AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF RESPONSIBLE AUTONOMY IN THE LANSING PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF RESPONSIBLE AUTONOMY IN THE LANSING PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

By

Duane Harrison Moore

Increasingly over the past decade strident accusations and criticisms have been leveled against the urban school systems of the United States. While many of the criticisms are the result of sensationalism some are, at the same time, rooted in substantial fact and call for a reshaping of the educational system to make it more responsible and more compatible with the changing society.

This evaluative study is an examination of one urban systems' effort to decentralize the approach to school administration, utilizing the concept of Responsible Autonomy, in order to respond to the critical issues facing them; the delivery of educational services to the student, the achievement of students, and being more responsive to the urban milieu.

Responsible Autonomy is the concept of shaping a flexible organizational structure that can respond to the problem of developing an optimum learning environment. The concept is based on the idea that greatest possible improvement in the schools will be attained when local schools are given wide latitude to solve their

unique problems. The study consisted of an analysis of surveys and achievement data from the Stanford Achievement Test to gain insight into the following questions:

> To what extent is the idealized model of Responsible Autonomy like the observed commitment to the definition?
>
> To what extent is the observed commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy related to the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy?
>
> To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to achievement?
>
> To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to the implementation of "successful practices?"

The conclusions drawn from the study of the decentralization effort were:

> A positive acceptance of the philosophy of Responsible Autonomy was manifest in the elementary schools of Lansing.
>
> Practices of Responsible Autonomy are being implemented in elementary schools of the Lansing School District.
>
> A relationship was found for elementary schools implementing practices of Responsible Autonomy to a high degree, as identified in this study, and commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy.
>
> A significant relationship existed between level of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy and achievement in reading and mathematics.
>
> The socio-economic status (S.E.S.) of the school is a factor to be considered when examining practices of Responsible Autonomy, particularly in the area of reading.
>
> The implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy in the school is not related to the implementation of "successful practices," as defined in this study.
>
> The implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy did not account for more of the difference in achievement among the elementary schools than the implementation of "successful practices."

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By

Duane Harrison Moore

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CHAPTER I

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Lansing is the capital city of Michigan, located near the center of the lower peninsula, with an employment divided among government, industry and education.

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

There have been some changes in the distribution of population with a movement of middle-class white families to the suburbs and the influx of lower-class whites and minority families into the city. In the 1974-1975 school year, the racial distribution in the schools was: Caucasian--60 percent, Negro--20 percent, Mexican-American--15 percent, and Other--5 percent.[1]

The district is made up of 47 elementary schools (K-6), five junior high schools (7-9), and four senior high schools (10-12) After increasing in enrollment steadily for many years, the number

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[1]Ethnic Report, Office of Child Accounting, Lansing Public Schools, 1975.

of students enrolled in public schools is showing signs of stabilizing, if not even decreasing. The 1974-1975 enrollment was 33,281.[2]

Statement of the Problem

Increasingly, over the past decade, strident accusations, charges and counter charges (but very few compliments) have been leveled against the urban school systems of the United States. Silberman's, "Crisis in the Classroom" and Christopher Jencks, "Inequality," are but two examples. A variety of pundits and pollsters have attacked the state of American education, particularly urban education. While many of the changes proposed are the result of bandwagonism and sensationalism, some are, at the same time, rooted in substantial fact and call for a reshaping of the educational system to make it more responsive and more compatible with societal changes that have accelerated in the post World War II decades. The Rand Report (1972), prepared for the President's Commission on School Finance, emphasizes that improvement in student outcomes, both cognitive and noncognitive, may require sweeping changes in the organization, structure and conduct of educational experience.[3]

The historical development of the American educational system is well known and need not be reviewed in detail. However, it is important to note that the evolution of American society from agrarian to industrial to technological gave birth to comparable development

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[2]Enrollment Reports, Office of Child Accounting, Lansing Public Schools, 1975.

[3]Harvey A. Averch, et al., How Effective is Schooling? A Critical Review and Synthesis of Research Findings, March 1972, Rand, Santa Monica, California, p. 158.

in the educational sector. A major problem faced by most urban school systems is that they have yet to move from the industrial stage to the technological phase of their development.

Education has played and continues to play an important role in American society. Legitimization of the educational system began in the United States with the Massachusetts laws of 1642 and 1647 requiring the establishment of common schools. Landmarks along the way have included New York in 1812 becoming the first state to pass a permanent law for the organization of public schools. New Jersey provided for the education of pauper children in 1820 and for all children in 1838. The establishment of the Office of Superintendent in Buffalo in 1837 and the famous Kalamazoo case of 1872 formalized the right of the school system to provide high school education supported by local taxes. Perhaps the most notable decisions of the United States Supreme Court having to do with education are the Brown Case of 1954 and the implementing decision one year later and the myriad of legal efforts spawned by them. In the initial decision the long accepted "separate but equal" doctrine was declared inadequate in the field of public education. Forced segregation of Negro pupils into separate schools was found to be contrary to the equal protection of the laws as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. The enforcement of the decision was remanded, in 1955, to the appropriate federal courts. The lower courts were instructed to accept "reasonable progress" toward the ultimate goal of desegregation of schools. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported in 1967 that factors such as residential segregation, segregated teaching staffs,

administrative judgements as to what constitutes overcrowding, and transportation policies have limited the amount of desegregation. Indeed, the Commission found that, in the North and South alike, more Negroes attended segregated schools in 1965 than at the time of the 1954 Brown decision.

Urban school systems are caught in a tide of increasing expectations by clients on the one hand and decreasing sources with which to serve client demands for education 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 the educational setting. These services are important, for without them some students cannot hope to attain educational success. Yet, they do exert a severe drain on available resources. As urban America becomes the repository for poor and indigent citizens, a higher and higher percentage of students requiring special non-educational services become clients of the urban school systems. Delivery systems become strained, often break down, and resultant problems are attributed to the educational system. Orstein has declared that as characteristics of metropolitan population have changed, the problems confronting the schools, and especially the inner-city schools, have increased. Nonwhites, most of them from lower-income groups, have become the majority student population in many city school systems, particularly in the elementary schools. At the same time an out-migration of blacks to the

suburbs has begun, and some suburban school systems are experiencing the problems once considered only characteristic of city schools.[4]

As the growth of urban school systems paralleled the growth of urban America, and as severe demographic and societal changes have impacted the cities, the need for re-examination of the structure of the urban school system has become critical and many urban systems have launched massive efforts to delineate and resolve emerging issues.

Although there are many critical and pervasive issues facing urban school systems, three of the most pressing and consuming, according to Candoli, are the following:[5]

The Desegregation Issue

This is perhaps the most emotional issue ever to surface in American education. The desegregation issue is never very far removed from the surface of any American city and is one that urban educators must face on a daily basis. The need and the requirement to desegregate has caused severe dislocations in most urban school systems. However, there are educational, professional, moral and ethical reasons that dictate the addressal and ultimate resolution of this issue.

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[4]Allen C. Ornstein, Administrative/Community Organization of Metropolitan Schools, Phi Delta Kappan, June 1973, p. 668.

[5]I. Carl Candoli, The Organization and Management of the Urban School System, Lansing, 1976, (mimeographed).

The Financial Issue

Urban centers are rapidly becoming financial disaster areas. The mandate of equal educational opportunity certainly involves the allocation of resources with which to provide educational and related services. The harsh fact is that as the more affluent segments of society move from the urban center, and as business, industrial and commercial interests follow their clients away from the city, the remaining population is one with severe and costly social, economical and educational needs. In most instances, a decreasing resource base from which to provide these services remains. The need for a variety of services, i.e., educational, social, police and fire protection, health, etc. is most critical in the city. At the same time, the costs for these services are higher in the urban center. Substantial and continuing increases in unit costs of these services are inescapable and force serious examination of the structure of the urban school system.

The Decentralization Issue

Recently, this issue has become a recurring theme in most urban centers. Decentralization models have proliferated with most major cities attempting in one way or another to decentralize their administrative structure. Educational theorists ranging from LeVine, to Argarus, to Cunningham, to Fantini have developed decentralization models for consideration. Legitimate concerns over extreme centralization are well taken and appropriate. Bigness leads to remoteness and remoteness leads to impersonalness which is inappropriate in an

institution (education) that is based on human service. Gittell and Hollander have stated, "it has been known for many years that extreme school district size has deleterious effect on the adequacy of the educational program."[6]

A proposition presented in the Rand Study (1972) states:[7]

> Research suggests that the larger the school system, the less likely it is to display innovation, responsiveness, and adaptation and the more likely it is to depend upon exogenous shocks to the system.

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 to attempts to effect meaningful educational change to better service 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, included in the issues cited above are a number of needs facing urban centers in the United States. Perhaps the most pressing need is the capacity to respond to a diverse student population. Students come to the urban school from all socio-economic levels; they may be white, black, brown or red; they may be part of a cohesive family unit or completely separated from parents; they may be indigenous to the city or may be newly arrived; and they may be affluent or on welfare. Their needs

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[6]M. Gittell and T.E. Hollander, Six Urban School Districts, (Praeger, New York, 1967), p. 123.

