Little	Much	Very Much	Very None	Little	Much	Very Much	Very None	Little	Much	Very Much
1			X				X				X	
2				X				X				X
3			X			X				X		
4			X				X				X	

*Criteria: 1 = Budget Planning
 2 = Curriculum Planning
 3 = Staff Selection
 4 = Parent Input

TABLE 5.--Matrix for School #300 Identified as the Lowest in Practice's of Responsible Autonomy

Criteria*	Source A (Building Administrators)				Source B (Teacher Representatives)				Source C (Central Office Personnel)			
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Very Little
	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	Very Little	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Little	None	Very Little
1				X								X
2			X									X
3			X					X				X
4			X									X

53

*Criteria: 1 = Budget Planning
 2 = Curriculum Planning
 3 = Staff Selection
 4 = Parent Input

implementing Responsible Autonomy practices (Table 6). These findings will be defined in greater detail later in this chapter.

School 500 had the highest mean for implementing Responsible Autonomy practices. All data sources [building administrators (4.2), teacher representatives (4.4), and central administrators (4.0)] rated school 500 above the study mean total (3.9) as shown in Table 6.

School 300 had the lowest mean for implementing Responsible Autonomy practices. Two data sources [teacher representatives (3.4) and central administrators (3.4) rated school 300 below the study mean total (3.9)]. Building administrators (4.1), rated school 300 above the study mean total (3.9) in Table 6.

TABLE 6.--School Means Ranked Highest to Lowest for Responsible Autonomy Practices

School	Building Administrators	Teacher Representatives	Central Administrators	Means
500	4.2	4.4	4.0	4.2
200	4.8	3.8	3.8	4.1
100	4.0	3.7	4.0	3.9
400	4.3	3.5	3.2	3.7
300	4.1	3.4	3.4	3.6
Mean Totals	4.3	3.8	3.7	3.9

The second component of Hypothesis 1 was to collect data on commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy by the five junior high schools from teachers and principals.

These data are presented from the highest school (500) to the lowest school (300) for commitment to Responsible Autonomy in Table 7. School 500 had the highest percent (88). In fact, both data sources [building administrators (82%) and teacher representatives (93%)] rated school 500 above the study mean of 80 percent. School 300 had the lowest commitment to Responsible Autonomy (70%). Building administrators (82%) rated school 300 slightly above the study mean (80%) while teacher representatives (59%) were well below the study mean (80%).

Of the two data sources from the five junior high schools, the building administrators had the highest commitment to Responsible Autonomy with 88 percent. As summarized in Table 7, teacher representatives (71%) were well below the study mean (80%).

TABLE 7.--School Means Ranked Highest to Lowest for Commitment to Responsible Autonomy

School	Building Administrators	Teacher Representatives	Means
500	82%	93%	88%
400	100%	71%	86%
100	78%	83%	81%
200	96%	52%	74%
300	82%	57%	70%
Mean Totals	88%	71%	80%

Based on the data summarized in Table 8, Hypothesis 1 is accepted. School 500 ranks first in both Responsible Autonomy practices and commitment to Responsible Autonomy. School 300 ranks lowest in both Responsible Autonomy practices and commitment to Responsible Autonomy. School 300 ranked third on both scales while schools 200 and 400 exchanged rankings of second and fourth.

TABLE 8.--School Rankings for Responsible Autonomy Commitment and Practice

Responsible Autonomy				
School	Practices	Rank	Commitment	Rank
500	4.2	1	88%	1
200	4.1	2	74%	4
100	3.9	3	81%	3
400	3.7	4	86%	2
300	3.6	5	70%	5

The above data comparisons were listed to show the relatedness of the data and not to establish a causal relationship. The findings support Hypothesis 1.

Other Findings Related to Hypothesis 1 and Responsible Autonomy Practices

The four Responsible Autonomy practices selected for this study are: (1) degree of staff involvement in the budgeting planning process; (2) degree of staff involvement in curriculum

planning; (3) degree of staff involvement in hiring of personnel; and (4) degree of parent input in the building decision-making process.

The summary of the responses from the data sources (building administrators, teacher representatives and central administrators) show the highest criterion to be staff involvement in curriculum planning (66 points) in Table 9. The lowest criterion was degree of parent input in the building decision-making process (52 points).

The means for Responsible Autonomy practices for the three data sources are: building administrators, $\bar{X} = 17.07$; teacher representatives, $\bar{X} = 15.34$; and central administrators, $\bar{X} = 14.95$. The small sample confidence interval--two tailed t-Test with an alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance between the three data source means.

The difference between the means of the building administrators (high) and teacher representatives (low) were held to be significantly different. The critical value of 2.306 with 8 degrees of freedom was well within the confidence interval of $.009 < U_1 - U_2 < 4.231$ as shown in Table 10.

