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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF  
IMPLEMENTATION OF EIGHTEEN BASIC MIDDLE SCHOOL  
CHARACTERISTICS AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS  
AND SUPERINTENDENTS IN SELECTED WISCONSIN  
MIDDLE SCHOOLS

presented by

Sara Magaña

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Educational Administration

  
Major professor

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**A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF  
EIGHTEEN BASIC MIDDLE SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AS PERCEIVED  
BY TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS IN SELECTED  
WISCONSIN MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

**By  
Sara Magaña**

**A DISSERTATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF EIGHTEEN BASIC MIDDLE SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS IN SELECTED WISCONSIN MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

**By**

**Sara Magaña**

The purpose of this study was to determine, compare, and analyze the perceptions of Wisconsin middle school teachers, principals and superintendents regarding their schools' current level of implementation of eighteen basic middle school characteristics commonly accepted as being important in planning, implementing, and evaluating middle school programs. The survey questionnaire developed by Riegle (1971) which identified these eighteen basic middle school characteristics was used in this study.

Thirteen objectives were designed to specify the data needed from teachers, principals and superintendents. A survey questionnaire was distributed to the superintendent, the principal and two teachers (1 female and 1 male) from each 127 randomly selected Wisconsin public middle schools.

Survey questionnaires were returned by 59 percent of the superintendents, 60 percent of the principals and 50 percent of the

teachers for an overall 54 percent return. Frequency counts of the responses were tabulated and multiplied by assigned values. The weighted values provided a positive correlation between high scores and high levels of implementation. Mean scores for each characteristic were calculated and compared to test the thirteen objectives.

Two schools were selected for an on-site visit. One school had the highest score for implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics and one school had the lowest implementation score. Three teachers from each school were interviewed. Thirty students from each school, ten from each grade level, were randomly selected to complete a questionnaire based on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. Teacher interviews were compared with responses from the surveys. The interview findings were consistent with the questionnaire findings from both middle schools. Each school retained its rating as either a high or low implementation middle school.

Two conclusions were supported by the findings of this study. First, in general, the public schools in Wisconsin have not implemented the eighteen middle school characteristics to a great degree be they grades 6-8, grades 5-8 and grades 7-8. Second, in general, whether a middle school houses two, three or four grade levels is not significantly related to the overall level of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics.

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**This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Antonio and Sara,  
whose continuing love, support, and encouragement have made this  
project possible.**

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Introduction**

It took nearly fifty years for the junior high school concept to become a traditional pattern of school organization for pre and young adolescents. The rapid growth of the middle school movement during the last twenty years has been extraordinary. Rapid changes in society and increased information about the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of the pre and young adolescent led many educators to believe that new programs and organizational patterns were necessary. Thus the middle school concept was born and publicized by the nationally circulated writings of the 1960's. National proliferation is supported by the significant research findings of Judith Murphy, Pearl Brod, William Cuff, William Alexander, Mary Compton, and the Educational Research Service of the NEA.<sup>1</sup> By 1974, Compton had reported 3,723 middle schools in the United States, a figure three times the number determined by Alexander in 1968. Furthermore, in a 1978 status report, Brooks stated that 4,060 middle schools were in operation at that time.<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning of the development of the middle school concept in the United States, there have been numerous studies

concept in the United States, there have been numerous studies conducted to evaluate the extent to which the concept has been implemented. Such studies have been advocated as a necessary part of standard curriculum evaluation and also due to the increased number of schools labeled as middle school. Since the middle school concept was founded upon certain goal statements which have been translated into desired program characteristics, a majority of the studies have focused upon the implementation of the prescribed characteristics.

In recent years the role of the public school has increased in both size and complexity in Wisconsin and throughout the United States. Education has assumed increased responsibilities contributing considerably to the expansion of its purposes. Because of the complexity of our society, the development of new abilities in its citizens is required. Therefore, schools have had to accept some responsibilities for the social and emotional well-being of children. As a result, modern education has become concerned with developing a total child who will eventually be a vital contributor to society.

An expanded concept of public school education is necessary because the present educational purposes have been expanded to include social, emotional, and psychological growth, as well as intellectual development. Referring to this idea, Rosenau stated:

Middle level schools, for example, must meet the unique needs of the pre and early adolescent child, and to do this they must be unique schools. In response to these pressures, a new term, "middle school," has been coined, which not only engulfs and expands the older related concept, "junior high school," but also provides many unique techniques and methods for encouraging the development and growth of transescent children in relation to its more all-inclusive objectives. <sup>3</sup>



As a result of the increased number of middle schools, there has been rapid growth in the number of books, middle school, journals, articles, filmstrips, conferences, and workshops pertaining to the various aspects of middle school programs. The programs and literature directed toward answering the question "What is a middle school?" are numerous. Alexander states that the middle school is a "school providing a program planned for a range of older children, preadolescents, and early adolescents that builds upon the elementary school program for earlier childhood and in turn is built upon by the high school's program for adolescence."<sup>4</sup> The middle school, customarily, serves students between the ages of ten and fourteen. Eichhorn refers to these students as being in the developmental stage of transescence.

Transescence is:

The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence. Since puberty does not occur for all precisely at the same chronological age in human development, the transescent designation is based on the many physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes in body chemistry that appear prior to the puberty cycle to the time in which the body gains a practical degree of stabilization over these complex pubescent changes.<sup>5</sup>

The middle school, in structuring its organization and program, needs to take into account the characteristics of the transescences it serves. Two problems occur in attempting to operationalize a school program for the transescent: [1] What grade levels should the middle school include? [2] What kind of program is needed to meet the needs of transescent students?

The most commonly found grade level organizational pattern for the middle school is the 6-8 grade grouping according to



Compton (1976) accounting for 60% of the total number of middle schools. Middle schools housing 5-8 grade level are the next most common organizational pattern accounting for about 23% of the total number of middle schools. Thus the 6-8 and 5-8 grade organizations together account for 83% of the middle schools in the United States. Other organizational patterns include grades 4-8, 5-7, 6-9, 4-7, 7-8 and 5-9.

In regard to program structure, Georgiady, Riegle, and Romano have developed a list of eighteen characteristics that are commonly accepted by middle school educators as being important in planning, implementing, and evaluating middle school programs. This list includes continuous progress, multi-material approach, flexible schedules, social experiences, physical experiences, intramural activities, team teaching, planned gradualism, exploratory-enrichment experiences, guidance services, independent study, basic learning skills, creative experiences, student security factors, evaluation practices, community relations, student services, and auxiliary staffing.<sup>6</sup> One of the basic concerns of middle schools should be that these characteristics must be implemented in light of the existing knowledge about transescents. Therefore, each characteristic should be implemented in such a way as to enhance the school's effort toward achieving its goal of providing a program focused on the unique needs of the transescent.

Using these characteristics Georgiady and Romano (1973) proposed that the following questions be asked as guidelines for evaluating existing or proposed middle school programs, with a view toward determining whether they truly provide for students in the

middle school years.

1. Is continuous progress provided for?
2. Is a multi-material approach used?
3. Are class schedules flexible?
4. Are appropriate social experiences provided for?
5. Is there an appropriate program of physical experiences and intramural activities?
6. Is team teaching used?
7. Is planned gradualism provided for?
8. Are exploratory and enrichment studies provided for?
9. Are there adequate and appropriate guidance services?
10. Is there provision for independent study?
11. Is there provision for basic skill repair extensions?
12. Are there activities for creative experiences?
13. Is there full provision for evaluation?
14. Does the program emphasize community relations?
15. Are there adequate provisions for student services?
16. Is there sufficient attention to auxiliary staffing?<sup>7</sup>

By employing a 62 item questionnaire this study sought answers to these 16 questions and thus was able to describe the current level of implementation of these characteristics in public schools which housed grades 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8, in Wisconsin.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of this study was to determine the current level of implementation of certain middle school characteristics as perceived by teachers, principals, and superintendents of public

schools housing grades 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, in Wisconsin. Essentially, this research was a discrepancy analysis between theory and practice in middle school operation.

### **Need for the Study**

The educational format of middle schools was created on the belief that the early adolescent is at a unique and critical development stage. The recognition of this fact thus implies the development of an educational system that is responsive to this time in a child's life. Therefore, with increasing frequency, the school districts of this nation are making the decision to abandon the junior high school as currently organized in favor of some form of middle school. Silberman, in a 1970 study, stated that, "the junior high school by almost unanimous agreement is the wasteland . . . one is tempted to say the cesspool of American Education."<sup>8</sup> Middle level education can no longer afford to derive its identity solely from the belief that its prime goal is to prepare these youngsters for the high school, nor can it derive its identity solely from the belief that it is a mere extension of the elementary school.

It is essential that educators look at middle level education as an identity in and of itself, and establish definable purposes for middle school which are founded on the principle of meeting the comprehensive needs of youth at this highly formative stage of their lives. More deliberate and comprehensive planning is essential, so that the middle school movement will not merely duplicate the junior high school and thereby simply compound the problems of educational programming for transescent youth, but provide that

important link between elementary and high school. The need exists for studies that analyze current middle school practices and the relationships that exist between these practices and the basic concepts that have been developed for middle school education.