[7]Harvey A. Averch, p. 156.

are different and sometimes in opposition to one another. The urban school system must provide an educational program for all of its diverse clientele so that the school experience is a positive one for each student. This means providing equal educational opportunity.

A second need (related to the first) is the need to reeducate the staff of the urban school system to the realities of present day urban life. The majority of professional personnel have been trained to work with relatively homogeneous groupings and must adjust to providing services to heterogenous groups. Flexibility and diversity coupled with tolerance are essential. Urban centers have become havens for minorities, the poor and the recent arrivals. Massive retraining efforts are needed to enable urban educators to adequately respond to the needs of the diverse clientele now present in the school system.

A third need is to restructure the system so that educational services can be effectively and quickly delivered to students. It is no longer possible to make programmatic decisions at a central office and expect educational success. Individual needs and local resources vary substantially throughout the urban school system and therefore educational decisions must be diffused through the entire system. Leu and Candoli state, "Program decisions impacting individual children must be made at the level closest to the child and must consider a variety of options, strengths and alternatives."[8]

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[8]Donald J. Leu and I. Carl Candoli, Planning for the Future; A Recommended Long-Range Educational and Facilities Plan for Chicago, Vol. 1 revised, August 1971, p. 25.

A fourth need (closely related to the third) is the need for coordination and comprehensive planning activities. Planning is important at every level of a school system and must be coordinated into an effort to direct resources to particular needs--be they individual, classroom, building, area or system wide. Planning efforts are also needed to best utilize scarce resources and to encourage inter-agency and multi-agency thrust.

A mass of evidence indicates that public schools have, in general, failed to adjust to changing conditions. The Coleman Report found, for example, that Negro students on standardized achievement tests scores 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 twelth grade.

In evaluating the school system the report found urban schools to be deficient.[9]

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

One of the important results of this situation is that a greater proporition of black students than white students drop out of

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

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).

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."[10] 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.[11]

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

The American public schools, traditionally, have been viewed by society as the means by which all people could "better" themselves economically, socially and protection of our way of life from possible outside hostile actions. However, in the past decades as educational costs have spiralled upward, community groups, government and

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

[11] Keith Goldhammer and Robert E. Taylor, Career Education: Perspective and Promise (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishers, 1972).

individuals have demanded increased accountability from public education as to the outputs (achievement) of the system. The Lansing Schools have not escaped the pressure. To an urban population who could see a good education as a way to change their life style, the Lansing Schools could only show the below-average achievement of their students as a result of their efforts.[12]

Armed with evidence that the Lansing Schools were not educating their children up to their expectations, community groups, minority groups, and individual parents went to the school board and to the administration asking for improvements.

How then can the urban school system respond to the issues of student growth, equal educational opportunity, desegregation, staff training and retraining, increasing urban costs, decentralization and the many other issues and criticisms of today?

Definition of Responsible Autonomy

In August, 1971, the Superintendent, Dr. Candoli, introduced a plan to decentralize educational programming to the building level. The concept, entitled "Responsible Autonomy," holds that groups don't learn, individuals do and that the only way to impact individual learning is to provide for programmatic decisions to be made at the classroom or building level.[13]

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

[13] I. Carl Candoli, speech delivered to the Lansing Administrative Staff, Lansing, Michigan (August 31, 1971).

Responsible Autonomy, as conceived in the Lansing Schools, is based on the idea that greatest possible improvements in the schools will be attained when local schools are given wide latitude to solve their unique problems. The concept as it has evolved in Lansing has as its base the making of educational program decisions at the closest possible level to the student. For this reason, the efforts of Responsible Autonomy are concentrated at the building level since the principal and his staff have the most direct and continuous contact with the student, the parents and the community.[14]

Philosophical Position

In August of 1972, Candoli summarized a philosophy of dealing with problems of organizational rigidity. The direction of autonomy, as it has developed in the decentralization process in Lansing, is aimed at bringing about a more flexible organizational structure that can respond to the problems of developing an optimum learning environment.[15]

In nine points, Candoli developed objectives designed to maximize learning potential for students.[16]

1. We must continue to vest major authority for administration of programs and objectives development in individual schools.

2. Teachers should play a much greater role in setting program objectives and in other school matters. This

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[14]Ibid.

[15]I. Carl Candoli, "Professional Autonomy - A Plan for Decentralization in the Lansing Schools," Lansing, 1972 (mimeographed).

[16]Ibid.

means that the sources of status schism between teachers and principals would lessen and that the administrator's role would change from control and unilateral direction to goal integration, articulation and facilitation.

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

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

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

6. We must provide parents and other citizens the opportunity not only to participate more fully in school affairs, but to share certain powers with educators at the school and system level.

7. We must continue to search for and provide alternatives and options to students and parents either within or outside the system.

8. We must press on to the task of true individualized instruction.

9. We must develop a united posture on the human quality of our progression.

It must be made clear that the decentralization effort is mainly concerned with providing the capacity for programmatic decisions to be made at the level closest to the student. System-wide objectives are the rubric under which Responsible Autonomy operates.

System goals are broad objectives and are not changeable. Utilizing the Context Input Process Product decision-making model, input decisions and process decisions are the purview of the individual buildings and departments. However, context and product expectations are consistent throughout the district. Overly simplified, product expectations deal with the cognitive, psychomotor and

affective growth of the student. Greatest effort is directed at developing growth expectations for individual students with instructional methodologies predicated on student needs and the indigenous strengths of a particular staff and community. The "responsible" part of the term refers then to accountability.

Now, five years after the introduction of the decentralization concept, implementation has progressed to the point where all education financial allocations are made to the building in the form of block grants, personnel allocations are made by formula with buildings determining the type and use of personnel, and categorical funds are distributed on a per-pupil allocation with the local unit determining their use. Other resources, i.e. allocation for aides, secretaries, substitute teachers, in-service funds, etc. are also distributed according to formula. Line-item distribution is in concept finalized by the community, staff and principal; and weekly budget status reports are submitted to teach principal. Adjustments of line-item allocations are accomplished at the request of the principal. Budget control is in terms of total expenditure for a unit. Program control is in terms of an annual audit of results as related to building and/or unit plans.

Purpose of the Study

This evaluative study is an examination of one urban systems' effort to decentralize the approach to school administration, utilizing the concept of Responsible Autonomy, in order to respond to the critical issues facing them; the delivery of educational services

to the student, the achievement of students, and being more responsive to the urban milieu.

The Process of Identifying 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 elementary schools of Lansing.

If one of the implications of the philosophy 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 the students in the district.

Many identified successful practices exist in public schools which impact on the issues of the urban school system. The wide latitude that Responsible Autonomy permits in the decision-making process should have some relationship with the level of implementation of these successful practices.

Figure 1 illustrates the process which was used to identify important questions to be explored in the study .

Based on questions shown in Figure 1 (page 17) the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis #1: The elementary schools identified as having implemented more practices of responsible autonomy will have a higher commitment to the definition of responsible autonomy than the schools identified as low in implementation.

Hypothesis #2: The elementary schools identified as having implemented, to a higher degree, practices of responsible autonomy will have higher achievement on the Stanford Achievement Test than schools identified as low.

Hypothesis #3: The implementation of responsible autonomy will account for more of the difference in achievement among the selected elementary schools than will the implementation of "successful practices."

Limitations of the Study

The fundamental limitation of the study was that it did not address causative factors in the elementary 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.

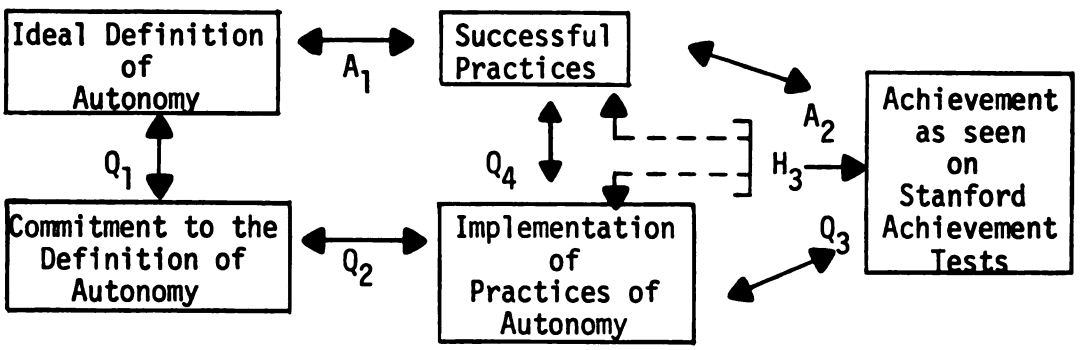
Overview of the Dissertation

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

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

Chapter IV addresses the hypotheses presented in Chapter I and other issues that surfaced during the analysis of the data.