The difference between the means of the building administrators (high) and central administrators (low) were held to be significantly different. The critical value of 2.306 with 8 degrees of freedom was well within the confidence interval of $-1.062 < U_1 - U_2 < 5.302$ as shown in Table 11.

There was little significant difference between the means of the teacher representatives (low) and central administrators (low).

TABLE 9.--Summary of the Responses from the Data Sources on Responsible Autonomy Practices

Criteria	Source A (Building Administrators)					Source B (Teacher Representatives)					Source C (Central Administrators)					Criteria Totals			
	None*	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	Total	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	Total	None	Very Little	Little		Much	Very Much	Total
1				8	15	23				16	5	21			6	12		18	62
2				8	15	23				8	15	23				20		20	66
3				12	10	22				4	6	19			6	12		18	59
4		3		12	5	<u>20</u>			6	8		<u>14</u>			6	12		<u>18</u>	52
TOTALS						88						77						74	239

*Response Values: None = 1; Very Little = 2; Little = 3; Much = 4; Very Much = 5.

TABLE 10.--Test of Significance for Administrator and Teacher Responsible Autonomy Practices

	\bar{X}	S^2	DF	T-Value	Confidence Interval
Building Administrators	17.07	1.50	8	2.306	$.009 < U_1 - U_2 < 4.231$
Teacher Representatives	15.34	1.50	8		

TABLE 11.--Test of Significance for Building and Central Administrators for Responsible Autonomy Practices

	\bar{X}	S^2	DF	T-Value	Confidence Interval
Building Administrators	17.07	1.50	8	2.306	$-1.062 < U_1 - U_2 < 5.302$
Central Administrators	14.95	2.70	8		

The critical value of 2.306 was just within the confidence interval of $-2.004 < U_1 - U_2 < 2.784$ as shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12.--Test of Significance for Teacher Representatives and Central Administrators for Responsible Autonomy Practices

	\bar{X}	S^2	DF	T-Value	Confidence Interval
Teacher Representatives	15.34	1.643	8	2.306	$-2.004 < U_1 - U_2 < 2.784$
Central Administrators	14.95	1.643	8		

Other Findings Related to Hypothesis 1 and Commitment to Responsible Autonomy

The hypothesis also asked for consideration of the following question: To what extent is the idealized model of Responsible Autonomy, as defined, like the observed commitment to the definition? This question was analyzed by computing the percent of responses by the building administrators (N=19) and teacher representatives (N=18) in each of the five junior high schools.

On each of the seven items, junior high administrators responded more affirmatively than did teacher representatives. The results for each of the seven questions on commitment to responsible autonomy are summarized below in tabular form.

Item	Group	Teacher Representatives	Junior High Principals
1. As a professional in your present position, do you presently have autonomy in your work?	Yes	89%	95%
	No	0%	0%
	More than I but not enough	11%	5%
2. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy can enhance the education opportunities for students in the Lansing elementary schools?	Yes	78%	90%
	No	5%	0%
	Maybe	17%	10%
3. Do you feel the Responsible Autonomy can assist you in being more effective in your job?	Yes	83%	95%*
	No	0%	0%
	Not Necessarily	17%	5%

*One did not respond to this question

Item	Group	Teacher Representatives	Junior High Principals
4. Do you feel that as a result of Responsible Autonomy you can be more satisfied with your job?	Yes	78%	95%
	No	5%	0%
	Little Direct Effect	17%	5%
5. In your opinion, can Responsible Autonomy result in an improvement in the operation of the district?	Yes	45%	79%
	No	5%	0%
	Maybe	50%	21%
6. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy allows you to be a facilitator in the learning process?	Yes	72%*	84%
	No	11%	0%
	Not Directly Related	17%	16%
*Two did not respond to this question.			
7. In your opinion can Responsible Autonomy allow parents a greater voice in the decision-making process for the Lansing Schools?	Yes	56%	79%
	No	0%	0%
	Maybe	44%	21%

Overall, the combined commitment to Responsible Autonomy by building administrators and teacher representatives is 80 percent as shown in Table 13. The item receiving the highest percent (92) of the affirmative responses was: (1) As a professional in your present position, do you presently have autonomy in your work? The item receiving the lowest percent (62) of the affirmative responses was: (5) In your opinion, can Responsible Autonomy result in an improvement in the operation of the district?

TABLE 13.--Summary of All Responses to the Commitment to Responsible
Autonomy Questions

Item 1--Presently have autonomy in your work?

92 percent of the two samples answered yes

Item 2--Autonomy can enhance the education opportunities?

84 percent of the two samples answered yes.

Item 3--Autonomy can assist you in being effective?

89 percent of the two samples answered yes.

Item 4--Autonomy can result in more job satisfaction?

87 percent of the two samples answered yes.

Item 5--Can autonomy improve the operation of the district?

62 percent of the two samples answered yes.