Research concerning the application of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics in Wisconsin schools would provide important information concerning current progress in the field and hopefully would be used to improve present programs. Documenting the degree of implementation of middle school characteristics would provide data for the Wisconsin State Department of Education, educators in Wisconsin and schools of education in the United States. The research would also help determine the consistency of reports among superintendents, principals and teachers as to how well these characteristics are being implemented. Finally, this study would provide an indication of how the Wisconsin schools are progressing in regard to the middle school movement.

### **Definition of Terms**

The presentation of the following definitions of terms is intended to aid in the interpretation and understanding of this study and to assist in clarifying terms for possible replications of this study.

**Junior high school:** This is the intermediate school which is designed to carry the pupil over from the content and techniques that are typical of the elementary school to those which characterize the senior high school. The school usually includes grades seven, eight, and nine. This varies, however, in accordance

with population trends.<sup>9</sup>

**Middle school:** A school unit offering an education program for grades over four but below nine . . . a system of education developed for the 10 to 14 year old age group. Its emphasis is upon support of the student in the learning situation as he ascertains his capabilities for learning and for orientation to his environment in light of his developing physical, social, intellectual, and psychological attributes.<sup>10</sup>

An operational definition of middle school that will be used in this study is as follows. The school must:

1. include a combination of grades between 5 and 8;
2. include the phrase "middle school" in their title; and
3. consider itself a middle school as opposed to a junior high school.

**Preadolescence:** The prefix "pre" is applied to the word adolescence to refer to the period immediately prior to the onset of puberty. Usually this includes a period of maturing both physically and intellectually in children ages 10 to 12. Typically this time of life is accompanied by extensive emotional and social growth.<sup>11</sup>

**Transescence:** That period in an individual's development beginning prior to the onset of puberty and continuing through early adolescence. It is characterized by changes in physical development, social interaction, and intellectual functions.<sup>12</sup>

**Adolescence:** ". . . .the transitional period between puberty and adulthood in human development."<sup>13</sup>

**Curriculum:** This includes all the planned and unplanned experiences offered to learners under the direction of the school.<sup>14</sup> Also included is the "third curriculum," a designation made by Frederick in referring to the school activities program.<sup>15</sup>

**Planned gradualism:** An organizational plan to provide experiences designed to assist early adolescents in making the transition from childhood dependence to adult independence.

**Continuous progress:** An educational program designed to facilitate academic progress by individual students according to their ability to advance regardless of grade levels, peer group readiness, or other organizational limitations. This type of program is often referred to in the literature as a nongraded program.<sup>16</sup>

**Exploration:** Gruhn and Douglass identified "exploration" as one of their six functions of middle level schools. This function includes such activities as discovering and exploring aptitudes and abilities, identifying interests, and participating in a wide variety of educational activities.<sup>17</sup>

**Interdisciplinary:** Characterized by participation or cooperation of two or more disciplines or fields of study.<sup>18</sup>

**Enrichment experience:** Those courses and/or experiences designed to meet the individual needs and interests of students.

**Team teaching:** An instructional situation where two or more teachers, possessing complementary teaching skills, cooperatively plan and implement the instruction for a single group of students, using flexible grouping to meet the particular needs of the students.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

This study assumes that the survey instrument developed by Riegle (1971) and adapted for this study is appropriate for measuring middle school practices in Wisconsin. It further assumes that the replicated instrument was presented in a manner which permitted middle school principals, teachers and superintendents to reply with accurate perceptions relative to the programs currently functioning within their schools.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to public schools in Wisconsin that house students in grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8. The intent of the study was to measure the level of implementation of the middle school characteristics selected from the literature. No attempt was made to measure the effectiveness of the application of these characteristics.

While the terms have been defined, and the characteristics explained, responses would be subject to the range of experiences of the individual respondents.

This study was based upon superintendents, principals, and teachers perceptions of the middle school characteristics and their implementation. It is assumed that the respondents were knowledgeable and accurate about the characteristics and the degree of implementation in their middle schools.

Although the instrument was developed after a review of the literature and has been tested several times with no or limited adaptations, it is possible that not all educators would concur that it represents the entire middle school concept.

This study measures only current practices and no adjustments were made for schools operating curtailed or temporary programs.

### **Objectives of the Study**

**Objective I:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools in Wisconsin.

**Objective II:** To measure the degree of implementation, by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, in Wisconsin.

**Objective III:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals, and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.



**Objective IV:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.

**Objective V:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.

**Objective VI:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.

**Objective VII:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

**Objective VIII:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

**Objective IX:** To compare the average level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics in schools housing

grades 5-8, grades 6-8, and grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

**Objective X:** To compare the average level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics in rural, urban and suburban schools in Wisconsin.

**Objective XI:** To compare the average level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics by teachers and principals of recent (1-9 years) middle schools in comparison to teachers and principals of established (10 or more years) middle schools in Wisconsin.

**Objective XII:** To determine the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics as perceived by a random selection of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the low implementation school and the high implementation school.

**Objective XIII:** To compare teacher interviews with their rating of the middle school characteristics on the questionnaire to determine consistency between them.

### **Procedure and Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers in schools housing grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8 in Wisconsin. The original eighteen characteristics were developed by Jack Riegle (1971). He extracted

them from the literature and had them validated by middle school authorities: Dr. Marie Elie, Montreal, Canada; Dr. Nicholas Georgiady, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio; Dr. Ann Grooms, Educational Services Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio; Dr. Louis Romano, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI; and Dr. Emmett Williams, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. After a list of eighteen basic middleschool characteristics were compiled, a survey instrument was developed using these characteristics. Upon completion the instrument was reviewed by Dr. Louis Romano and staff consultants in the Department of Research Services, Michigan State University.

The Wisconsin Educational Directory was consulted. The directory includes the names of middle schools, the mailing address of each school, the name of the superintendent of each school district, and the name of the principal of each middle school. A random sample of public schools which had middle school in their titles was selected.

The replicated survey instrument contained 62 questions and was divided into two sections. The first section contains multiple choice questions with responses that seek a single answer per question. In the second section, questions seeking multiple responses were presented. Specific items in the survey relate to each of the eighteen basic characteristics of the middle school.

An introductory cover letter was prepared and mailed with the questionnaire along with stamped self-addressed return envelopes to 106 superintendents, 127 principals and 254 teachers [127 females and 127 males] of Wisconsin middle schools. Directions for completion of the survey instrument were attached to each of the

surveys.

Survey instruments returned were separated into three groups containing schools housing grades 5-8, schools housing grades 6-8, and schools housing grades 7-8. Each group was then subdivided into four groups, superintendents, principals, female teachers and male teachers. Mean scores, variances, and mean percentages of the maximum possible score yielded by the survey instrument were calculated on each one of the eighteen characteristics for each sample of schools in the study. These scores were tabulated and comparisons between groups were made on the basis of mean percentage scores.

Two schools from the sample were selected for a visitation. One of the schools selected was the school that scored highest on the implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics, using the total of the scores of superintendents, principals and teachers. The other school selected was the school that scored lowest on the implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. The purpose of the visitation was to observe the accuracy of the responses of the individuals surveyed. Three teachers, one from each grade level from each school, were interviewed. A comparison was made between the results from the original questionnaire completed by staff members in the school and the interview guide based on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. A random selection of 10 students from each grade level, thirty students from each school, completed a questionnaire on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics.

### **Organization of the Study**

An outline of the study concerning the current level of implementation of eighteen basic middle school characteristics as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools is as follows.

Chapter I contains a frame of reference for the entire study. A statement of the problem and the purpose of the study have been presented. The need for the study has been outlined. Definitions of terms, limitations and assumptions of the study have been clarified.

The objectives of the study have been listed and the procedures and methodology have been provided.

Chapter II presents a review of related literature pertinent to the problem under consideration. In the review, the history of middle school education is traced. Characteristics of transescent youth are presented, and programs to meet the needs of these youth are discussed. Related studies are reported.

Chapter III presents the methodology of the study, purpose of the study, population and sample, source of instruments, data collection, the statistical methods employed, and the administrative procedures used are outlined.

Chapter IV contains the statistical results and a discussion of the findings. Appropriate descriptive statistics are presented with each objective of the study.

Chapter V presents a summary of the study with the findings outlined. Conclusions and recommendations for further research are included in the final chapter.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The review of the literature includes areas that should be examined and considered in the development of a middle school program for the preadolescent. The first area researched was the nature of the student. Various terms "transescent", "pre-adolescent", and "in-between-ager", students of the middle school/junior high school are going through a period of many changes. An attempt is made to identify the special needs and characteristics middle school educators must understand if they are to develop consistent instructional programs. A description of the students in this age bracket detailing their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional characteristics is presented.

The second area researched was the historical development of the middle school concept from its similarities to early junior high school philosophical foundations to today's increasing societal demands on the preadolescent youth. The review indicated that, in theory, the junior high school stresses meeting the needs of the preadolescent; in practice it became a mere extension of the senior high school. Parents and educators who feel that the junior high school has failed to provide the educational opportunities that were proposed in its original design have welcomed the middle school

movement. Middle school characteristics and functions contain many similar concepts and goals of the early junior high schools. Middle schools and junior high schools are designed for the transitional period in order to provide a program for the group of students between elementary and senior high schools.