Chapter V presents the conclusions that were drawn from the study and a discussion of each conclusion is provided. Implications for future research are also presented.



Assumptions:

A 1 The ideal definition of Responsible Autonomy is linked to successful practices in elementary schools.

A 2 Successful practices in elementary schools are linked to the achievement of students.

Research Questions:

Q 1 To what extent is the idealized model of Responsible Autonomy, as defined, like the observed commitment to the definition?

Q 2 To what extent is the observed commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy related to the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy?

Q 3 To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to achievement?

Q 4 To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to the implementation of successful practices?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature provides an overview of two areas relevant to the study. The first section, Decentralization, deals with key literature concerning decentralization of urban school systems. The second section, Characteristics of Schools, reviews those most recent studies that have examined the characteristics of schools that have demonstrated success in the areas of academic achievement.

Decentralization

March and Simon, in reviewing the literature of organization theory, reported their impression that "not a great deal has been told about organizations, but it has been said over and over in a variety of languages."[1] If this can be said of organizational theory as a whole it surely can be said of the decentralization issue as well. Dale observed that "decentralization like politeness means different things to different people."[2]

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[1]James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958), p. 5.

[2]Ernest 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,

Becker and Gordon saw decentralization as "related to the degree of autonomy across organizational units." This decentralization, as they used the term, referred to the "organization of autonomous units around sets of different subgoals."[3]

Baker and France referred to the decentralization of decision making. They state:[4]

> 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.

Their use of "administrative decentralization" agrees with what Argyris called simple "decentralization." "Fundamentally, decentralization means pushing down authority and responsibility to the lowest possible level. The aim is to have decisions made at the lowest point in the organization."

Leu and Candoli emphasized the need to diffuse certain decision making power as imperative for success. "Centralized

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ed. by H.J. Kruisinga (Leiden: H.E. Stenfert Kroese N.V., 1954), p. 27.

[3]Selwyn W. Becker and Gerald Gordon, "An Entrepreneurial Theory of Formal Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly, XI (December 1966), pp. 337 and 339.

[4]Helen Baker and Robert France, Centralization and Decentralization in Industrial Relations (Princeton, N.J.: Industrial Relations Section, Department of Economics and Sociology, Princeton University, 1954), p. 20.

[5]Chris Argyris, Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, Inc., 1962), p. 3.

decision making of all operational problems is just not practical."[6] However, they felt certain controls and decisions must be retained at the city level in order to implement the city-wide objectives of the school system.

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.[7]

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

In impoverished West Philadelphia, seven schools are representative of a movement toward the decentralization of authority, the involvement of people in their schools, and the humanization of the education process (the development of creative alternative approaches to traditional schools).[8]

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[6]Donald J. Leu and I. Carl Candoli, A Feasibility Study of the "Cultural - Educational Park" for Chicago, (College of Education, Michigan State University, 1973), p. 15.

[7]Luvern Cunningham, Governing Schools; New Approaches to Old Issues (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p. 162.

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

The data from Engel's study revealed that those professionals associated with the moderately bureaucratic setting are most likely and those in highly bureaucratic settings are the least likely to perceive themselves to be autonomous. Bureaucracy, she concluded, is not detrimental to professional autonomy.[9]

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.[10]

Gorman at Kent State University claimed that changes in the school organization are overdue, and drastic restructuring is needed to meet the demands of today's society.[11]

> 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 judgement 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

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

[10]Ronald F. Campbell; Luvern L. Cunningham; and Roderick F. McPhee, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Book, Inc., 1964), p. 532.

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

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.[12]

Cunningham went on to list the following design imperatives for viable decentralization in the urban school setting:[13]

1. It must be responsibe 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.

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

Meranto pointed to the decentralization concept of school organization as a means of bringing about the flexibility that is so desperately needed:[14]

> 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.

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[12]Donald Thomas, "Decentralization as a Management Tool" (Paper presented at the American Management Association Annual Conference and Exposition, New York City, August 3-5, 1971).

[13]Luvern Cunningham, 1971, p. 29.

[14]Philip J. Meranto, "School Politics in the Metropolis," Metropolitan America: Its Government and Politics, Edited by Allan K. Campbell, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., p. 71.

The city is not one neighborhood with common aspirations for its youth. Within each school community there seem to be needs peculiar to that school alone. Though there are many similarities there remains a diversity that can be dealt with only if the organization pattern is responsive to variables within its various communities.

Fantini used the St. Louis Plan for decentralizating the decision making process as an example of "bottom-up movement," where agents of change who are closest to the learner have more of a voice in the development of the instructional program and those farthest removed become facilitators and coordinators.[15]

Characteristics of Schools

Many studies have been conducted to identify and isolate the characteristics of schools that have demonstrated success in the areas of academic achievement.

Powell and Eash compared two high achieving and two low achieving high schools in Chicago, Illinois and identified the following characteristics:[16]

Positive

1. Focus and emphasis on instruction.
2. Active programs of instructional leadership.
3. Concern for maintaining a climate free of disruption.

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

[16]Daniel Powell and Maurice J. Eash, "Secondary School Cases," in Evaluating Educational Performance (Herbert J. Walberg, Chicago: McCutchan, 1974), pp. 291-292.

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.

The Michigan Department of Education identified 11 positive characteristics and five negative characteristics in a comparison of 33 high achieving and 33 low achieving compensatory education projects in Michigan:[17]

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. Proportion of instructional materials selected by the teacher.
5. Use of periodicals as basic reading materials.
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.

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[17] Michigan Cost - Effectiveness Study: An Executive Summary, Michigan Department of Education, 1975.

Peacock identified six positive characteristics in a comparison of 18 successful and 25 unsuccessful E.S.E.A. Title I programs nationally:[18]

Positive

1. Careful planning.
2. Clear statement of objectives.
3. Teacher training in the method of the program.
4. Parent involvement.
5. High intensity of treatment.
6. Individualization of instruction.

Thirty positive characteristics were identified in an analysis of 103 elementary schools, 42 junior high schools and five senior high schools in the Philadelphia School District, Pennsylvania in an effort to discover which school resources help learning.[19]

Averch et al. prepared for the President's Commission of School Finance a synthesis of over 200 studies of education effectiveness with an emphasis of studies since 1950. Five different research approach categories were included (Input-Output, Process, Organizational, Evaluation and Experiential).[20]

A number of studies of educational effectiveness employ what Averch call the "input-output approach." These studies are distinquished by a view of the educational process that holds a students educational outcome is determined by the quantities of resources his school makes available to him; by the personal, family and community

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[18]Compensatory Instruction Intervention, in Review of Educational Research (Itasca, Illinois, Peacock, 1974), p. 157.

[19]"Which School Resources Help Learning? Efficiency and Equity in Philadelphia Public Schools," in Business Review, January 1975, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia.

[20]Averch et al., pp. V-VII.

characteristics that influence his learning--typically grouped under the term "background factors." The structure and organization of the school and classroom are neglected.

Much of the research produced in the input-output approach has been prominent in recent policy debates--for example, the Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey and its various re-analyses, Bowles and Levin[21] and Smith.[22]

Educational researchers have, at one time or another, investigated a large number of student outcomes, school resources, and background factors, Mollenkopf and Melville,[23] Thomas,[24] Fox[25] and James Coleman's massive document representing the result of research into a number of educational problems.[26]

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[21]Samuel Bowles, Educational Production Function, Final Report, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, (Harvard University, Cambridge, February 1969).

[22]Marshall S. Smith, "Equality of Educational Opportunity: The Basic Findings Reconsidered," in F. Mosteller and D.P. Moynihan On Equality of Educational Opportunity (Vintage Books, New York, 1972).

[23]William G. Mollenkopf and S. Donald Melville, A Study of Secondary School Characteristics as Related to Test Scores, Research Bulletin, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, 1956.

[24]James A. Thomas, "Efficiency in Education: A Study of the Relationship Between Selected Inputs and Mean Test Scores in a Sample of Senior High Schools," Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University Library, 1962.

[25]Thomas G. Fox, "School System Resource Use in Production of Interdependent Educational Outputs," The Joint National Meeting, American Astronautical Society and Operations Research Society, Denver, Colorado, 1969 (mimeographed).

[26]James S. Coleman, et al., 1966.

Thomas emphasizes six questions to be asked when attempting to recognize a successful school, however, he did not provide a basis for measurement.[27]

1. What are the schools basic measurement purposes? (Objectives clearly stated.)
2. What degree of respect for children does the school exhibit? (Uniqueness of individuals.)
3. What alternatives in learning opportunities does the school offer? (Use of multisensory materials.)
4. What kinds of self-concept 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? (Volunteers, conferences, etc.)