Item 6--Autonomy allows you to be a facilitator in the
learning process?

78 percent of the two samples answered yes.

Item 7--Allows parents a greater voice in decision making?

68 percent of the two samples answered yes.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: The junior high school identified as having implemented, to the highest degree, practices of Responsible Autonomy will have students achieve higher test results on the Stanford Achievement Test than the school identified as having the lowest degree of implementing practices of Responsible Autonomy.

The data collected for Hypothesis 2 was identified as Stanford Achievement Reading Test results or Stanford Achievement Mathematics test results for all students at school 500 (high in Responsible Autonomy commitment and practices) and school 300 (lowest in Responsible Autonomy commitment and practices).

The reading mean for students (N=1,281) at school 500 was 66.23. The reading mean for students (N=1,127) at school 300 was 63.20. The results of the two independent sample t-Test for the means of schools 500 and 300 are shown in Table 14. The t-value is -3.17 with 2,343 degrees of freedom and significance is at 0.002. Alpha was 0.05. These data support the acceptance of Hypothesis 2 for student achievement in reading as related to Responsible Autonomy commitment and practices.

TABLE 14.--Responsible Autonomy Test of Significance--Reading

School	Test	Number of Cases	Mean	T-Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance
500	Reading	1,281	66.23	-3.17	2343	0.002
300	Reading	1,127	63.20			

The mathematics mean for students (N=1,281) at school 500 was 64.43. The mathematics mean for students (N=1,127) at school 300 was 63.78. The results of the two independent sample t-Test for the means of schools 500 and 300 are shown in Table 15. The t-value is 0.35 with 2,355 degrees of freedom and significance is at 0.725. Alpha was 0.05. These data do not support Hypothesis 2 for student achievement in mathematics as related to Responsible Autonomy commitment and practices.

TABLE 15.--Responsible Autonomy Test of Significance--Mathematics

School	Test	Number of Cases	Mean	T-Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
500	Math	1,281	64.43	0.35	2355	0.725
300	Math	1,127	64.78			

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: The implementation of Responsible Autonomy will account for more of the difference in student achievement among the selected junior high schools than will the implementation of successful practices.

The data in Table 16 reveals that school 500 (highest in Responsible Autonomy practices) has a mean of 5.7 for the ten successful practices (N=60). School 300 (lowest in Responsible Autonomy practices) has a mean of 6.1 for the ten successful practices (N=52).

Analysis of the data for significance in Table 17 shows little significance with alpha at .05 and the t-value at 2.101 on a

TABLE 16.--Mean Responses to Ten "Successful Practices" by the Highest and Lowest Junior High Schools in Practices of Responsible Autonomy

Statement	Mean of Highest School (500)	Mean of Lowest School (300)	Difference
1. Objectives	5.6	6.0	-.4
2. Planning Process	6.2	6.2	.0
3. School Climate	5.9	7.1	-1.2
4. Teacher Expectations	6.4	5.9	+.5
5. Administrator Expectations	6.2	6.9	-.7
6. Alternatives in Learning	6.0	6.8	-.8
7. Progress Reporting	6.1	6.1	.0
8. Individualized Instruction	5.8	6.0	-.2
9. Program Articulation	4.8	4.9	-.1
10. Parental Involvement	<u>4.1</u>	<u>5.5</u>	-1.4
Mean Totals	$\bar{X} = 5.7$	$\bar{X} = 6.1$	

TABLE 17.--Testing Significance for Highest and Lowest Schools in "Successful Practices"

School	\bar{X}	S^2	DF	T-Value	Confidence Interval
500 (Highest in Responsible Autonomy Practices)	5.7	.507	18	2.101	$-4.443 < U_1 - U_2 < -3.557$
300 (Lowest in Responsible Autonomy Practices)	6.1	.433	18		

confidence interval of $-4.443 < U_1 - U_2 < -3.557$. It appears there may be an inverse relationship between Responsible Autonomy practices and perceived successful practices. The highest school (500) in Responsible Autonomy practices was higher than the school (300) lowest in Responsible Autonomy practices in only one (#4) of ten successful practices. These data do not support Hypothesis 3.

Summary

The findings in Chapter IV supported Hypothesis 1: The junior high school identified as having implemented more practices of Responsible Autonomy will have a higher commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy than the school identified as lowest in implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices.

The findings partially supported Hypothesis 2: The junior high school identified as having implemented, to a higher degree, practices of Responsible Autonomy will have students achieve higher test results on the Stanford Achievement Test than the school identified as having the lowest degree of implementing practices of Responsible Autonomy. The data supported this hypothesis for reading test results but showed no significant relationship between these schools in mathematics test results.