The third area of review includes the status of the middle school movement. During the decade of the 60's the middle school concept grew to become the middle school movement. By the late 70's over 4000 middle schools were identified in the United States. Research has indicated that in many school districts the reasons given for establishing middle schools are for other reasons than to provide a program specifically designed to meet the objectives of middle school philosophy. Studies by Alexander (1968), Gatewood (1973), Kindred (1968), and Stefanich (1980) revealed that the reorganization of the grades in the middle years has been attributed primarily to such practical reasons such as to eliminate crowded conditions in other schools, to utilize a new building, to move grade nine into the high school, and to aid desegregation. Thus the middle school emerged in response to social pressures as well as educational needs. The research showed the existence of a large gap between theory and practice because of the lack of incorporation of middle school characteristics and concepts within middle schools programs. The educational reasons such as to provide a more appropriate program for early adolescent students, to better bridge the elementary school and the high school, and to implement innovative plans for curriculum, instruction, and organizational structure have been less emphasized (Gatewood, 1973).

The last area of review deals with similar studies. Any relationship of these studies relative to this study are then presented.

### **Pertinent Characteristics of the Transescent**

Since the predominant reason given for the middle school is to meet the needs of the transescent, it is important that an overview of their needs and characteristics be examined. The question "Who are the middle school students?" needs to be addressed. Whether we call them transescents, preadolescents, or "in-between-agers" these students whom the middle school is to serve, students in transition between childhood and young adulthood, have unique needs.

The time of preadolescence, approximately spanning the years of 10-14, is a time of tremendous change. The most evident of the changes which occur at this level are the biological. Pubertal change, or lack of it, is striking evidence for transescents that their lives will be dramatically altered. More changes occur during this stage than during any other stage except birth to three years (Lipsitz, 1982). However, little is known about this age group. As one researcher, Lipsitz, wrote, preadolescence is "a time in life about which we suffer from an embarrassing lack of knowledge."<sup>19</sup> Educators need to review what little is known about the nature of the preadolescent learner, because understanding students is a key to being able to meet their needs. Understanding the students must precede all other educational decision-making (Thornberg & Jones, 1982).



Martin Stamm and Blossom Nissman (1973), in an article concerning the role of middle school counselors, compare the preadolescent years to a trip through the hall of mirrors at a carnival. Upon entering the hall of mirrors, the image of the individual is seen as distorted. Depending on the twist or curve of the mirror, the reflection lengthens, shortens or widens the image.

Students in the preadolescent and adolescent years often view themselves with similar feelings of distortion. "The normal growth patterns are so varied among peer groups that confusion and fear of abnormality are often a serious concern of the individual. He may find himself unattractive in one situation and seem to approve of his appearance or actions in another instance . . . blemishes on the skin become major catastrophes. Enlarged features seem to be more pronounced as he views himself."<sup>20</sup>

The uniqueness of the "in-between" stage of a student's life has necessitated a term to describe the transition from childhood to adolescence. Eichhorn (1968), an early leader in middle school education, coined the term "transescent" to designate the individual and "transescence" to designate the period of development. He describes transescence as the period of development between childhood and adolescence. Defining it as the time in development beginning prior to the onset of puberty and continuing through early adolescence. Riegle, defines the transescent stage as, "a growth spurt takes place, sexual maturity is realized, mental processes reach toward an ability to deal in the abstract, social values and interests transfer to the peer group to a greater degree, and

self-concept becomes a highly impressionable inner concern as the child seeks to mold his personality."<sup>21</sup>

The most noticable and probably the most dramatic changes in preadolescents are biological ones; the most observable of which are rapid physical growth and development. There are several marked physical changes that take place in a preadolescent which have a profound impact on various areas of a preadolescent's life.

However, there is immense variability in the changes that occur among individual preadolescents. There is variance in the age of onset of changes and in the rate and amount of change. These physical changes can be summarized into various broad categories: growth spurt, sexual development, metabolic changes.

The term "growth spurt" is often associated with the rapid physical growth and development of preadolescents. There is an increase in weight, height, heart rate, lung capacity, and muscular strength. Many preadolescents are self-conscious about their bodies and these accompanying changes. There is immense variability in this growth spurt, and there are marked differences between the sexes. Although the sequence of these developmental changes is relatively consistent in boys and girls, boys tend to lag about two years behind girls.<sup>22</sup>

Another important biological change during early adolescence is the beginning of sexual maturation. Biehler (1971) stated that the average age of puberty for girls in the United States is between 12 and 13 years, and the range is from 9 to 16 years. The average age of puberty for boys is 14 years, with the range being from 11 to

18 years. Sexual maturation involves drastic biological and psychological adjustments, and adolescents are concerned and curious.

Gordon (1962) summarized the preadolescent period in the following manner:

In summary, the child enters preadolescence continuing the slow, steady growth of childhood. He finishes this period at the beginning of the growth spurt. He gains in strength, health, coordination, and these changes manifest themselves in behavior. His views of himself and his interpersonal world is influenced by his changing body. His concern with athletic prowess is partially attributable to his increased skill. His difficulty in school (boys have more troubles than girls) are partially attributable to his need for activity which can no longer find acceptable outlets within the average school program. The growth of the body is complemented by, and exceeded by, the conceptual development of the child during this time. He enlarges, clarifies, and sharpens his definition of self and his world.<sup>23</sup>

Another important area of change occurs for pre and young adolescents in their social relationships. In particular, the affiliation base of pre and young adolescents broadens from the family to peers. According to Jersild, Brook, and Brook (1978), the developments that occur in young adolescents during pre and middle adolescence present educators with a serious challenge. One of the many stresses that adolescents face is the perceived need to change the image that they have of themselves.

Association with peers becomes very important to most pre and young adolescents. The peer group provides a sense of belonging and a sense of strength and power that is one of the central factors of the social development of young adolescents (GAP, 1968). Peer groups are important to youngsters because they provide avenues to

learn and practice socially acceptable behaviors and to develop a sense of identity as a young man or young woman (Dorman & Lipsitz, 1981). Dorman and Lipsitz stated, that "one of the signs of serious disturbance in young people is the inability to relate to peers and fit into a peer group."<sup>24</sup>

Young adolescents also undergo changes in their emotions which are heightened and intense. Extremes in emotions are great and youngsters may feel as though they are on an emotional roller coaster and not know why. Ames, Metraus, and Walker (1971) suggested that the age of eleven is a paradox. They stated an increased sensitivity to criticism and projection toward more adaptive inhibitions. They describe eleven-year-olds as argumentative and ready to do battle. Also, at the same time, conformity and response to the pressures of the group reach a new high at this age.

Dorman & Lipsitz (1981), stated that these mood swings are normal for preadolescents. They are probably associated with hormonal activity, but are also intensified by the changing expectations of others, and feelings of confusion and ambivalence about all of the changes taking place within themselves.

### **Intellectual Development of Early Adolescents**

The other important stage of early adolescence is the beginning of a new capacity for thought. This change in intellectual development equals the rapid physical growth and development in importance as it, too, affects both social and emotional

development.

During preadolescence youngsters start to move away from almost complete reliance on their own concrete experiences and toward the ability to consider alternatives, to develop hypotheses, to consider "what if's", to think reflectively, to reason abstractly about such concepts as justice and love (Dorman & Lipsitz, 1981; McNassor, 1975). The preadolescent begins to appreciate and utilize the hypothetical, and can begin to deal with incongruities (Kagan, 1971). More questioning of reasons behind rules and behavior occurs, and preadolescents begin to see the "gray areas" of certain situations. Youngsters can, for the first time, really consider issues outside themselves. They can also begin to think about a personal future (Dorman & Lipsitz, 1981). These changes in thinking are termed "formal operations" (Wadsworth, 1979).

Three points must be made clear, however, about these cognitive changes:

1. Such changes are gradual.
2. Youngsters may shift from concrete to abstract thinking and back again on different issues.
3. Not all early adolescents, not even all adults, achieve this capacity to think abstractly.

This last point is particularly important. The shift from concrete to formal operations only begins in preadolescence for some youngsters. Others could experience this change in thinking at a later time, still others may not at all.

Piaget's (1970a, 1970b) research on cognitive development focused on the appropriate developmental levels which a child must experience before moving to the next level of development. Piaget emphasized:

A person does not grow in knowledge by passively copying objects in the world . . . a person acts upon objects to know them . . . the action may be direct manipulations, visual observation, or a mental or internal transformation such as comprehending an idea after combining new and old information.<sup>25</sup>

Piaget determined that the ability to learn is sequential and continuous, with present learning dependent on previous development. Thus, Rosenau stated, "It is not reasonable to provide learning experiences in schools which by-pass intermediate, necessary steps in intellectual development."<sup>26</sup> Likewise, Bruner stated, "What is most important for teaching basic concepts is that the child be helped to pass progressively from concrete thinking to the utilization of more conceptually adequate modes of thought."<sup>27</sup>

Until recently, middle level educators have been somewhat guided by Piaget's classification of the stages of intellectual development (Alexander & George, 1981). However, recent research on brain growth seriously challenges his theory that formal operations begin at about age 11 and carry through the ages of 12 to 14 years since there is evidence of a brain growth plateau during these years. Research by Epstein (1977, 1978) shows that rather than growing continuously, the brain grows more during certain periods (ages 2-4, 6-8, 10-12, and 14-16+ years) and that students

experience intervening plateaus during ages 4-6, 8-10, and 12-14. Toepfer (1980) stated this challenge quite clearly:

The problem for middle grades seems to reside in the nature of educational programming offered during the age 12-14 years span. Clearly, achievement and growth during the age 10-12 period seem to confirm that emerging adolescents have the capacity to learn new and higher level thinking skills along with facts and information at that time. However, the fact of the plateau period of brain growth during the following age 12-14 years period and the classic mental age growth studies . . . indicate that youngsters cannot continue to grow and develop new and higher level cognitive, thinking skills during the brain growth experienced between age 10-12 years and the plateau period of ages 12-14.<sup>28</sup>

Toepfer's study should alert middle level educators to be careful of challenging learners at an unachievable level of difficulty during the plateau period within the 12 to 14 age interval.