Further, Trump and Georgiades, recommend a plan for program evaluation that included six elements, "That apply to all kinds of places that serve all ages and types of students."[28]

1. Understanding and commitment--degree of understanding of present program by students, teachers, administration and community. In addition to understanding, also needed is a measure of commitment of groups.
2. Criterion-Referenced data in relation to program objectives--the objectives defined in performance terms provide a basis for the school to measure the degree to which the program achieves the purposes.
3. Degree of progress in reaching various aspects of the locally-accepted model for school improvement--school plots its' progress or lack of it toward the goals that the personnel in it have accepted.
4. Program evaluation data collected.
5. Use of Norm-Based data--also needed to include data that show comparisons with a large number of schools.
6. Subjective evaluation by visiting experts and program participants.

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[27]M. Donald Thomas, "How to Recognize a Gem of a School When you See One," American School Board Journal, Vol. 162, No. 3 (March 1975): 98.

[28]J. Lloyd Trump and William Georgiades, "How to Evaluate the Quality of Educational Programs," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 59, No. 391 (May 1975):99-103.

Manning states there are six general concepts to stress if schools wish to increase their effectiveness:[29]

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.

Summary

The review of the literature has demonstrated that decentralization has a variety of definitions and applications within the urban setting, however the common thread of pushing down the authority of decision making to the lowest level of the system exists throughout much of the literature.

The selected studies also cited the characteristics of "successful schools" in the area of academic achievement which were utilized to identify the ten characteristics for the survey on "successful practices."

The review of the literature was selective of a vast body of literature, attempting to review some of the well known figures in the field. For further literature the reader is directed to--Campbell and Cunningham's excellent review of literature on decentralization.[30]

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[29]Duane Manning, The Qualitative Elementary School (New York: Harper Row, 1963), p. 173.

[30]Ronald F. Campbell and Luvern L. Cunningham, Decentralization of Urban Schools; A Review (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Book Inc., 1964).

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will define the population and sample that was used in the study, the second section describes the procedures for testing the hypotheses.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all 47 Lansing School District elementary school principals, all 47 elementary school representatives of the Lansing Schools Education Association (LSEA),[1] all seven area principals and a representative sample of elementary teachers.

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

Procedures for Testing the Hypotheses

Operation 1

All of the school administrators of the 47 elementary schools in Lansing were surveyed. Also, all of the building teacher representatives of the LSEA were included because of the nature and degree

[1] Lansing Schools Education Association hereafter referred to as LSEA in the paper.

of involvement at the local building level. All subjects of each group were included in the sample.

The survey was sent to a total of 94 principals and LSEA representatives, with the following returns:

Groups	Returns
1. Elementary Principals	43
2. LSEA Representatives	34
Total Returns:	77

Purpose.--The intent of the survey was twofold: (1) to determine the degree of commitment of the ideal definition of Responsible Autonomy and (2) the degree of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy.

The assessment of commitment to the ideal definition was accomplished by asking the subjects to respond to the following questions: (See Appendix A.)

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 education opportunities for students in the Lansing elementary 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 47 elementary schools the survey asked the elementary 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. (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.

Operation 2

The area principals were requested to rank order the elementary schools under their supervision on their degree of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy based on the four criteria. They also were to assess each building individually on each of the criteria.

Purpose.--To determine the area principals' perception of the degree of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy for the schools assigned to them.

Operation 3

Based on the information received from the two previous surveys the five highest and five lowest schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy were identified. Figure 2 presents a diagram illustrating the process.

A. 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 process.

B. 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.

C. Ranking of schools using same four criteria, by area 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 process.

Figure 2.--Process for Identification of Schools.

The identification process was to plot the responses for each school from each source for each criteria as follows in Figure 3:

SOURCE

Criteria	A					B					C				
	None	Limited	Moderate	Considerable	Great Deal	None	Limited	Moderate	Considerable	Great Deal	None	Limited	Moderate	Considerable	Great Deal
1															
2															
3															
4															

Figure 3.--Matrix for Plotting of Responses for Each School.

The matrix for each school was examined to arrive at the decision of schools highest and those 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?

Operation 4

Teachers and principals in this survey were those from the schools selected in operation 3. The population consisted of the top five and bottom five schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy.

Purpose.--The questionnaire to the teachers and principals was a survey to examine the "successful practices" operating in their schools. This questionnaire was developed based on the review of the literature and addressed the following topics: (See Appendix B.)

-statement of objectives

-parental involvement

-individualized instruction

-planning process

-alternatives in learning opportunities

-climate

-teacher expectations for students

-progress reporting of students

-perceived principal's expectations for students

-program articulation

This survey was sent to ten elementary schools, which consisted of ten elementary school principals and 122 elementary teachers, for a total of 132. The total number of those responding was 110.

Operation 5

The achievement data were obtained from analyzing the Stanford Achievement Test available from the office of Evaluation Services of the Lansing School District. The achievement data utilized was the number of students in the ten identified schools of the Lansing School District who were above the district average in Reading or Mathematics and also the students who were below the district average

in Reading and Mathematics on the May 1976 Stanford Achievement Test. The Chi Square was utilized to examine the relationship of the achievement data with various factors.

Purpose.--The achievement scores were necessary to examine the hypotheses.

Summary

Thus, the survey from Operation 1 provided the information to assess the degree of commitment to Responsible Autonomy in the 47 elementary schools and the degree of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy. From this information the five schools highest and the five schools lowest in practices of Responsible Autonomy were identified. A survey to determine the degree of implementation of "successful practices" was then administered to the five highest and five lowest schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy and analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The data collected in the study is presented in this chapter according to the procedures described in Chapter III, and will address the hypotheses presented in Chapter I and other findings that relate to the hypotheses.

All of the hypotheses presented in Chapter I involved the schools selected as the highest and the lowest in practices of Responsible Autonomy. Consequently, to examine the hypotheses presented in Chapter I it was necessary to identify the five schools highest and the five schools lowest in practices of Responsible Autonomy. Ten schools were utilized since this was a manageable figure for analysis. The schools were selected by plotting the responses of the three groups surveyed on a matrix (area principals, LSEA buildings teacher representatives and elementary principals) as related to 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.

Identification of Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Responsible Autonomy

Tables 1 to 5 are the matrices for the five elementary schools identified as being highest in practices of Responsible Autonomy and Tables 6 to 10 are the matrices for the five schools identified as being the lowest in practices of Responsible Autonomy.

In the analysis of the 47 schools matrices a wide variation in the responses was noted. However, the following factors were prevalent enough to be taken into consideration:

1. The LSEA teacher representatives were lower in their responses overall than the elementary principals.

2. The lowest criteria for the principals and LSEA teacher representatives was Criteria #3, involvement in the hiring of personnel. However, the five schools identified as high indicated a high degree of involvement on this criteria.

3. The area principals were extremely consistent between their rankings and ratings on degree of implementation of the four criteria, as noted in Tables 1 through 10.

Based on the three factors above, all sources were not given equal weight in the analysis, with the area principals (Source A) having the least amount and the principals (Source B) and LSEA teacher representatives (Source C) being equally weighted because of the general consistency of their overall responses to the four criteria. However, the area principals' perceptions were considered since their task is to daily respond and deal with issues arising with the school principal, staff and community.

Table 1.--Matrix for School #1 Identified as One of the Five Highest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #1		Source A					Source B					Source C				
		None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria	1					X				X					X	
	2					X					X			X		
	3					X					X				X	
	4					X					X					X

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 2.--Matrix for School #24 Identified as One of the Five Highest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #24		Source					Source B					Source C				
		None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria	1					X				X					X	
	2					X					X					X
	3					X				X					X	
	4					X			X					X		

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 3.--Matrix for School #34 Identified as One of the Five Highest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #34	Source A					Source B					Source C				
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria 1					X					X				X	
Criteria 2					X					X					X
Criteria 3					X			X						X	
Criteria 4					X					X				X	

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 4.--Matrix for School #39 Identified as One of the Five Highest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #39	Source A					Source B					Source C				
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria 1					X			X						X	
Criteria 2					X				X					X	
Criteria 3					X				X					X	
Criteria 4					X				X					X	

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 5.--Matrix for School #43 Identified as One of the Five Highest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #43	Source A					Source B					Source C				
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria 1				X					X						X
Criteria 2				X					X					X	
Criteria 3				X						X					X
Criteria 4				X					X					X	

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 6.--Matrix for School #7 Identified as One of the Five Lowest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #7	Source A					Source B					Source C				
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria 1		X							X			X			
Criteria 2		X							X				X		
Criteria 3		X						X			X				
Criteria 4		X						X					X		

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 7.--Matrix for School #11 Identified as One of the Five Lowest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #11	Source A					Source B					Source C				
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria 1			X						X					X	
Criteria 2			X						X					X	
Criteria 3			X			X							X		
Criteria 4			X				X						X		

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 8.--Matrix for School #18 Identified as One of the Five Lowest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #18	Source A					Source B					Source C				
	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria 1			X						X					X	
Criteria 2			X					X					X		
Criteria 3			X					X				X			
Criteria 4			X						X						X

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 9.--Matrix for School #23 Identified as One of the Five Lowest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #23		Source A					Source B					Source C				
		None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria	1			X					X					X		
	2			X						X					X	
	3			X			X							X		
	4			X				X						X		

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Table 10.--Matrix for School #46 Identified as One of the Five Lowest in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

School #46		Source A					Source B					Source C				
		None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much	None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much
Criteria	1		X							X			X			
	2		X							X			X			
	3		X					X					X			
	4		X						X				X			

A=Area Principal; B=Elementary School Principal; C=LSEA Representative

Hypothesis #1

The first hypothesis states that the elementary schools identified as having implemented more practices of Responsible Autonomy will have a higher commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy than the schools identified as low in implementation.