Hypothesis 3: The implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices will account for more of the difference in student achievement among selected junior high schools than will the implementation of successful practices. The findings did not support this hypothesis.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter contains four sections. The first section reviews the purpose of the study and the procedures used to realize the purpose. Section two includes the major conclusions of the study. The third section suggests implications resulting from this study on Responsible Autonomy. A statement of recommendations for further research is presented in the final section.

Summary

In this study, the author sought to determine the level of acceptance and implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices in five urban junior high schools in the Lansing School District. The data source groups included building principals, teachers, and central administrators. Their perceptions on Responsible Autonomy levels of acceptance and implementation of practices were obtained by using the "Questionnaire on Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Schools" as developed by Dr. Duane H. Moore.¹

¹Duane Moore, op. cit.

Data collected was evaluated by using descriptive statistical procedures and the two independent sample t-test. Results were deemed significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Relevant literature was discussed in Chapter II which included the need for urban school districts to be more responsive to meeting heterogeneous student needs by considering "sweeping changes in the organization, structure, and conduct of educational experience."¹ One sweeping change suggested by Becker and Gordon was to provide for greater decentralization, i.e., to provide a degree of autonomy across organizational units.² Actualization of this change process presents the question, at what level can decisions be assigned and still carry responsibility? By introducing the concept of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing School District in 1972, Superintendent I. Carl Candoli initiated an organizational change which will further clarify the answers to this vital question.

In Chapter III, the procedures used in the collection of data were presented. In Chapter IV, the findings were presented and this chapter includes the summary presentation.

Conclusions

1. Responsible Autonomy has been accepted to a high degree by junior high administrators and teacher representatives.

¹Averich, op. cit., p. x.

²Becker and Gordon, op. cit., p. 337.

A total of 80 percent of the combined data source groups of building administrators and teacher representatives responded yes to all seven questions on the commitment to Responsible Autonomy survey. Building administrators responded more affirmatively (88%) to commitment to Responsible Autonomy questions than did teacher representatives (71%).

2. Practices of Responsible Autonomy are being implemented in the Lansing junior high schools.

Findings indicate a level of "much involvement" by data source groups in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices in junior high schools. With "much involvement" equivalent to 4.0 on a scale of 1-5, the data source groups means were: building administrators (4.3); teacher representatives (3.8); and central administrators (3.7). The mean for all groups was 3.9.

The mean for the building administrators was significantly higher than the teacher representatives (critical value = 2.306; confidence interval of $.009 < U_1 - U_2 < 4.231$) and central administrators (critical value = 2.306; confidence interval of $-1.062 < U_1 - U_2 < 5.302$). There was no significant difference between the means of the teacher representatives and central administrators.

3. A strong relationship was found for the junior high schools highest in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices and their commitment to Responsible Autonomy.

The data for each junior high was ranked by level of implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices and commitment to Responsible Autonomy. The findings show that school 500 was ranked

first in both categories with means of 4.2 (practices) and 88% (commitment). School 300 was ranked fifth in both categories with means of 3.6 (practices) and 70% (commitment).

4. A significant relationship existed between the junior high schools highest and lowest in implementing Responsible Autonomy practices and student achievement in reading. There was no significance for mathematics.

There is a significant difference in student achievement in reading between the school highest and lowest in practices of Responsible Autonomy. School 500 (highest) had a reading mean of 66.23 and school 300 (lowest) had a reading mean of 63.20. The results of the two independent sample t-test for these means shows significance at .002. The results for student achievement in mathematics show no significant difference ($p = 0.725$) between the schools. The mathematics means were almost identical as school 500 (highest) had a mathematics mean of 64.43 and school 300 (lowest) had a mathematics mean of 64.78.

5. The implementation of "successful practices" by junior high schools is not related to their implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices.

The total professional staffs of the junior high schools highest and lowest in Responsible Autonomy practices were surveyed to determine their level of implementation of ten successful school practices.

On a scale of 1 to 10, school 500 (highest in Responsible Autonomy practices) had a "successful practices" mean of 5.7 ($N=60$) and school 300 (lowest in Responsible Autonomy practices) had a

"successful practices" mean of 6.1 (N=52). There was no significant difference between the means.

Implications

The question defined as basic to this study was how can a large urban school district effectively provide for the heterogeneous learning needs of its students? Many sources cited in Chapter II indicated that a centralized educational organization was inflexible in nature and was reluctant to change its educational delivery systems to meet current student needs. This condition implies that if a highly centralized school system is to be effective, new organizational strategies are needed, especially where decision making is related to budget planning, curriculum planning, staff hiring, and parental involvement in program planning. These concepts were actualized by Dr. Candoli for the Lansing School district in 1972 and provided the focus of this study as then related to junior high programs. The major implications are presented below.