Having reviewed each four aspects of preadolescence separately it must be remembered that each of these elements can affect all the others. And, it must be remembered that the onset, rate, and degree of these changes will vary greatly from youngster to youngster. As educators we must remember that every student is unique.

The middle level student is in the process of self discovery. Since the transescent is undergoing rapid physical, emotional, social, and intellectual change, the school that best serves this age must be concerned with the child's total being.<sup>29</sup>

The development characteristics of early adolescents will play an increasingly heavier role in achieving effective education.

## **The Development and Functions of Junior High and Middle Schools**

Since the early 1960's dissatisfaction with the discontinuity of elementary and secondary schools and the ensuing problems of children in transition from level to level, along with widespread criticism of schooling in general, and the search for change and alternatives created a receptive climate for middle school proposals and reorganizations.

The development and growth of the junior high school in the early part of the 20th century was an outgrowth of causes which focused on the political, social, and economic problems of the period. Lounsbury (1960) emphasized, ". . .it (the junior high school) grew out of the times and has continued to shift with the times. It was the interaction of many conditions and factors which caused the successful growth of the movement"<sup>30</sup>. Various important causes which contributed to the movement, according to Lounsbury, were:

1. College presidents in the 1890's wanted high schools to speed up and improve college preparation;
2. several influential national commissions issued reports which supported reorganization proposals during the period of 1892-1918;
3. psychologists, such as G. Stanley Hall, supported separate institutions for early adolescents as being better able to assist them;



4. educators were gaining additional insight into individual differences of early adolescents from the research of psychologists;
5. the addition of junior high school buildings was a solution to the school building shortage caused by two world wars.

The junior high school was one of many reform movements which was a result of the first two decades of the 20th century. There were many factors that were influential in its birth, but the reasons for this were based primarily on the values of social and economic efficiency which prevailed during this period rather than the psychological theories of G. Stanley Hall (Stephans, 1967).

Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University in 1888, gave a speech to the National Education Association concerning the emergence of the junior high school. He criticized the prevalent pattern of schooling, which consisted of eight elementary grades and four years at the secondary level (Eichhorn, 1980; Klingele, 1979; Moss, 1969; Sommer, 1978). Noting the advanced quality of students graduating from secondary schools in France, Eliot suggested that the American schools allow secondary studies to begin earlier (Sommer, 1978). In addition, Eliot was also concerned about the relatively late age at which freshmen were entering college (Eichhorn, 1980). In order to resolve these concerns, he recommended a reduced number of elementary school years (Sommer, 1978). The speech, which raised the question, "Can school programs be shortened and enriched?," and the many significant committees

which followed it, stated what became known as the reorganization movement. From it emerged the junior high school in the 1910s and, half a century later, the middle school.

The National Education Association responded to Eliot's message by forming a committee of ten in 1892. The committee in 1894 recommended that secondary education begin after the completion of six years of elementary school (Moss, 1969; Sommer, 1978).

Sommer (1978) referred to some common circumstances in the first half of the twentieth century which led to the creation of a separate school for the middle level grades between elementary and the senior high school: (1) a rapid increase in school population; (2) a corresponding need to provide more classroom space; (3) an increased emphasis upon testing the mental capacities of pupils; (4) an increased value for individual differences among pupils; and (5) a desire to attract more highly trained teachers to the middle level grades.

Howard and Stoumbis (1970) referred to the growth and acceptance of the junior high school as a consequence of the following factors:

A growing demand for universal secondary education, the promise of better transition from the elementary to the high school, benefits of vocational training for those students who chose to continue in school, better preparation for college and, often, the popularity of the program resulting from its favorable publicity.<sup>31</sup>

Since the beginnings of the junior high school movement, a

variety of reasons have contributed to its growth and development. Many of these reasons had to do with the changing economic conditions, political and social roots. One educational reason which appeared consistently throughout the literature was the recurring expectation that the junior high school would provide educational experiences appropriate for the student during the middle level grades.

Brimm (1963) suggested that the unique function of the junior high school program could be expressed through a curriculum that provides for a transition for the child from the life of a preadolescent to the life of young adulthood. Brimm defined the function as follows:

1. Transition from the self-contained classroom of the elementary school to the highly departmentalized classes of the senior high school.
2. Transition from the emphasis on basic skills . . . to the elective program . . . .
3. Transition from the program of all required courses . . . to the elective program . . .
4. Transition from the childhood activities of the preadolescent to the accepted adult activities of the young adult.
5. Transition from the preadolescent set of values to the more serious adult values of our modern, complex economy.
6. Transition from the social patterns of childhood to the social life of the adult which draws a definite distinction between the activities of the sexes.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to meeting the adolescent's needs, another function of the junior high school, as stated by VanTil, et al., (1967) is to reconcile these needs with society. A definition of needs which reconcile the individual and society is: "Needs are psychological-biological tensions that are heavily influenced by the social realities and values, which impinge on the individual's life".<sup>33</sup> VanTil referred to some common needs which are characteristic of most young adolescents. They are:

1. The need to find his/her place in the junior high school age group--to belong, be accepted, fit in with peers, have fun with friends;
2. the need for determining masculine and/or feminine roles--learning which roles they must play, particularly in school relationships;
3. the need to become independent--to face work and study problems, to make mistakes and remedy them, and to learn to live with other humans.<sup>34</sup>

A major problem of the reorganization of junior high schools was that many if not all schools were reorganized for administrative and not educational purposes. However, there were some that were created to introduce a program specifically designed to meet the needs of preadolescents. Fluctuating enrollment figures, building utilization, staffing and budgetary problems, and other like factors, usually took precedence over the need for a unique intermediate program. However, in some instances, the reorganization was followed by the adoption of an appropriate philosophy and program. In others, it quite simply was not (Melton, 1984).

William T. Gruhn, in a 1983 interview responded to "What school practices illustrate the failures of the movement?" by saying he was reluctant to refer to the shortcomings of the junior high school as "failures." "Rather, I think, we have problems, some of which have been with us since the beginning of . . . the movement"<sup>35</sup>

Whatever they are called, problems or failures, they exist in abundance. The junior high school has continued to evolve in this century amid the criticisms and support of educators, parents, school boards, administrators, and junior high school associations. The junior high school did achieve a number of major successes, in spite of its problems, or failures, or both that have provided a foundation for the further improvement of education at the middle level (Melton, 1984).

### **Middle School**

Since the early 1960's dissatisfaction with the discontinuity of elementary and secondary schools and the ensuing problems of children in transition from level to level, along with widespread criticism of schooling in general, and the search for change and alternatives created a receptive climate for middle school proposals and reorganizations.

Several ways of defining the middle school were found in the literature. One way of defining the middle school is to interpret its name literally. It is, in fact, the school in the middle. It operates in the middle of the other two basic levels of public education in America. Alexander (1981) likened the middle school to simply

being in the middle of the "school ladder" between kindergarten and high school.<sup>36</sup>

Another approach to defining the middle school has been the attempt to identify an educational program specifically designed for the middle level student. Advocates of this position maintain that the period of time between late childhood and preadolescence is unique, and, therefore, the educational program for students progressing through this time period needs to be equally unique. This viewpoint was supported by Wiles (1976) who stated:

According to the middle school philosophy, educators must study the developmental patterns of students in the preadolescent stage of development in order to structure a meaningful program of education. A means must be found to intersect the larger goals of educating with the needs of the individual.<sup>37</sup>

Alexander and George (1981) also recognized different approaches to defining the middle school and then offered the following as their contribution:

We define a middle school as a school of some three to five years between the elementary and high school focused on the educational needs of students in these in-between years and designed to promote continuous educational progress for all concerned.<sup>38</sup>

According to Popper (1967), the American middle school is designed to:

. . . intervene protectively in the process of education which was begun in the elementary school, mediate between the human condition at the onset of adolescence and the pressures of culture, and continue the general education of early adolescents with a curriculum applied in a psychosocial environment which is functional for learning at this stage of socialization.<sup>39</sup>

Compton (1968) referred to the middle school as a "promising alternative to the inadequate 6-3-3 organization . . . it focuses attention on a portion of the school population too often treated as second class citizens in the public school".<sup>40</sup>

Other researchers have defined their concept of the middle school. Probably the most frequently referred to middle school concept is that of Alexander. The following items represent his middle school aims:

1. To serve the educational needs of the "In-between-ages"(older children, preadolescents, and early adolescents) in a school bridging the elementary school for childhood and the high school for adolescence.
2. To provide optimum individualization of curriculum and instruction for a population characterized by great variability.
3. In relation to the foregoing aims, to plan, implement, evaluate and modify, in a continuing curriculum development programs, a curriculum which includes provision for: (a) a planned sequence of concepts in the general education areas, (b) major emphasis on the interests and skills for continued learning, (c) a balanced program of exploratory experiences and other activities and services for personal development, and (d) appropriate attention to the development of values.
4. To promote continuous progress through and smooth articulation between the several phases and levels of the total educational program.
5. To facilitate the optimum use of personnel and facilities available for continuing improvement of schooling.<sup>41</sup>

Eichhorn (1966) established a link between the physiological development of the middle level student and the type of educational program needed. Expanding upon this idea, Kindred, Wolotkiewicz, Mickelson, and Coplein (1981) emphasized the psychological,

social-cultural, and physiological changes experienced by the middle level student. They noted that merely rearranging grades is not enough to create a middle school. Instead, a concerted effort must be made to provide for that period of time in each middle level student's life between late childhood and preadolescence. Such a provision must be taken into account as the middle school program is designed, implemented, and evaluated.