This hypothesis was examined by combining the responses of the LSEA teacher representatives and elementary principals (see Appendix) of the five highest schools identified and combining the responses for the five lowest schools identified and calculating the percent. The thrust was to establish if there was a relationship and not assumed to be a causal relationship, thus, no correlation techniques were utilized. The findings support the hypothesis. Table 11 provides a summary of the responses.

The five highest schools ranged from a low of 70 percent yes responses on questions one and seven to a high of 100 percent on questions three and four with a total average for yes responses of 83 percent. The five lowest schools ranged from a low of 50 percent on question seven to a high of 90 percent on question three with a total average for yes responses of 68.5 percent.

Even though a majority of all respondents were positive toward the philosophy of Responsible Autonomy the five highest schools were consistently higher on all items than the five lowest schools.

An interesting issue was the responses of the five highest schools to item one of the questionnaire in relation to their responses to the other six items. It appears that the groups are firmly committed to the philosophy and the potentials that it possesses for the

Table 11.--Percent Responses of Commitment to the Definition of Responsible Autonomy by the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Responsible Autonomy.

N=10	Five Highest Schools	Five Lowest Schools
Item 1: . . . do you presently have autonomy in your work?		
Yes	70%	60%
No	10%	20%
More than	20%	20%
Item 2: . . . can enhance the education opportunities for students in the Lansing elementary schools?		
Yes	90%	70%
No	0%	10%
Maybe	10%	20%
Item 3: . . . can assist you in being more effective in your job?		
Yes	100%	90%
No	0%	0%
Not Necessarily	0%	10%
Item 4: . . . you can be more satisfied with your job?		
Yes	100%	80%
No	0%	10%
Maybe	20%	30%
Item 5: . . . result in an improvement in the operation of the district?		
Yes	80%	60%
No	0%	10%
Maybe	20%	30%
Item 6: . . . allows you to be a facilitator in the learning process?		
Yes	80%	70%
No	0%	10%
Not Directly Related	20%	20%
Item 7 . . . allows parents a greater voice in the decision making process for the Lansing Schools?		
Yes	70%	50%
No	0%	10%
Maybe	30%	40%
TOTAL: Yes	83%	68.5%

system, themselves, and the students, however 20 percent of each group felt that they did not yet have enough autonomy in their present work assignments.

Other Findings Related to Hypothesis #1

The hypothesis 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 each group surveyed in the 47 elementary schools to each of the items.

The following are summaries, in tabular form, of the responses of the two groups to items one through seven.

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

Group	LSEA Teacher Representatives	Elementary Principals
Yes	61%	76%
No	15%	0%
More than I did but not enough	24%	24%

Item 2.--Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy can enhance the education opportunities for students in the Lansing elementary schools?

Group	LSEA Teacher Representatives	Elementary Principals
Yes	85%	86%
No	3%	2%
Maybe	12%	12%

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

Group	LSEA Teacher Representatives	Elementary Principals
Yes	88%	86%
No	0%	0%
Not Necessarily	12%	14%

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

Group	LSEA Teacher Representatives	Elementary Principals
Yes	94%	83%
No	0%	2%
Little Direct Effect	6%	15%

(*One did not respond to this question.)

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

Group	LSEA Teacher Representative	Elementary Principal
Yes	64%	64%
No	3%	3%
Maybe	33%	33%

Item 6.--Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy allows you to be a facilitator in the learning process?*

Group	LSEA Teacher Representative	Elementary Principal
Yes	82%	83%
No	3%	4%
Not Directly Related	15%	13%

(*Two did not respond to this question.)

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

Group	LSEA Teacher Representative	Elementary Principal
Yes	55%	71%
No	3%	5%
Maybe	42%	24%

The lowest areas are questions one, five and seven of the LSEA teachers group, and question five for the principals group.

The responses are consistent between the two groups with the exception of question seven. The LSEA teacher representatives,

although indicating (42 percent) that it might allow parents a greater voice in the decision making process, are 16 percent lower than the principals responses.

The articulation and acceptance of the philosophy of Responsible Autonomy as indicated in the responses of both groups is positive overall within the district.

If a "yes" answer is assumed to indicate support and commitment to the philosophy of Responsible Autonomy the following total responses may be used as an indicator. The following results in Table 12 were derived by combining the two groups in the population.

Table 12.--Summary for the Total Population

Item 1--Presently have autonomy in your work?
68.5 percent of the total population answered yes.
Item 2--Autonomy can enhance the education opportunities?
85.5 percent of the total population answered yes.
Item 3--Autonomy can assist you in being effective?
87 percent of the total population answered yes.
Item 4--Autonomy can result in more job satisfaction?
85.5 percent of the total population answered yes.
Item 5--Can autonomy improve the operation of the district?
64 percent of the total population answered yes.
Item 6--Autonomy allows you to be a facilitator in the learning process?
82.5 percent of the total population answered yes.
Item 7--Allows parents a greater voice in decision-making?
63 percent of the total population answered yes.
N=77

Quotations From Respondents

An opportunity was given for the respondents to comment on the survey and it was felt that the comments made were of importance to gain insight into the feelings of those responding. Not all wrote comments on each question. A sample of the comments were very simply categorized into three areas: positive, neutral or negative.

Item 1.--

Positive

"My principal supports my teaching methods."

"I have initiated programs for children."

"If principal understands autonomy."

"It's great!"

"Program development and implementation more easily accomplished."

"With budget and program."

"Freedom to decide with staff and parents."

Neutral

"To a degree."

"Teachers agree or vote and it still may ve overridden by administrators."

"Up to a point."

Negative

"No input into major curriculum changes, i.e. Management System."

"Not in curriculum."

"Central administration still hold all the strings."

"Management objectives are the problem."

Item 2.--

Positive

"Teachers are more in touch with needs of students."

"Building staff can more realistically assess needs of students it serves and design curriculum to meet those needs."

"Each school has special problems and needs."

"Programs worked out at building level can better meet needs of students."

"Teachers more aware."

"Program development reflect principal and teacher strengths."

"Teachers best judge of student needs."

Neutral

"Some aspects useful--others will be detrimental."

"If done so responsibly."

Negative

"It should."

Item 3.--

Positive

"Able to develop objectives which will be beneficial to my students."

"Addressing our staff to our particular problems."

"Programs and materials are chosen more carefully by the people who will use them."

"Sure--I can deal with problems as they arise."

"I have freedom to select materials and techniques."

"Having input improves my attitude."

Neutral

"It takes time to budget, etc."

"All the autonomy in the world still does not make me relate any differently to my students."

Item 4.--

Positive

"Arbitrary decisions by an administrator can cause teacher frustration."

"I can do more of the things I want to do."

"I feel I have more controls over factors that influence my performance in the classroom."

"It cuts a lot of red tape and the spontaniety in the classroom."

"I have self direction."

"Yes, because you are happier."

"Yes, because why should someone from outside my school tell us what books to use, etc."

"More satisfied--voice in decisions."

Neutral

"Could be."

"If I am allowed to do the job."

"A little more."

Negative

"There seems to be so much time involved in planning, meetings, etc. that I have less time to work with students, teachers and parents."

Item 5.--

Positive

"Money more carefully spent."

"It forces people to act."

"In the area of community responsiveness."

"Cannot blame others."

"Can make changes."

"Worth the effort."

"Local needs better met."

"Decision making more appropriate."

"Greater flexibility."

Neutral

"Depends on how it is handled in each building."

"Can't tell city wide."

"It may cause problems centrally to keep up."

Negative

"Expensive and less efficient."

"Need to have authority."

Item 6.--

Positive

"Can utilize techniques with which you feel most comfortable."

"Selection of materials."

"Knowing that a single teacher has the ability to recommend a new idea can facilitate its being attempted."

"Sharing of educational ideas."

"Flexibility."

"Process is open."

"Plans arrived at jointly."

"Encourages innovative programs."

"Better able to support teachers."

Neutral

"Time will tell."

Negative

"Not practiced in our building."

Item 7.--

Positive

"Parents need to know what is being taught in the classroom."

"Help to make decisions on what is appropriate for the child."

"If parents know for a fact that they can change things they will get involved."

"Parents have a voice."

"They are part of the autonomous school unit."

"If carried through--if their opinions taken into consideration."

"Allows parents the right to help make decisions."

"Decisions can be made at the building level."

"A most positive aspect."

Neutral

"Most cases."