1. Responsible Autonomy has been very favorably accepted by junior high staffs (80%). Even though there is a difference in acceptance levels by staff components [building administrators (88%) and teacher representatives (71%)], the indication is that staffs have responded favorably to Responsible Autonomy. One reason the building administrators have a higher acceptance level is Responsible Autonomy provides them with greater flexibility and control in decision making. They can respond more effectively to the needs of students and staff.

2. This high level of acceptance of Responsible Autonomy by building staffs also implies that the support roles of central administrators may be reversed, to a large degree. For many school functions, central administrative program directors could now be expected to support staffs and their decisions as opposed to staffs coming to them to seek approval to develop education activities or to request funds.

3. Responsible Autonomy practices have been widely implemented by building staffs. The three data groups' mean (3.9) is equivalent to a rating of "much involvement" (4.0) on the survey scale (1-5). The individual data group means [building administrators (4.3), teacher representatives (3.8) and central administrators (3.7)] imply that building administrators find Responsible Autonomy practices to be very supportive of their administrative responsibilities. There is also a need to involve teachers to a greater degree in Responsible Autonomy practices if their degree of involvement is to improve.

4. The findings indicate those staffs with high acceptance of Responsible Autonomy also demonstrate a high level of Responsible Autonomy practices. It is suggested that central administrators may improve the low level of Responsible Autonomy practices of some staffs by improving their acceptance level of Responsible Autonomy. This might be accomplished by several strategies including a clarification of the Responsible Autonomy process, the setting of reasonable program goals, the monitoring of staff progress, and to have

appropriate support systems available to support areas in need of improvement.

5. The relationship between Responsible Autonomy acceptance, practices, and student achievement presents an interesting pattern. The highest and lowest junior highs in Responsible Autonomy practices had significant differences in reading ($p = .002$) and no significant differences in math ($p = .725$).

One factor of note about these findings is the school district mathematics program is highly organized on a K-12 basis. The mathematics learning objectives have been identified and are available to staff across grade levels. The progress of the mathematics program has also been closely monitored by the district coordinator for a long period of time. This may partially explain the similarity of the mathematics results in the two sample schools. It is recommended that the present K-12 reading program could be strengthened with the addition of effective support systems for schools in need of them.

6. There was no significant difference in the highest and lowest junior high schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy and their implementation of "successful practices." This suggests that a staff which has not become highly involved in the Responsible Autonomy process may be experiencing unusual circumstances. For example, if teachers are not meaningfully involved in Responsible Autonomy practices, then they tend to rely on their individual "successful practices." This might explain why the school lowest in Responsible Autonomy practices ranked highest in nine out of ten

items on the "successful practices" survey. This implies that when teachers experience greater involvement in decision making at the local level, their implementation of "successful practices" will approximate the norm identified for schools high in Responsible Autonomy practices.

7. Responsible Autonomy is an important organizational strategy which can provide the flexibility needed by educators to respond to diverse students' needs in an urban setting. The educators involved in this study indicated Responsible Autonomy is significantly assisting them to accomplish this task. This implies that students and educators can participate in an educational process which is mutually supportive and fulfilling to all program participants.

Recommendations

Further research is suggested in the following areas:

1. Replication of the study at the senior high level regarding commitment to and practices of Responsible Autonomy.
2. A comparison of Responsible Autonomy to other decentralized organizational strategies.
3. An expanded study on student achievement to include the relationship of Responsible Autonomy practices to other variables like socio-economic status, student mobility rates, and attendance patterns.
4. A study comparing the Lansing School District model of Responsible Autonomy with other urban school districts.

5. A longitudinal study on Responsible Autonomy and its impact on variables like student success following high school graduation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS AND LSEA TEACHER
REPRESENTATIVES**

October 27, 1977

Dear Colleague:

I am in the process of gathering data for my dissertation, "An Evaluative Study of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Schools." Your assistance is requested. Please complete the enclosed brief questionnaire and return it to me at Pattengill as soon as possible but, hopefully, by Thursday, November 3, 1977.

Basically, the study will examine research questions which focus on how Responsible Autonomy has been accepted and implemented by junior high staffs. Through the information received from this questionnaire, it will select junior highs from which entire staffs will be surveyed.

The information you share with me will be part of the published data in my paper. Your anonymity will be strictly enforced.

Your cooperation and time from your busy schedule is greatly appreciated in this effort.

Sincerely,

Bill Haak
Assistant Principal
Pattengill Junior High
Lansing School District

Enclosure

Questionnaire on Responsible Autonomy in the
Lansing Public Junior High Schools _____ *

Definition of Responsible Autonomy:

Responsible Autonomy, as conceived in the Lansing School System, is based on the idea that the greatest possible improvement in the schools will be obtained when local schools are given wide latitude to solve their unique problems. Thus, the efforts of Responsible Autonomy are concentrated ideally at the building level since the principal and staff have the most direct and continuous contact with students, parents, and communities. The term, Responsible Autonomy, is directed at the decentralization of responsibilities within the school organization (i.e., school budget planning, curriculum planning, personnel selection, and community involvement).