Swain (1981) identified five factors which he thought should be included in middle school programs to meet the needs of the pre and early adolescent. They were (1) exploration, (2) skill development, (3) individualization, (4) activity-oriented experiences, and (5) advisement.

Kindred et al. (1981) described the middle school as "a definite attempt to provide for that period in a child's life referred to . . . as transescence".<sup>42</sup> He further explained:

The psychological and social-cultural aspects of development must be taken into account, as well as the physical aspects. Child-centeredness and humaneness are essential. To harmonize with this developmental stage the school must be transitional. The school must make it possible for students to work on the developmental tasks associated with their particular stage of life at a particular time. A true middle school is student-centered, not subject-centered.<sup>43</sup>

The emergence of the new middle school has long been in the making. Many educators have described this movement as a new concept, but, as a review of literature demonstrates, the present movement is basically a rededication to the basic principles of preadolescent education. Eichhorn (1973), noted that it is a 70-year-old concept rededicated to its basic principles. The



fundamental belief that the middle school should be designed for youngsters in transition from childhood to adolescence is just as accurate today as it was in the early decades of this century. Effective schools, whether they are junior high or middle schools, have a common element: a program uniquely designed for the transescent learner.

Wiles and Bondi (1981) described four factors that led to the emergence of the American middle school. They are:

1. The late 1950s and early 1960s were filled with criticisms of American schools, . . . ; books like Why Johnny Can't Read triggered new concerns about the quality of schooling in the United States. The successful launching of Sputnik in 1957 led to further criticism, especially about the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools. At this time a renewed interest in college preparation led to a call for a four-year high school where specialized courses like computer sciences and microbiology could remain under the direction of the college preparatory school, the high school. Likewise, the inclusion of grades 5 and 6 in an intermediate school promised to strengthen instruction by allowing subject specialists to work with younger students. Many of the first middle schools were organized with grades 5-8.
2. Another factor leading to the emergence of the middle school was the elimination of racial segregation.
3. . . . the increased enrollments of school-aged children in the 1950s and 1960s. The shortage of buildings resulted in double and even triple school sessions in school districts. Because older students in high school were able to cope with overcrowding better than young students, the ninth grade was moved to the high school to relieve the overcrowded junior high school. The same rationale was used to relieve the elementary school by moving the fifth and/or sixth grade to the junior high school.
4. . . . the "bandwagon effect." This resulted when one middle school received favorable exposure in books and periodicals, and some administrators determined that the middle school was 'the thing to do'.<sup>44</sup>

Donald H. Eichhorn (1973) has indicated that there are at least three significant forces motivating efforts of educators to redefine the functions of schools in the middle:

1. There is a growing body of knowledge relating to the characteristics of boys and girls in late childhood and early adolescence that is causing a reaffirmation of the principle of uniqueness espoused by early junior high leaders. The fact that biological maturation is occurring at an earlier age adds to its impact.
2. There are significant changes in our culture such as population shifts, population mobility, the dream of racial equality, developments in transportation and communication, and the forces involved in a developing technology which are prompting a reconsideration of school building as well as organizational pattern.
3. There is a growing realization that schools in the middle have become rigid and institutionalized. A variety of developing educational concepts such as continuous learner progress, flexible schedules, nongrading, interdisciplinary curriculum, cooperative planning and teaching and affective programs appear more likely to succeed in a revised framework.<sup>45</sup>

The review of the literature on the junior high school and the middle school movements indicates that the events and forces that have set the stage for the consideration of the middle school were paralleled in the development of the junior high school from 1890 to 1920. Both were developed to provide intermediate school experiences for preadolescents in transition from elementary school to senior high school. The junior high school was designed to provide experiences which help preadolescents develop skills in social competence, values clarification, self-management, and leadership. The middle school evolved in response to the criticism that junior high schools had failed to implement their stated goals.

In light of what we know about the preadolescent, more and

more educators are placing emphasis on the sound development of a middle school program specifically designed to meet the intellectual, social, emotional and physical needs of this age group. Its affirmed objectives were to provide a well balanced program of learning experiences for preadolescents with a program that reflects a strong philosophical base geared to the specific needs of the preadolescent. Both the middle school and junior high school designs were to focus on the transitional nature of the preadolescent.

### **Status of the Middle School Movement**

Many educators in America believe that middle level education has gone through an interesting and important period in the past decade. Some believe that we have witnessed a "rebirth" of interest in the middle level - a rebirth that has been healthy for educators, for communities, and most importantly, for students. (Valentine, et al.,1981)

The growth of the middle school movement, at least in terms of grade organization and title, can be easily documented due to various national surveys that have been conducted. Several reasons, in varied manifestations, contributed to the widespread reorganization after 1960 of the middle level grades. Surveys by Alexander in 1967-68 and by Brooks in 1977-78 make possible a comparison of the status of middle schools in several areas, a stratified random sample of 110 reorganized middle schools asked each respondent to check a list of possible reasons to indicate why

the school concerned had been established (Alexander, 1978). These surveys also revealed the growing popularity during the period of the grades 6-8 organization over the 5-8 organization. In the United States, there were about 1,100 middle schools in 1967 according to the Alexander survey, and ten years later there were over 4,000. Alexander (1981) estimates that as of 1980 the number of middle schools in this country was at least 5,000. The increase in the number of middle schools was documented as rapid and widespread (Alexander, 1978; Alexander & George, 1981; Brooks, 1978; Kindred, 1981; Wall, 1981).

Alexander (1984) stated that "the surveys fail to show the enthusiasm and also the frustration that went into the many reorganizations of school patterns and programs in the course of the middle school movement."<sup>46</sup> Alexander referred to a quote from an article in the 1967 Wall Street Journal (Spivak, 1967) which still applies:

In any event, the middle school seems destined to thrive. Local school boards are finding that it helps satisfy the public's push for educational change, provides a potential for increasing the integration of races, and accords more closely with the way children mature.

Perhaps most important, the middle school offers a chance to experiment with new ways of teaching children during the years when their intellectual curiosity is more often killed than quickened by the classroom.<sup>47</sup>

In the past two decades, the middle school movement has been a remarkable endeavor. Wiles and Thomason (1975) expressed the concern that the rapid dispersion of the middle school concept may have led to the establishment of some middle schools with a very

limited amount of planning time for middle school concepts. As has been indicated, the research shows that some schools are adopting more middle school characteristics and programs after a few years of operation. Observations by Alexander (1981) of middle schools throughout the United States indicated that "there has been a noticeable improvement on all of these criteria (elements of middle school program) during the past decade".<sup>48</sup> Many of the trends today, such as content acceleration, high school type programs, and an emphasis on unrealistic standards are ideas which have been found to be ineffective in the past. Middle schools will only remain effective if they continue to devise programs that are clearly in response to the nature of the transescent.

The significance of the increased consideration given to this age group was summarized by George (1981) in the following statement:

The firm establishment of a nationwide appreciation of early adolescence as a critical phase of life is a monumental accomplishment. Early adolescence is receiving more attention from scholars, educators, scientists, parents and politicians than ever before. Educators are now aware both of the probable significance of early adolescence as a passage of life, and of the need to understand the nature of early adolescence. Psychologists like Uri Bronfenbrenner, Joseph Adelson, Lawrence Kohlberg, Jerome Kagan and Jean Piaget have built a strong foundation for the notion of early adolescent growth and development. Regardless of the eventual fate of the middle school movement, the focus on this period of life will continue to sharpen and intensify.<sup>49</sup>

### **Review of Related Studies**

VanTil, Vars, and Lounsbury (1967) summarized and reported several studies conducted prior to 1967 and published their conclusions. In their report a list of 23 characteristics were included which should be implemented in a junior high or middle school program. Features which were listed as desirable were similar to the goal statements and program characteristics which were subsequently developed by middle school advocates.

Alexander (1968) published the results of a national study of middle schools which indicated a gap between the "ideal" program and operational programs. The national study of 110 middle schools produced demographic data and a statistical profile of middle school programs and practices. The stratified, randomly selected sample of 110 middle schools secured data about the current status of middle schools regarding enrollment, housing, grade levels, articulation, reasons for establishment, curriculum plans, instructional organization, and meeting individual needs.<sup>50</sup> The survey results did not reveal any major differences between the program offerings of the middle school and its predecessor.