"It has the potential to involve parents, but need effective leaders."

"If the C.I.C. functions properly."

"Yes, if they have the knowledge as to what is going on."

"Depends on their personal goals."

Negative

"They allow teachers to make decisions."

"Parents have too much voice."

"Always same parents."

"Not enough time for significant involvement."

"Allows parents too much input into how classroom should be run."

"We are trained, not parents."

The other research question related to Hypothesis #1 follows: To what degree are practices of Responsible Autonomy being implemented in the elementary schools of Lansing?

The issue of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy in the elementary schools was based on an analysis of the responses to the questionnaire by the elementary principals and LSEA teacher representatives.

Table 13 indicates the responses of each group to the four criteria in the survey, which are the essential practices of Responsible Autonomy. The mean response was calculated for each group. The figure also shows the N for each group, the high and low response --which illustrates the range of responses for each group. Also indicated are the number making no indications for the degree of practice.

The LSEA teacher group responses to the statements ranged from a low mean of 2.9 on statement three to a high mean of 3.16 on statement two. The elementary principals responses ranged from a low

Table 13.--Mean Responses to Practices of Responsible Autonomy by Two Groups Surveyed.

Statement 1: Degree of staff involvement in the budgeting process.

LSEA Teacher Representatives (N=34)

		Low ↓	Mean 3.5		High ↓
1		2	3	4	5
None	Very Little		Little	Much	Very Much

Elementary Principals (N=43)

			Low ↓	Mean 4.3	High ↓
1		2	3	4	5
None	Very Little		Little	Much	Very Much

Statement 2: Degree of staff involvement in curriculum decision making process.

LSEA Teacher Representatives (N=34)

		Low ↓	Mean 3.6		High ↓
1		2	3	4	5
None	Very Little		Little	Much	Very Much

Elementary Principals (N=43)

		Low ↓		Mean 4.2	High ↓
1		2	3	4	5
None	Very Little		Little	Much	Very Much

Statement 3: Degree of staff involvement in hiring personnel.

Table 13.--Continued.

LSEA Teacher Representatives (N=34)

Low ↓		Mean 2.9		High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much

Elementary Principals (N=43)

Low ↓		Mean 3.4		High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much

Statement 4: Degree of community input into building decision making process.

LSEA Teacher Representatives (N=34)

Low ↓		Mean 3.2		High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much

Elementary Principals (N=43)

	Low ↓		Mean 4.1	High ↓
1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	Little	Much	Very Much

(One return made no indication for statement 4.)

mean of 3.4 on statement three to a high mean of 4.3 on statement one. Overall the LSEA teachers group consistently responded lower on all of the four statements, which would indicate that the perceptions of

the teachers responding, who are in the classroom, do not see the practices of autonomy as being implemented to as high a degree as the principals do.

The weakest practice appears to be the hiring of personnel. However, this may be explained by a declining school population resulting in less activity in this area, thus, they may not have had much opportunity.

The general posture denotes that practices of Responsible Autonomy are being implemented in the Lansing elementary schools, some at a higher level than others, with a total mean of 3.7 for all groups on all practices.

Hypothesis #2

The second hypothesis stated that the elementary schools identified as having implemented to a higher degree, practices of Responsible Autonomy will have higher achievement on the Stanford Achievement Test than schools identified as low.

This hypothesis was tested by utilizing the grouping of schools into the top five and bottom five with regard to the practices of autonomy and the students one year or more below and one year or more above grade level in Reading and also one year or more below and one year or more above grade level in Mathematics on the Stanford Achievement Test in those schools. The Chi Square was employed to determine if practices of Responsible Autonomy and achievement were related in the ten schools. Table 14 and Table 15 suggest that this hypothesis is supported by the findings, with a P indicating significance of .04 in Reading and .009 in Mathematics.

Table 14.--Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Reading Achievement Scores.

	Students One Year or More Below Grade Level		Students One Year or More Above Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	448	# Students	482
	% Students	48.2	% Students	51.8
Top Five Schools	# Students	272	# Students	362
	% Students	42.9	% Students	57.1

X^2=4.00 (df=1) p < .04

Table 15.--Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Math Achievement Scores.

	Students One Year or More Below Grade Level		Students One Year or More Above Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	338	# Students	473
	% Students	41.7	% Students	58.3
Top Five Schools	# Students	188	# Students	357
	% Students	34.5	% Students	65.5

X^2=6.78 (df=1) p < .009

The data indicates that the relationship which exists in the top five and bottom five schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy and achievement is significant, particularly in the area of mathematics.

The matrices in Table 14 and Table 15 show that the top five schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy had 57.1 percent of the students in the group one year or more above in Reading and 65.5 percent one year or more above in Math as compared to 51.8 and 58.3 percent for the bottom five schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy.

The relationship between practices of Responsible Autonomy and achievement yielded a significance of .07 when the achievement was the total students above and below grade level in Reading and Math in the ten schools, however, it was determined that the preceeding data was a more definitive process of analysis.[1]

Other Findings Related to Hypothesis #2

A further analysis was made controlling for children identified as members of families receiving Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), an indicator of the socio-economic status (S.E.S.) of the ten schools selected. Although the study did not address S.E.S. in the hypothesis or selection of schools, it was a finding uncovered during the analysis of the data.

Using Chi Square to assess the relationship between achievement in Reading and Math and practices of Responsible Autonomy with

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[1]See Appendix D.

the factor of Aid to Dependent Children being controlled is shown by the data in Tables 16, 17, 18 and 19.

Table 16.--Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Reading Achievement Scores Controlling for Low Percent of Aid to Dependent Children.

	Students One Year or More Below Grade Level		Students One Year or More Above Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	237	# Students	359
	% Students	39.8	% Students	60.2
Top Five Schools	# Students	53	# Students	236
	% Students	18.3	% Students	81.7

X^2=39.58 (df=1) $p < .001$

Table 17.--Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Reading Achievement Scores Controlling for High Percent of Aid to Dependent Children.

	Students One Year or More Below Grade Level		Students One Year or More Above Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	211	# Students	123
	% Students	63.2	% Students	36.8
Top Five Schools	# Students	219	# Students	126
	% Students	63.5	% Students	36.5

X^2=.00001 (df=1) $p > .997$

Table 18.--Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Math Achievement Scores Controlling for Low Percent of Aid to Dependent Children.

	Students One Year or More Below Grade Level		Students One Year or More Above Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	166	# Students	368
	% Students	31.1	% Students	68.9
Top Five Schools	# Students	42	# Students	218
	% Students	16.2	% Students	83.8

X^2=19.40 (df=1) p < .003

Table 19.--Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Math Achievement Scores Controlling for High Percent of Aid to Dependent Children.

	Students One Year or More Below Grade Level		Students One Year or More Above Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	172	# Students	105
	% Students	62.1	% Students	37.9
Top Five Schools	# Students	146	# Students	139
	% Students	51.2	% Students	48.8

X^2=6.31 (df=1) p < .012

Tables 16 and 17 show that in the schools selected in this study achievement in reading is significantly related to practices of Responsible Autonomy being implemented when the students come from a high socio-economic background. The probability of the relationship is not significant, ($p > .997$) when the students come from a low socio-economic status. Apparently, the practices of Responsible Autonomy have not impacted the area of teaching reading to poor students within the system.

Tables 18 and 19 indicate a highly significant relationship existing between math achievement and practices of autonomy in both the high and low ADC schools. This is consistent with the Chi Square significance of $p < .04$ for reading in Table 14 as compared to the p significance of .009 for math achievement. The district practices of Responsible Autonomy seem to be responding very well to the needs of all students in mathematics, regardless of socio-economic status.

The entire issue of socio-economic status, practices of Responsible Autonomy and achievement needs further study empirically examining the impact that it may have on large urban school systems and the decentralization process.

Hypothesis #3

As stated in Chapter I, the third hypothesis was that the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy will account for more of the difference in achievement among the selected elementary schools than will the implementation of "successful practices."

To examine this hypothesis, the ten schools were ranked by the mean responses to the survey on "successful practices," Table 20 indicates the ranking.

Table 20.--Ranking of Ten Schools by Mean Responses to Survey on "Successful Practices."

Building Number	Mean
11	8.7
*34	8.2
*43	8.0
23	7.1
*39	6.7
*24	6.5
7	6.5
18	6.2
*1	5.3
46	4.1

*Denotes school identified as one of the five highest schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy.

The ranking of the mean responses were then split into the top five and bottom five and placed on a matrix with the observed values (number of students above or below grade level in Reading or Math) as shown in Table 21.

The Chi Square was then computed, as shown in Table 22.

Table 21.--Matrix of Ten Schools: "Successful Practices" and Achievement in Reading and Mathematics.

Successful Practices	Students Below Grade Level	Students Above Grade Level	Total
Top Five Schools	852	704	1556
Bottom Five Schools	762	524	1286
TOTAL	1614	1228	2842

Table 22.--Chi Square for Schools Ranked by Successful Practices and Achievement.