Part I. Based on the above definition of Responsible Autonomy, please respond to the following questions:

1. As a professional in your present position, do you presently have autonomy in your work?

Yes _____ No _____ More than I did but not enough _____

Comment: _____

2. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy can enhance the educational opportunities for students in the Lansing junior high schools?

Yes _____ No _____ Maybe _____

Why? _____

*Coded for retrieval purposes only. Your anonymity will be strictly enforced.

Part 1. Continued.

3. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy can assist you in being more effective in your job?

Yes ____ No ____ Not Necessarily ____

Why? _____

4. Do you feel that as a result of Responsible Autonomy you can be more satisfied with your job?

Yes ____ No ____ Little Direct Effect ____

Why? _____

5. In your opinion, can Responsible Autonomy result in an improvement in the operation of the school district?

Yes ____ No ____ Maybe ____

Why? _____

6. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy allows you to be a more effective facilitator in the learning process?

Yes ____ No ____ Not Directly Related ____

Why? _____

7. In your opinion, can Responsible Autonomy allow parents a greater voice in the decision-making process for the Lansing schools?

Yes ____ No ____ Maybe ____

Why? _____

Part II. Based on the above definition of Responsible Autonomy, please circle the number that, in your opinion, describes the practice at your school. Below each statement, criteria are listed to assist you in responding.

1. Degree of staff involvement in the foundation allowance budget process.

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	Little*	Much	Very Much**

(*Little - building budget committee meets annually and budget printout data is shared infrequently)

(**Very much - building budget committee meets monthly and budget printout data is shared as it is received)

2. Degree of staff involvement in the curriculum decision-making process.

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	Little*	Much	Very Much **

(*Little - involved in the selection of a few instructional materials; instruction process is established by others; objectives developed for courses are done mostly by others)

(**Very Much - involved in selection of all instructional materials; participate in the instructional planning process; participate in the development of course objectives)

Part II. Continued.

3. Degree of staff involvement in hiring personnel.					
1	2	3	4	5	
None	Very Little	Little*	Much	Very Much **	
(*Little - participate in the establishment of some criteria of professional and paraprofessional personnel)					
(**Very Much - participate in the establishment of professional and paraprofessional personnel; activity participate in some part of the interview process)					
4. Degree of community input into the building decision-making process.					
1	2	3	4	5	
None	Very Little	Little*	Much	Very Much**	
(*Little - Community Involvement Committee meets two times a year; building budget data shared with the CIC two times a year)					
(**Very Much - CIC meets monthly; building budget data shared at each meeting; CIC has input into establishing the building budget)					

Present Position _____

Number of Years in the Lansing System _____

If in Administration, Number of Years in Administration _____

Thank you for your support.

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO
CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

1017 Jerome Street
Lansing, Michigan
November 2, 1977

Dear

I am in the process of gathering data for my dissertation, "An Evaluative Study of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Junior High Schools." Your assistance as a central office administrator is requested because your perceptions on the acceptance and implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices by junior high staffs are of value to this study.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me at Pattengill at your earliest convenience, hopefully, by Wednesday, November 9, 1977.

The information you share with me will be part of the published data in my paper. Your anonymity will be enforced.

Your cooperation and time from your busy schedule is greatly appreciated in this effort.

Sincerely,

Bill Haak
Assistant Principal
Pattengill Junior High
Lansing School District

Enclosure

Questionnaire on Responsible Autonomy in the
Lansing Public Junior High Schools

*

Definition of Responsible Autonomy

Responsible Autonomy, as conceived in the Lansing School District, is based on the idea that the greatest possible improvement in the schools will be attained when local schools are given wide latitude to solve their unique problems. Thus, the efforts of Responsible Autonomy are concentrated ideally at the building level since the principal and staff have the most direct and continuous contact with students, parents, and communities. The term, Responsible Autonomy, is directed at the decentralization of responsibilities within the school organization (i.e., school budget planning, curriculum planning, personnel selection, and community involvement).

Instructions

Based on the above definition, please circle the number that, in your opinion, describes the implementation of Responsible Autonomy practices at each junior high school. Below each statement, criteria are listed to assist you in responding. The anonymity of you and the junior high schools will be enforced.

*Coded for retrieval purposes only.