A study conducted by the National Education Association (1969) described the instructional organization and practices of 154 middle schools. Seven middle school characteristics were to some extent being implemented in most of the middle schools surveyed.

Flynn's (1971) study of middle school programs in California attempted to establish a list of criteria to upgrade contemporary middle school programs and the implementation level of such

criteria that would facilitate the transitional phase of converting a junior high school to a middle school. Flynn concluded, limited to middle school programs within the state of California, that a significant gap existed between the acceptance and implementation of established criteria and determined discrepancies between theory and practice in several major areas.

Daniel's (1973) dissertation attempted to measure the degree to which middle schools in Arkansas implemented the basic characteristics of middle schools as set forth in the literature. Daniel used nine middle school characteristics as evaluative criteria and concluded that few Arkansas middle schools satisfied the characteristics identified in the literature.

The purpose of Billing's 1973 study was an attempt to (1) determine middle school criteria, and (2) assess the extent to which such criteria were practiced. Billing concluded that although authorities in the field of middle school education demonstrated a high degree of consistency in their determination of essential criteria, middle schools in the state of Texas did not show evidence of implementation of those basic criteria. While none of the schools fully implemented criteria, a majority of the schools showed full or high-partial implementation of all but five criteria being essential for true middle school classification.

Franklin's (1973) study attempted to examine (1) to what extent the 31 middle schools in Virginia practiced certain instructional and organizational methods and (2) the rationale for not employing such methods. Franklin used twelve criteria as

desired features. He concluded that five of the twelve criteria were practiced by the Virginia middle schools.

Bloom's (1974) study investigated schools for preadolescents and early adolescents in Wisconsin to determine the extent of implementation of thirty theoretical principles for curriculum opportunities, instructional practices, and special programs and services. The study also attempted to determine the extent of differences between middle schools and junior high schools in their implementation of the theoretical principles. After the data was analyzed Bloom stated:

Although not a comparative study, this research appears to indicate that in the areas of curriculum opportunities and special programs and services, the theoretical principles comprising the middle school concept are implemented by Wisconsin schools for preadolescents and early adolescents to the same degree. Wisconsin middle schools show a greater tendency toward the implementation of the theoretical principles in the areas of instructional practices than do junior high and intermediate schools.

In general, this study revealed that the rapid increase in the number of Wisconsin schools identified as middle schools has not been accompanied by a high degree of implementation of those principles considered by authorities to be basic to middle school education.<sup>51</sup>

Riegle (1971) reviewed the professional literature for a list of basic characteristics that distinguished middle schools from junior high schools. From the literature he extracted a list of eighteen basic middle school characteristics which he had validated by five national middle school authorities. Riegle's list, often referred to simply as eighteen middle school characteristics, has subsequently been used throughout the country by a large number of researchers



including Raymer(1974), Caul (1975), Bohlinger (1977), Beckman (1978), Pook (1980), Wah(1980), Prescott (1984), Minster (1985), and others. Riegle concluded that, in 1971, middle schools in Michigan did not implement the eighteen characteristics to any great degree and trailed the degree of implementation reported by the middle schools in the national study conducted by Alexander (1968).

The eighteen basic characteristics of middle schools identified by Riegle were refined by Romano et al. (1973). It was, in fact, used as a basis for the characteristics of an exemplary middle school endorsed by the Michigan State Board of Education in 1980. The eighteen basic middle school characteristics were also used in this research project because (1) they provided a specific framework for evaluation, and (2) their use is supported by other research. The detailed list of eighteen middle school characteristics appear on the following pages:

### Characteristics

#### 1. Continuous Progress

### What and Why

The middle school program should feature a non-graded organization that allows students to progress at their own individual rate regardless of chronological age. Individual differences are at the most pronounced stage during the transescent years of human development. Chronological groups tend to ignore the span of individual differences.

### Explanation

The curriculum built on continuous progress is typically composed of

sequenced achievement levels or units of work. As a student completes a unit of work in a subject he moves on to the next unit. This plan utilizes programmed and semi-programmed instructional materials, along with teacher-made units.

## 2. Multi-material Approach

### What and Why

The middle school program should offer to students a wide range of easily accessible instructional materials, a number of explanations and a choice of approaches to a topic. Classroom activities should be planned around a multi-material approach rather than a basic textbook organization.

### Explanation

Maturity levels, interest areas, and student backgrounds vary greatly at this age and these variables need to be considered when materials are selected. The middle school age youngster has a range biologically and physiologically anywhere from seven years old to nineteen years old. Their cognitive development, according to Piaget, progresses through different levels, too. (Limiting factors include environment, physical development, experiences, and emotions). The middle school youngster is in one of two stages: preparation for and organization of concrete operations or the period of formal operations. These students have short attention spans. Variation in approach and variable materials should be available in the school program to meet the various needs and abilities of

the youngsters and to help the teachers retain the interest of the youngsters.

### **3. Flexible Schedules**

#### **What and Why**

The middle school should provide a schedule that encourages the investment of time based on educational needs rather than standardized time periods. The schedule should be employed as a teaching aid rather than a control device. The rigid block schedule provides little opportunity to develop a program to a special situation or to a particular student.

#### **Explanation**

Movement should be permissive and free rather than dominated by the teacher. Variation of classes and the length of class time as well as variety of group size will help a student become capable of assuming responsibility for his own learning.

### **4. Social Experiences**

#### **What and Why**

The program should provide experiences appropriate for the transescent youth and should not emulate the social experiences of the senior high school. Social activities that emulate high school programs are inappropriate for middle school students. The stages of their social development are diverse and the question of immaturity is pertinent in the planning of activities for this age level.

#### **Explanation**

The preadolescent and early adolescent undergo changes which affect the

self-concept. The youngster is in an in-between world, separate from the family and the rest of the adult world.

This is a time of sensitivity and acute perception, a crucial time in preparation for adulthood. This is the age of sex-role identification. The youngsters model themselves after a same-sex adult and seek support from the same-sex peer group. The youngster needs to be accepted by the peer group. The attitudes of the group affect the judgment of the individual child. There is the necessity for developing many social skills-especially those regarding the opposite sex. There are dramatic changes in activity: dancing, slang, kidding, practical joke give and take, etc. Common areas should be provided in the building for social interaction among small groups.

#### 5. and 6. Physical Experience and Intramural Activities

##### What and Why

The middle school curricular and co-curricular programs should provide physical activities based solely on the needs of the students. Involvement in the program as a participant rather than as a spectator is critical for students. A broad range of intramural experiences that provide physical activity for all students should be provided to supplement the physical education classes, which should center their activity upon helping students understand and use their bodies. The middle school should feature intramural activities rather than interscholastic activities.

**Explanation**

Activities that emulate the high school program are inappropriate for the middle school. The stages of their physical development are diverse and the question of immaturity is pertinent in planning activities for this age level. The wide range of physical, emotional and social development found in youngsters of middle school age strongly suggests a diverse program. The child's body is rapidly developing. The relationship of attitude and physical skill must be considered in planning physical activities consistent with the concern for growth toward independence in learning. The emphasis should be upon the development of fundamental skills as well as using these skills in a variety of activities. Intramural activity involves maximum participation, whereas interscholastic activity provides minimum involvement. There is no sound educational reason for interscholastic athletics. Too often they serve merely as public entertainment and encourage an overemphasis on specialization at the expense of the majority of the student body.

**7. Team Teaching****What and Why**

The middle school program should be organized in part around team teaching patterns that allow students to interact with a variety of teachers in a wide range of subject areas. Team teaching is intended to bring to students a variety of resource persons.

**Explanation**

Team teaching provides an opportunity for teacher talents to reach greater numbers of students and for teacher weaknesses to be minimized. This organizational pattern requires teacher planning time and an individualized student program if it is to function most effectively.

**8. Planned Gradualism****What and Why**

The middle school should provide experiences that assist early adolescents in making the transition from childhood dependence to adult independence, thereby helping them to bridge the gap between elementary school and high school.

**Explanation**

The transition period is marked by new physical phenomena in boys and girls which bring about the need for learning to manage their bodies and erotic sensations without embarrassment. Awareness of new concepts of self and new problems of social behavior and the need for developing many social skills is relevant. There is a responsibility to help the rapidly developing person assert his right to make many more decisions about his own behavior, his social life, management of money, choice of friends, in general, to make adult, independent decisions. The transition involves a movement away from a dependence upon what can be perceived in the immediate environment to a level of hypothesizing and dealing with abstractions. There is an establishment of a level of adult-like

thought and a desire to test ideas in school as well as in social situations.

**9. Exploratory and  
Enrichment  
Programs**

**What and Why**

The program should be broad enough to meet the individual interest of the students for which it was designed. It should widen the range of educational training a student experiences rather than specialize his/her training. There is a need for variety in the curriculum. Elective courses should be a part of the program of every student during his/her years in the middle school.

**Explanation**

Levels of retention are increased when students learn by "doing" and understanding is more complete when viewed from a wide range of experiences. Time should be spent enriching the student's concept of himself and the world around him, rather than learning subject matter in the traditional form. A student should be allowed to investigate his interests on school time, and to progress on his own as he is ready.

**10. Guidance Services**

**What and Why**

The middle school program should include both group and individual guidance services for all students. Highly individualized help of a personal nature is needed.