Row Percent Expected Value	Below Grade Level	Above Grade Level	
Top Five Schools	.3409	.2366	.5475
	883.6	672.4	
Bottom Five Schools	.2570	.1955	.4525
	730.4	555.6	

X^2=4.38707 (df=1) p .05

The data in Table 22 indicate a p significance of .05 for the relationship between the "successful practices" implemented in the schools and the achievement reported in the ten schools. It was determined from the data that the relationship of the factor practices of Autonomy and mathematics achievement seemed to be the strongest of all the factors with a p significance of .009 while the relationship of Autonomy and reading achievement was weaker with a p significance

of .04. Therefore, based on the information available in this study the hypothesis is rejected. The hypothesis would be supported if it spoke only to mathematics, however, the issue is clouded when reading achievement is considered.

Other Findings Related to Hypothesis #3

The research problem asked for consideration of the following question: To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to the implementation of "successful practices?"

To investigate this question the mean responses were calculated for each of the ten statements of "successful practices" for the five highest schools and the five lowest schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy. Table 23 shows the mean responses, standard deviations and t test.

The t test did not yield any significant relationship (t=1.58) between practices of Responsible Autonomy and "successful practices." However, an individual examination of each statement indicated that some of the "successful practices" are related to autonomy and some are not. Statements two, six and nine indicated a positive relationship while statements five and seven indicated a negative difference. It may be assumed that parental involvement, school climate and the elementary school principal's expectations are factors that are fostered by Responsible Autonomy. Future analysis may assess the impact that Responsible Autonomy has on the selection of "successful practices" in the schools.

Table 23.--Mean Responses to Ten "Successful Practices" by the Identified Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy.

Statement	Mean of Five Highest (N=64)	Difference	Mean of Five Lowest (N=56)
1. Objectives	6.7	+ .9	5.8
2. Parental Involvement	6.2	+1.0	5.2
3. Individualized Instruction	7.4	+0.1	7.3
4. Planning Process	7.3	+0.7	6.6
5. Alternatives in Learning	6.8	-0.2	7.0
6. School Climate	7.8	+1.0	6.8
7. Teacher Expectations	7.2	-0.3	7.5
8. Progress Reporting	7.5	+0.1	7.4
9. Principal's Expectations	8.3	+1.2	7.1
10. Program Articulation	6.9	+0.2	6.7
	X = 7.2		X = 6.7
	S.D. = .57		S.D. = .69
		t = 1.58	

Summary

The findings in Chapter IV supported the first hypothesis: The elementary schools identified as having implemented more practices of Responsible Autonomy will have a higher commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy than the schools identified as low in implementation.

The second hypothesis was supported particularly in the relationship of mathematics and practices of Responsible Autonomy. The findings regarding the related issue of socio-economic-status indicated a highly significant relationship existing between mathematics achievement and practices of Responsible Autonomy in both the high and low ADC schools.

The third hypothesis could not be supported from the findings. The implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy did not account for more of the difference in achievement than the implementation of "successful practices."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was evaluative in nature. It was an examination of one school system's efforts to decentralize the approach to school administration in order to become more responsive to improvement of delivery of educational services to the students, to improve the achievement level of students and to being more responsive to the urban milieu.

This chapter will present the conclusions that were drawn from the study and discuss each. Implications for further research will be drawn from the conclusions.

Conclusions

1. A positive acceptance of the philosophy of Responsible Autonomy, as defined, was manifest in the elementary schools.

The combined responses for both groups, LSEA teacher representatives and elementary principals, ranged from a low of 63 percent on the question, ". . . Can Responsible Autonomy allow parents a greater voice in the decision making process for the Lansing School?" to a high of 87 percent on the question, ". . . Can Responsible Autonomy assist you in being more effective in your job?" A total of 76.5 percent responded yes to all questions.

2. Practices of Responsible Autonomy are being implemented in the elementary schools of the Lansing School District.

On the four criteria established indicating the essential practices of Responsible Autonomy a total mean of 3.7 was calculated. A value of four indicated much involvement in the criteria. However, the LSEA teacher group responded lower on all of the four criteria than the elementary principals.

3. A relationship was found for elementary schools implementing practices of Responsible Autonomy to a high degree, as identified in this study, and commitment to the definition of Responsible Autonomy.

The five highest elementary schools identified in practices of Responsible Autonomy had a total average of 83 percent yes responses to the survey assessing commitment. The five lowest schools had a total average for yes responses of 68.5 percent.

4. A significant relationship existed between level of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy and achievement in reading and mathematics.

The relationship is apparently strong in reference to mathematics achievement with a p significance of .009 and a p indicating significance of .04 in the area of reading. The five highest schools in practices of Responsible Autonomy had 57.1 percent of their students one year or more above in reading and 65.5 percent one year or more above in mathematics as compared to 51.8 and 58.3 percent for the bottom five schools.

5. The Socio-Economic Status (S.E.S.) of the school is a factor to be considered when examining practices of Responsible Autonomy, particularly in the area of reading.

The data indicated that the relationship between achievement in reading and practices of Responsible Autonomy is not significant,

p .997, when the students come from a low socio-economic status. The significance was high for both high and low S.E.S. in the area of mathematics.

6. The implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy in the school is not related to the implementation of "successful practices," as defined in this study.

The analysis of the data did not yield any significant relationship between practices of Responsible Autonomy and "successful practices," + = 1.58. The mean responses to the ten "successful practices" for the five highest elementary schools was 7.2 and 6.7 for the five lowest schools. An individual examination of each statement indicated that some of the "successful practices" are related to Responsible Autonomy and some are not.

7. The implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy did not account for more of the difference in achievement among the elementary schools than the implementation of "successful practices."

The relationship between Responsible Autonomy and achievement was strong only in mathematics when the achievement was analyzed. Reading indicated only a p significance of .04, suggesting at the most a trend or movement in that direction.

Discussion

This study indicated that of those surveyed in the 47 elementary schools in Lansing a positive image was exhibited toward the philosophy of Responsible Autonomy as stated by Candoli, "the greatest possible improvements in the schools will be obtained when local schools are given wide latitude to solve their unique problems."[1]

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[1] I. Carl Candoli, 1971.

Thus, this study confirms that overall the articulation and dissemination of the philosophy has reached the individual school level within the Lansing School District.

However, the assumption that Responsible Autonomy contributes to the opportunity for parents to have a greater voice in the decision making process in the elementary schools is questionable. The LSEA teacher respondents were particularly skeptical that parents were participating or being allowed to participate in the decision making process. This attitude was also supported by about 30 percent of the elementary principals. Greater participation can only be achieved to the extent that teachers and principals in particular, are willing to share information with the community. A concentrated effort to educate principals with the model of consensus decision making would strengthen this area. As Meranto[2] emphasized, community involvement would combat the alienation and distrust many parents and students harbor toward the schools.

Autonomy is being practices based on the following criteria: (1) degree of staff involvement in the 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. The LSEA teacher responses tended to be lower than the elementary principals. This tendency may be accounted for by the fact that the elementary principals should be knowledgeable toward a broader view of the school's operation than

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[2]Philip Meranto.

the classroom teachers and suggests that in-service education regarding Responsible Autonomy is needed for the elementary staffs.

The philosophy and resulting practices of autonomy, as indicated by many of the comments, have generated a positive feeling of self-worth among the principals and teachers within the system. This may have influenced the conclusions drawn about the achievement.

The data indicated a significant relationship between the level of implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy at the school level and the achievement of its students. Burton Gorman emphasized that the bureaucracy of the school must be broken down and greater decision making must be exercised in smaller units.[3]

The urban school system must be capable of responding to the needs of the community and students which it serves. A decentralized system can provide the opportunity for innovation to be achieved easier if the points of decision are more visible and obstacles more readily identifiable.

An interesting issue which surfaced during the study was the relationship of Responsible Autonomy and achievement when the factor controlled was the S.E.S. The data demonstrated that the practices of Responsible Autonomy are strongly related to the reading achievement in the schools where students come from a high S.E.S. and related to the mathematic achievement at both high and low S.E.S. schools.

The question is then raised as to what factors may be influencing the mathematics achievement that are not affecting the reading achievement. The district has been successful in identifying concrete

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[3]Burton Gorman, May 1972.

"steps" or objectives that a student must master sequentialy as they move through the mathematics system and teaching staffs are apparently comfortable with it. Reading and the process of reading on the other hand has been and still is a very difficult concept for teachers to grasp. This difficulty is not only exhibited in the Lansing District but throughout the state and nation. An aspect which should be considered is the preparation and inservice provided for teachers in the area of reading. A new graduate comes poorly prepared from the university or college to cope with the diversity of reading needs and problems of students in the urban classroom. A concentrated effort is required to enhance the skills of teachers in reading, particularly for children who come from poorer backgrounds. Many teachers expressed attitudes of dissatisfaction toward the individual management system in reading that was "thrust" upon them. Viewing this as a deterrent toward their flexibility and autonomy. The district should reassess the management system and the impact upon the reading program.