1. Degree of staff involvement in the foundation allowance budget planning process.

FRENCH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
GARDNER	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
OTTO	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
PATTENGILL	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
RICH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**

(*Little - building budget committee meets annually and budget printout data is shared infrequently)

(**Very Much - building budget committee meets monthly and printout data is shared as it is received)

2. Degree of staff involvement in the curriculum decision-making process.

FRENCH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
GARDNER	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
OTTO	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
PATTENGILL	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
RICH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**

(*Little - involved in the selection of a few instructional materials; instructional process is established by others; course objectives developed mostly by others)

(**Very Much - involved in the selection of most instructional materials; most staff participate in the instructional planning process and in the development of course objectives)

3. Degree of staff involvement in hiring personnel.

FRENCH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
GARDNER	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
OTTO	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
PATTENGILL	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
RICH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**

(*Little - participate in the establishment of some criteria of professional and paraprofessional personnel)

(**Very Much - participate in the establishment of criteria of professional and paraprofessional personnel; actively participate in some part of the interview process)

4. Degree of community input into the building decision-making process.

FRENCH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
GARDNER	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
OTTO	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
PATTENGILL	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**
RICH	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Little*	4 Much	5 Very Much**

(*Little - CIC meets twice annually; building budget data shared with the CIC)

(**Very Much - CIC meets monthly; building budget data shared at each meeting and the CIC has input for budget planning)

Thank you for your support.

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO THE STAFFS
OF THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST
JUNIOR HIGHS IDENTIFIED

November 30, 1977

Dear Colleague:

I am in the process of gathering data for my dissertation, "An Evaluative Study of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Junior High Schools." Your assistance is requested. Please complete the enclosed brief questionnaire and return it to me at Pattengill as soon as possible but, hopefully, by Friday, December 9, 1977.

Basically, the questionnaire is designed to assess the degree to which the educational factors listed in the questionnaire exist in schools.

The questionnaire is coded to assist me only in the retrieval process. Your anonymity will be enforced.

Your cooperation and time from your busy schedule is greatly appreciated. Thanks in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Bill Haak
Assistant Principal
Pattengill Junior High
Lansing School District

Enclosure

Questionnaire on Educational Factors in the
Lansing Public Junior High Schools

Introduction

Listed below are ten educational factors related to secondary schools. Please circle the number that, in your opinion, identifies the degree to which that factor exists in your school.

1. <u>State of Instructional objectives.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poorly Articulated*								Well Articulated**	
(*Not written down, not discussed, no relationship to the program.)									
(**Written down, reviewed annually, closely related to the program.)									
2. <u>Instructional planning process.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low*								High**	
(*Past planning not related to programs, minimum involvement of staff members in the planning process.)									
(**Extensive involvement of staff members in the planning process, existing plans are well understood and relate to past planning.)									
3. <u>School climate.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Restrictive*								Facilitative**	
(*Distrust, fear of failure, innovation discouraged.)									
(**Atmosphere for reasonable risk taking exists, atmosphere of sharing.)									

____ Coded for retrieval purposes only.

4. <u>Teachers' expectations for students.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low*								High**	
(*Teachers tend to categorize students and hold different expectations for various categories.)									
(**Teachers genuinely believe all students can succeed.)									
5. <u>Building administrators' expectations for students.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low*								High**	
(*Building administrators tend to categorize students and hold different expectations for various categories.)									
(**Building administrators genuinely feel all students can succeed.)									
6. <u>Utilization of alternatives in learning opportunities.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Few*								Many**	
(*Limited opportunities to arrange different types of Instruction for students with different learning needs.)									
(**Instructional programs are available to support heterogeneous student learning styles.)									
7. <u>Reporting of student progress.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inadequate*								Exemplary**	
(*Little, if any, information, hard to interpret or too general.)									
(**Easy to understand information frequently shared with students and parents in a variety of ways.)									

8. <u>Individualized instruction.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low*					High**				
(*Students seldom regrouped, heavy reliance on group instruction.)									
(**Frequent regrouping of students, provision made for students to work on Instructional materials at their own level.)									
9. <u>Instructional program articulation.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor Articulation*					Excellent Articulation**				
(*Little communication between departments on how to meet common student learning needs.)									
(**Program efforts interrelated between departments and are well understood by departmental staff members on and between grade levels.)									
10. <u>Degree of parental Involvement.</u>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low*					High**				
(*Hesitant, uninformed, activities social rather than related to the decision-making process.)									
(**Well informed, frequently involved in the decision-making process and parents feel welcome to visit school.)									

PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO BILL HAAK AT PATTENGILL.

THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

APPENDIX D

QUOTATIONS FROM RESPONDENTS ON COMMITMENT
TO RESPONSIBLE AUTONOMY

Quotations from Respondents on Commitment

Responsible Autonomy

An opportunity was given for the respondents to comment on the survey. It was felt these comments were important to gain insight into the feelings of those responding. Not all wrote comments on each question. A sample of the comments on each of the seven questionnaire items was categorized into three areas: positive, neutral, or negative. Quotations are presented as written by the respondents.

Item 1. . . . Do you presently have enough autonomy in your work?

Positive

"Autonomy allows me to be involved in a significant degree in the decision-making process."

"Principal wants the best for students and wants to be sure we are using budget wisely."

"I've had direct control in identifying objectives and teaching methods."