**Explanation**

The middle school child needs and should receive counseling on many matters. Each teacher should "counsel" the child

regarding his/her learning opportunities and progress in respective areas. Each child should perhaps be a member of a home-base group led by a teacher-counselor, someone who watches out for his welfare. Puberty and its many problems require expert guidance for the youngsters, so a professional counselor should be available to the individual youngster.

#### 11. Independent Study

##### What and Why

The program should provide an opportunity for students to spend time studying individual interests or needs that do not appear in the organized curriculum offerings.

##### Explanation

A child's own intellectual curiosity motivates them to carry on independently of the group, with the teacher serving as a resource person. Independent study may be used in connection with organized knowledge, or with some special interest or hobby. The student pursues his/her work, after it has been defined, and uses his/her teachers, various materials available in and out of school, and perhaps even other students, as his/her sources. S/he grows in self-direction through various activities and use of materials.

#### 12. Basic Skill Repair and Extension

##### What and Why

The middle school program should provide opportunities for students to receive clinical help in learning basic skills. The basic education program fostered in the elementary school should be extended in the middle school.



**Explanation**

Because of individual differences, some youngsters have not entirely mastered the basic skills. These students should be provided organized opportunities to improve their skills. Learning must be made attractive and many opportunities to practice reading, listening, asking questions, etc., must be planned in every classroom. Formal specialized instruction in the basic skills may be necessary and should be available.

13. **Creative  
Experiences**

**What and Why**

The middle school program should include opportunities for students to express themselves in creative ways. Student newspapers, dramatic creations, musical programs, and other student-centered, student-directed, student-developed activities should be encouraged.

**Explanation**

Students should be free to do some divergent thinking and explore various avenues to possible answers. There should be time allowed for thinking without pressure, and a place for unusual ideas and unusual questions to be considered with respect. Media for expressing the inner feelings should be provided. Art, music, and drama provide opportunities for expression of personal feelings.

14. **Security Factor**

**What and Why**

The program should provide every student with a security group: a teacher who knows him well and to whom he relates in a positive manner; a peer group that

meets regularly and represents more than administrative convenience in its use of time.

#### Explanation

Teachers need time to give the individual student the attention he needs, to help in counseling and curriculum situations. The student needs someone in school that s/he can be comfortable with.

### 15. Evaluation

#### What and Why

The middle school program should provide an evaluation of a student's work that is personal, positive in nature, nonthreatening, and strictly individualized. The student should be allowed to assess his own progress and plan for future progress.

#### Explanation

A student needs more information than a letter grade provides and s/he needs more security than the traditional evaluation system offers. Traditional systems seem to be punitive. The middle school youngster needs a supportive atmosphere that helps to generate confidence and a willingness to explore new areas of learning. Student-teacher planning helps to encourage the students to seek new areas. Student-teacher evaluation sessions can help to create a mutual understanding of problems and also to provide a more meaningful report for parent. Parent-teacher-student conferences on a scheduled and unscheduled basis should be the basis reporting method. Competitive letter grade evaluation should be replaced with

open pupil-teacher-parent communications.

**16. Community Relations**

**What and Why**

The middle school should develop and maintain a varied program of community relations. Programs to inform, to entertain, to educate, and to understand the community, as well as other activities, should be a part of the basic operation of the school.

**Explanation**

The middle school houses students at a time when they are eager to be involved in activities with their parents. The school should encourage this natural attitude. The middle school has facilities that can be used to good advantage by community groups.

**17. Student Services**

**What and Why**

The middle school should provide a broad spectrum of specialized services for students. Community, county, and state agencies should be utilized to expand the range of specialists to its broadest possible extent.

**Explanation**

Health services, counseling services, testing opportunities for individual development (curricular and co-curricular) meeting the interests and needs of each child should be provided.

**18. Auxiliary Staffing**

**What and Why**

The middle school should utilize highly diversified personnel such as volunteer parents, teacher aides, clerical aides,

student volunteers, and other similar types of support staffing that help to facilitate the teaching staff.

#### Explanation

Auxiliary staffing is needed to provide the individual help students require. A variety of teacher aides or paraprofessionals may be used to extend the talent of the professional staff.<sup>52</sup>

Various studies have utilized the eighteen basic middle school characteristics, as identified by Riegle and refined by Romano et al. (1973). Walsh (1977) investigated the differences between the self-concepts of transescents in schools with extensive and minimal levels of implementation of the basic characteristics. No significant differences were found in the two groups, as far as, the level of implementation.

Hawkins (1972) developed an extension of the Riegle study. The study attempted to investigate the relationship between the principals' and teachers' perceptions of their schools' practices in selected Michigan middle schools and national middle schools of distinguished reputation. Questionnaires using the eighteen middle school characteristics were sent to the principals of the Michigan and national middle schools with distinguished reputations. Hawkins concluded that the four distinguished national middle schools applied the eighteen basic middle school characteristics to a greater degree than the Michigan middle schools used in the study.

Raymer's (1974) study was based on a survey of 100 Michigan

middle schools and 100 middle schools from throughout the United States. Raymer attempted to compare the degree to which the basic eighteen middle school characteristics had been implemented in the selected 5-8 or 6-8 middle schools from within Michigan and throughout the United States. The mean percent scores for the different categories of schools sampled ranged from 49 to 66 percent.

Kramer's 1974 study investigated the level to which California middle schools of grades 5-8 and 6-8 had implemented the eighteen basic middle school characteristics identified by Riegle. Kramer reported a mean percent score of 53.6 for grades 5-8 middle schools, and 50.6 for grades 6-8 middle schools. He concluded that California middle schools had not extensively implemented the eighteen basic characteristics.

Bohlinger's (1977) study attempted to determine the degree to which the eighteen characteristics of middle schools were implemented in Ohio public middle schools housing grades 5-8 or grades 6-8. In assessing the extent to which the eighteen characteristics were being implemented he relied upon the perceptions of middle school principals. The survey results were interpreted as supporting two basic conclusions: (1) the eighteen basic characteristics were not implemented extensively by middle schools in Ohio, and (2) the degree of implementation of the eighteen characteristics was not significantly related to the number of grade levels contained within a middle school.

Green's (1977) study was similar in that it attempted to

investigate the perceptions of junior high and middle school principals regarding the levels of implementation of certain practices appropriate for middle school education. There were 276 principals identified for the study. Green acknowledged returns from only 131. Green's return percentage was only 47 percent, which weakened the study's conclusions.

Demp's (1978) study attempted to determine the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and the level of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics. No significant relationships were found between the two variables.

Beckmann's (1978) study investigated the current level of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics in 147 schools in Missouri. Similarities were found in the implementation levels of the various schools, regardless of their titles of elementary, junior high, or middle school.

In 1979, Holihan investigated the perceptions of teachers, parents, administrators, and board members concerning goals for the middle school. Twenty-two goal statements were presented to the participants, who were then asked to rate them according to the importance of the goal and the level of implementation of the goal. Overall support was shown by the respondents for the middle school program and high priorities were placed on the affective goals. General consensus was shown by the classroom teachers regarding the importance and attainment of the goals.

Pook's (1980) study attempted to determine whether there was a relationship between the degree of implementation of eighteen

middle school practices and the degree of job satisfaction expressed by middle school teachers. Pook surveyed 340 teachers from Colorado middle schools. Significant correlations were found between the level of implementation and the degree of satisfaction with school facilities, curriculum, and community support. However, no significant differences were found in job satisfaction for teachers employed in schools with low, medium, or high levels of implementation of middle school practices.

Beaty (1980) investigated middle school programs to determine the implementation of eighteen middle school characteristics in Tennessee middle schools housing grades 5-8 and grades 6-8. One major conclusion was reached. No significant implementation was found in the group of schools housing grades 6-8. The total score of 16.2 percent, representing the average implementation by the grades 6-8 group of the total possible score yielded by the survey instrument, supported this conclusion.

Lindley's (1982) study was to determine, compare, and analyze the perceptions of Ohio middle school principals and teachers regarding past, present, and future implementation of basic middle school characteristics. Lindley concluded significant differences were found in the data related to each of the five research questions. Principals perceived a decline in the implementation of basic middle school characteristics from 1977 to 1982 and expect a similar decline from 1982 to 1987. There was great consistency between the perceptions of the principals and teachers.

Prescott's (1984) study was an attempt to determine middle

level students', middle level teachers', and middle school authors' preferences toward selected middle school characteristics. The study was to analyze and measure the differences, likenesses, and relationships between these three categories of respondents and their preferences for the survey responses that were developed from the selected middle school characteristics. Prescott concluded that a significance was found in the relationships resulting from the comparison of responses made by middle school authors, middle level teachers, and middle level students.

Minster's (1985) study was designed to determine the current level of their implementation in selected middle schools in Illinois. Minster concluded that superintendents reported a higher degree of implementation than principals, and principals reported greater implementation than teachers.

In 1975, Wiles and Thomason reviewed the literature for research that was related to the middle school that was conducted between 1968 and 1974. Of the middle school studies reviewed they deemed 13 of 27 studies as substantial. They summarized the 13 studies as "comparative in nature . . . of remarkably low quality . . . from a limited number of states and regions . . . concerned with only four areas: academic achievement, attitudes, self-concepts and facilities".<sup>53</sup> Brief summaries of the several studies were provided which were primarily the products of doctoral students or proponents of the junior high or the middle school. A need was cited by Wiles and Thomason for organized evaluation of the middle school and noted, in particular, a need for "a method of identifying



middle schools which, in their practices, follow the guidelines of the middle school literature".<sup>54</sup>

### **Summary**

For sometime now educators have recognized the unique educational needs of preadolescents and early adolescents. From around 1910 until approximately 1965, the junior high school emerged as first the innovation and then the established educational pattern for students in transition from childhood to adolescence.