The question of what actually accounts for the difference in the achievement among the schools was not determined from this study. The relationship which exists between the schools' achievement and practices of Responsible Autonomy was significantly the strongest in the area of mathematics only.

The issue of this relationship may well hinge on the very freedom that Responsible Autonomy espouses. The freedom to use the judgement of the local school may in fact influence the degree and selection of "successful practices" implemented at the local school.

Any practice might be made successful by a staff and community experiencing freedom of choice under Autonomy.

The decentralization model of Responsible Autonomy in Lansing appears to be a viable means by which this urban school system may respond to the many needs of the populace it serves. While weaknesses in implementation of the model appeared in the study, particularly in the area of community input, it should provide the opportunities to address the diversity and challenge of the urban setting.

Implications

Further research is suggested in the following areas:

1. Replication of the study at the secondary level regarding commitment, practices of Responsible Autonomy and achievement.

2. An indepth examination of the relationship of achievement, practices of autonomy and other variables like Socio-Economic Status.

3. A broader sample of schools to analyze the issue of the relationship of Responsible Autonomy and "successful practices."

4. Comparison of Lansing with another urban school district.

5. An analysis of attitudes toward decision making growing out of Responsible Autonomy and the impact of those attitudes on the success of the particular practices selected.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER AND SURVEY SENT TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND LSEA TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES

May 4, 1976

Dear Colleague:

I am in the process of gathering data for my dissertation at Michigan State University: "An Evaluation Study of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Schools." I would like to solicit your assistance by completing the brief questionnaire enclosed and returning it to me at the Partington Center on or before May 12, 1976.

Basically, the study will be examining the following research questions:

1. To what extent is the idealized model of Responsible Autonomy, as defined, like the observed commitment to the definition?

2. To what extent does the implementation of practices of Responsible Autonomy relate to achievement?

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

Through the information provided on this questionnaire, and other information, I will identify selected buildings in which to survey the entire staff.

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

Sincerely,

Duane H. Moore

Duane H. Moore
Director
Continuing Education
Lansing School District

Enclosure

Definition:

Responsible Autonomy, as conceived in the Lansing School System, is based on the idea that greatest possible improvements 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 as it is intended in this questionnaire is directed at the decentralization of responsibilities within the school organization (i.e., budget allocation, curriculu, personnel and community involvement).

Units at the various levels of the organizational structure are free to gather information, assess and to act independently on situations within their areas of responsibility.

A flexible organizational structure that can respond to the problems of developing an optimum learning environment, within the balance of accountability and freedom to act on educational matters.

I. Based on the definition, 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 education opportunities for students in the Lansing elementary schools?

Yes _____ No ____ Maybe ____ Why?

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 satisifed 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 District?

Yes ____ No ____ Maybe ____

Why?

6. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy allows you to be a 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?

II. Based on the definition, please circle the number that in your opinion describes the practice at your school: Below each statement are some criteria to assist you in responding.

1. Degree of staff involvement in the budgeting process.

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

(*little--budget committee meets annually, budget printouts posted irregularly)

(**very much--budget committee meets monthly, budget printouts posted bi-weekly)

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

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

(*little--involved in selection of a few instructional materials; instruction process is established mostly by others; objectives developed for classroom mostly by others)

(**very much--involved in selection of all instructional materials; participate in establishment of instructional process; participate in development of objectives)

3. Degree of staff involvement in hiring personnel.

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

(*little--participate in establishing criteria of professional and paraprofessional personnel)

(**very much--participate in establishing criteria of professional and paraprofessional personnel; actively participate in recruitment of personnel; actively participate in interview process)

4. Degree of community input into 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; budgets shared two times a year)

(**very much--C.I.C. meets monthly; budgets shared at each meeting; input into establishing all budgets)

Present Position _____

Number of Years in Lansing System _____

If in administration, number of years in administration _____

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE TO AREA PRINCIPALS

April 26, 1976

Dear

I am in the process of gathering data for my dissertation: An Evaluative Study of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Elementary Schools, and would like to solicit your assistance as an Area Principal, by completing the brief task on the attached sheet and returning it to me at the Partington Center at your earliest convenience.

The information that you share with me will be published in my paper, however your anonymity will be enforced. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at extension 301.

Thank you for your assistance.

Duane H. Moore

Duane H. Moore
Director, Continuing Education
Lansing School District

Attachment

Responsible Autonomy, as conceived in the Lansing School System, is based on the idea that greatest possible improvements 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 the students, parents, and community.

Based on your experience and expertise and the four factors listed below, please, rank order the buildings within your area of responsibility as to their degree of implementation (include your building assignment) of practices of Responsible Autonomy.

Factors to Consider:

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.

Building

Highest 1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

6._____

7._____

8._____

lowest 9._____

Name_____

Assignment_____

Number of years in present assignment_____

Definition:

Responsible Autonomy, as conceived in the Lansing School System, is based on the idea that greatest possible improvements 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 as it is intended in this questionnaire is directed at the decentralization of responsibilities within the school organization (i.e. budget allocation, curriculum, personnel and community involvement).

Units at the various levels of the organizational structure are free to gather information, assess and to act independently on situations within their areas of responsibility.

A flexible organizational structure that can respond to the problems of developing an optimum learning environment, within the balance of accountability and freedom to act on educational matters.

I. Based on the definition, 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 education opportunities for students in the Lansing elementary schools?

Yes ____ No ____ Maybe ____

Why?

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 satisifed 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 District?

Yes ____ No ____ Maybe ____

Why?

6. Do you feel that Responsible Autonomy allows you to be a 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?

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER AND SURVEY SENT TO TEN SCHOOLS: FIVE HIGHEST AND FIVE LOWEST IDENTIFIED

May 26, 1976

Dear Colleague:

I am in the process of gathering data for my dissertation at Michigan State University: "An Evaluative Study of Responsible Autonomy in the Lansing Public Schools." I would like to solicit your assistance by completing the brief questionnaire enclosed and returning to me at the Partington Center on or before June 8, 1976.

Basically, the questionnaire is attempting to assess the degree to which the factors listed (identified from research) 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.

Sincerely,

Duane H. Moore

Duane H. Moore
Director
Continuing Education

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

1. State of objectives for building.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Poorly Articulated* — Well Articulated**

(*Not written down, not discussed, no relationship to program.)

(**Written down, reviewed annually, closely related to program.)

2. Degree of parental involvement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Low* — High**

(*Hesitant, uninformed, activities social rather than decision making.)

(**Well informed, frequently involved in decision, often present in school, feel welcome.)

3. Individualized instruction.

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 at own pace, provision made for students to work on materials at own level.)

4. Planning process.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Low* — High**

(*Past planning not related to programs, minimum involvement of groups in planning process.)

(**Extensive involvement of groups in planning process, existing plans well understood, existing program related to past planning.)

5. Utilization of alternatives in learning opportunities.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Few* Many**

(*Limited opportunities to arrange different types of instruction for different students.)

(**Materials of facilities to meet needs of students with various cognitive styles.)

6. School climate.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Restrictive* Facilitative**

(*Distrust, few of failure, innovation discouraged.)

(**Atmosphere for reasonable risk taking exist, atmosphere of sharing.)

7. Teacher expectations for students.

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.)

8. Progress reporting of students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Inadequate* Exemplary**

(*No information or poor, hard to interpret or too general.)

(**Information frequently shared with students and parents in a variety of ways, detailed information on actual skills provided.)

9. Principal's expectations for students.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low*									High**

(*Principal tends to categorize students and hold different expectations for various categories.

(**Principal genuinely feels all students can succeed.)

10. Program articulation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor Articulation*									Excellent Articulation**

(*Confused relationships between isolated programs, i.e., Title I, Chapter 3.)

(**Program efforts interrelated and well understood by all personnel.)

APPENDIX D

CHI SQUARE FOR THE FIVE HIGHEST AND FIVE LOWEST SCHOOLS IN PRACTICES OF AUTONOMY AND READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FOR STUDENTS ONE YEAR OR MORE BELOW GRADE LEVEL AND STUDENTS AT GRADE LEVEL

Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Reading Achievement Scores for Students One Year Or More Below Grade Level and Students at Grade Level.

	Students One Year or More Below Grade Level		Students at Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	448	# Students	515
	% Students	48.2	% Students	52.8
Top Five Schools	# Students	272	# Students	398
	% Students	42.9	% Students	57.1

$x^2 = 3.36$ (df=1) $p < .04$

Chi Square for the Five Highest and Five Lowest Schools in Practices of Autonomy and Mathematics Achievement Scores for Students One Year Or More Above Grade Level and Students at Grade Level.

	Students One Year or More Above Grade Level		Students at Grade Level	
Bottom Five Schools	# Students	473	# Students	515
	% Students	49.1	% Students	50.9
Top Five Schools	# Students	357	# Students	398
	% Students	48.4	% Students	51.6

$x^2 = 6.11$ (df=1) $p < .017$

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