"Each department works out its own plans."

"Parameters governed by board policy."

Neutral

"As a classroom teacher I'm not sure."

"Actual 'Responsible Autonomy' will mean hiring staff based on total building staff needs from administration down to aides."

Negative

"As a classroom teacher, I still feel it has not effectively helped."

"We are still tightly controlled by administration in many ways."

Item 2. . . . Responsible Autonomy can enhance educational success for students.

Positive

"School programs can be more responsive to heterogeneous student needs."

"Makes it more possible to deal with students' educational necessities on more individualized basis."

"Curriculum modified to meet the needs of our students and dollars can be spent when needed to implement the program."

"Flexibility for unique programs based on identified needs of the building."

"I can participate in decisions which will directly effect my work and goals."

"It allows individuals to make decisions that are closest to the situation."

"We stay in tune to student needs this way."

"Ideally, parents, teachers, and students would be setting goals together."

Neutral

"There are times when coordination would be beneficial (e.g., textbook selection)."

"The dollar base still comes from an outside source which initially controls what you do."

"This is dependent upon building administrative support of staff in providing program development opportunities."

"Responsible Autonomy is possible only if there is a working relationship between building administrators and staff."

Negative

"I think it has more or less hindered the programs in education."

"Autonomy is good if it is 'REAL.' Sometimes we find that downtown still maintains the control where they feel fit to."

Item 3. . . . Responsible Autonomy can assist you in being more effective in your job.

Positive

"I've found . . . it challenges me to become more effective. There is a commitment."

"I work more diligently when I have been involved in decision making."

"Community-school needs vary--R. A. allows me to act in accord with my community school needs."

"Autonomy cuts red tape--and less money is wasted."

"Allows creativity in problem solving."

"I frequently have information and ideas which need to be a part of a decision."

"I know what will help my program grow better than an outsider."

"Particularly in meeting the needs of local building students and staff."

Neutral

". . . providing that inter-school sharing process is developed."

"It depends on how well I present and carry out the program."

Negative

"I don't see that my job has changed that much--if at all."

"Demands much greater, less funds available."

Item 4. . . . With Responsible Autonomy you can be more satisfied with your job.

Positive

"Yes, because I feel I am part of the planning of the building."

"Allows for more flexibility in job approach."

"Because I don't feel handicapped and tied down."

"If I don't like something I can work directly through my building for a change or modification."

"I enjoy added responsibility."

Neutral

"If employed properly--have yet to see this effectiveness."

Negative

"It has become very competitive among the different departments which results in less efficiency and cooperation."

Item 5. . . . Responsible Autonomy results in an improvement in the operation of the school district.

Positive

"It places decision making and responsibility with those closest to the problem."

"It makes less 'buck-passing' possible."

"Each building can operate more efficiently."

"Quality of the educational program will improve and it results in a more satisfying system to work in."

"Lansing School District is in the best position it's ever been in--i.e., monies and curriculum."

"We should be better able to educate kids."

Neutral

". . . if there is direct involvement at the central level for buildings to be held responsible."

"Each school must do its job as part of the whole."

"But perhaps then we would have only a mass of separate functions without any unity."

"No matter what, there will always be some type of central control."

Negative

"Some aspects of R. A. cause an overall structural breakdown (i.e.) programs, steering committees."

"Only because each school may deal with the same problem."

Item 6. . . . Responsible Autonomy allows you to be a facilitator in the learning process.

Positive

"Appropriate educational delivery systems can be developed by involved staff members."

"Individualizing instruction to fit socio-economic needs."

"Being responsible for the development of programs, then the teacher can take a greater interest in the success of the program."

"Decisions are more immediate."

"I can effect the environment."

"It allows me more direct access to such areas as how the budget is spent in our building."

"Decisions of process and management can be compatible to individual teaching style."

Neutral

"Could (be a better facilitator) if families are involved and learning disabilities are diagnosed and remediated."

"With the administration that I work with I still would have autonomy to a certain extent."

Negative

"At times--but I have yet to see it help the classroom teacher that much."

"This procedure has not helped--innovative ideas are not often given first priority."

Item 7. . . . Responsible Autonomy allows parents a greater voice in the decision-making process for the Lansing schools.

Positive

"Their input is valuable in program planning."

"With decision making decentralized, parents feel more input into decision making."

"Parents getting involved makes better conditions for learning as they know what you are trying and hoping to accomplish."

"Parent input is more easily heard at a building level."

"Parents have good ideas and we could well afford to listen to them."

Neutral

"Opportunity is there for their input. We have a ways to go for meaningful parent involvement."

"It depends on how open each building will be."

"Dependent upon building readiness and energy for seeking parent involvement in the decision-making process."

"Can, but slows down process, less efficient but closer to decision."

Negative

"I personally believe they do not use it and many could care less!"

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