Following World War II dissatisfaction with the junior high school began to surface with a growing number of parents and educators who became concerned with the tendency of the junior high school to emulate practices originally established for the senior high school thus forcing children to grow up too fast.

Grade level patterns other than the traditional junior high school housing grades 7-9 existed prior to the 1960s. However, during the 60's the middle school concept grew to become the middle school movement. Middle schools have grown to over 4,000 and exist in nearly all states of the United States. The middle school program has evolved beyond the "traditional" junior high school program.

The middle school program has some unique characteristics differing from the junior high school. The middle school has been defined through a variety of approaches. There is general agreement that the definition must refer to an educational program based upon the developmental needs of the students enrolled in the middle school. Middle schools have incorporated into their programs

wholly or in part the characteristics of independent study, development of positive self-image, individual and group activities, exploration and enrichment courses, flexibility in scheduling and learning, emphasis on student involvement and their interests, and additional services.

Several reasons encourage the foundation of the middle school concept. Yet, ideally, the basis for the concept rests on the recognition of the uniqueness of the transescent and the need to provide a program designed specifically to meet the special needs of the transescent during this period.

The establishment of goal statements for the middle school logically led to the need to evaluate the progress toward achieving the goals. Goal statements were often defined in terms of program characteristics, which were perceived as basic ingredients in order to be an effective middle school. Evaluation studies frequently have been undertaken to determine the degree of implementation of basic middle school characteristics. Generally, these evaluation studies have indicated that middle schools have not implemented many of the characteristics which are considered essential to the middle school concept.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The design and methodology of this study included the following major areas: (a) purpose of the study, (b) population and sample, (c) source of instrument, (d) procedures and (e) treatment of data.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics as perceived by teachers, principals and superintendents of grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8 in a random selection of public schools in Wisconsin. The eighteen characteristics, originally developed by Jack Riegle (1971), were extracted from the literature and validated by authorities in the field. Essentially, the research is a discrepancy analysis between theory and practice in middle school operation as it exists in the State of Wisconsin.

#### **Population and Sample**

The 1986-87 Wisconsin Educational Directory was used to identify all public schools in Wisconsin which housed grades 5-8, grades 6-8 and grades 7-8. 150 such schools were specified. Each

of the 150 schools was assigned an identification number. By using a random selection process, 127 of the 150 schools were chosen to be included in the survey.

Packets containing the survey instrument, a cover letter, and a stamped return addressed envelope were forwarded to a random sample of teachers, principals and superintendents. Superintendents, principals and two teachers, one female and one male, from each of the selected schools were solicited as survey respondents. The completed and returned survey instruments provided the data used in this study.

### **Instrument Used**

The survey instrument was replicated from Riegle (1971). It was modified only by the inclusion of definitions for some of the middle school characteristics. The original instrument developed by Riegle was validated by a panel of middle school authorities for the purpose of measuring the level of implementation of the basic middle school characteristics. The list was reviewed and revised by consultants at Michigan State University, and then further reviewed by a panel of authorities: Dr. Marie Elie, Dr. Nicholas Georgiady, Dr. Ann Grooms, Dr. Louis Romano, and Dr. Emmett Williams.

Upon their critique and suggestions, Reigle compiled a list of eighteen basic middle school characteristics. The characteristics are listed and explained in Chapter II.

The replicated instrument used in this study contains a total of 62 questions arranged into the type of responses sought (i.e., single

choice, multiple choice, or check forms to compare two variables). Specific survey items related to each of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. A copy of the survey instrument which provides the questions for each item is reported in Appendix B.

### **Procedures**

Each of the 127 randomly selected middle schools in Wisconsin received a packet which included an introductory cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and directions for completing the questionnaire. Three copies of the survey instrument with self-addressed return envelopes were mailed to the principals, one to be completed by the principals, the other two by one female and one male teacher. Superintendents received one copy of the instrument with a self-addressed return envelope. No information regarding the numerical values of responses were provided in the material mailed to the respondents.

On March 13, 1987, a reminder letter, another survey instrument, and a stamped return envelope were mailed to each principal, teacher or superintendent who had not completed and returned the survey instrument sent February 23, 1987. By March 31, 1987, survey instruments had been completed and returned by 128 of the 254 teachers [72 males and 56 females], 75 of the 127 principals and 62 of the 106 superintendents for an overall response rate of 54.4%. The responses received from each of these groups provided the raw data for the analysis.

The raw scores were recorded and a mean score on each characteristic for each group was calculated. The mean score was

converted to a percentage of maximum possible score yielded by the survey instrument for each characteristic and for the grand total possible for each group. The conversion of mean scores to percentages was necessitated by the varying maximum scores that were possible among the characteristics. Converting to percentage scores made comparisons between the groups possible.

### **School Visitations**

After the data was collected and analyzed, two schools were visited in May 1987. By using the sum of the raw scores of the superintendent, principal and teachers of each school, the schools were ranked from the highest total raw scores to the lowest raw scores. The school with the highest total raw scores and the school with the the lowest total raw scores were selected for a visitation. Both principals were contacted and a visitation schedule was established.

Both schools are located in the Milwaukee county area. The school with the highest total score housed grades 6-8 with an enrollment of approximately 368 students. There were 40 teachers, an assistant principal/counselor, and a principal on the professional staff. The school with the lowest score also housed grades 6-8, had an enrollment of approximately 840 students, a staff of 66 teachers, an assistant principal, and a principal.

The visitation at each school was divided into two time blocks, interviewing and observing. The purpose of the visitation was to observe the accuracy of the responses of the individuals surveyed. Interviews were held with three teachers, one from each grade

level from each school. A comparison was made between the results from the original questionnaire completed by staff members in the school and the interview guide based on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. A random selection of 10 students from each grade level, thirty students from each school, completed a questionnaire on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. Students completed questionnaires in groups of 5 according to grade level. The interview guide and students questionnaire are presented in Appendices C and D.

Materials such as parent-student handbooks, master schedules, student evaluation reports, parent materials and an overview of the school district were received and reviewed prior to the visit and used to compare the level of implementation.

The teacher interview tapes were transcribed and percentages were computed based on responses provided. A descriptive analysis of the tapes is provided in Chapter IV.

### **Objectives to be Measured**

The first objective of this study was to measure the degree of implementation as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools in Wisconsin.

The second objective of the study was to measure the degree of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools in Wisconsin as reported by female and male teachers in each middle school.

The third objective of the study was to measure the degree of

implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals, and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.

The fourth objective of the study was to measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.

The fifth objective of the study was to measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.

The sixth objective of the study was to measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.

The seventh objective of the study was to measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

The eighth objective of the study was to measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

The ninth objective was to make a comparison of the degree of



implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics in schools housing grades 5-8, grades 6-8, and grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

The tenth objective of the study was to make a comparison of the degree of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics in rural schools, urban schools and suburban schools, in Wisconsin.

The eleventh objective of the study was to make a comparison of the degree of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics by teachers and principals of recent (1-9 years) middle schools in comparison to teachers and principals of established (10 or more years) middle schools in Wisconsin.

The twelfth objective of the study was to determine the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics as perceived by a random selection of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the low implementation school and the high implementation school.

The thirteenth objective was to compare teacher interviews with teacher ratings of the eighteen middle school characteristics on the questionnaire to determine consistency between them.

### **Summary**

Eighteen basic middle school characteristics were extracted from the literature. The characteristics were reviewed by consultants at Michigan State University. The list was further reviewed by a panel of authorities: Dr. Marie Elie, Dr. Nicholas Georgiady, Dr. Ann Grooms, Dr. Louis Romano, and Dr. Emmett

**Williams.**

A survey instrument originally developed by Riegle was replicated for use in this study and sent to the superintendents, principals and teachers in 127 middle school in Wisconsin housing grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8. A total of 265 returns were received and summarized in the study.

Two schools were selected for a visitation. One school scored the highest on the survey and the other scored the lowest in the implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics.

The raw scores were summed across schools in each group and a mean score on each criterion was calculated for each group. A total score for each school was calculated and these scores were summed for each sample to provide a grand total for each group. This total was converted to a mean total for each group. All means for each group were converted to percentages of the possible maximum scores yielded by the survey instrument. The composite percentage scores provided an indication of the current level of implementation of the total possible score of the eighteen middle school characteristics included in this study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PRESENTATION OF DATA**

The data presented in this chapter were collected from the survey instrument results returned by a total of 265 teachers, principals and superintendents in 127 Wisconsin public schools which housed grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8. The questionnaire was designed to provide data for each of the eighteen middle school characteristics described and listed in chapter II. During the school visitations the teacher interviews and student questionnaires were completed.

Prior to presenting the data measuring the current level of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics, it was significant to review a list of the characteristics included in the survey instrument and corresponding numbers of questions used to collect data on each characteristic. Table 1 on the following page lists characteristics and related question numbers. Numerical values were assigned to each of the items included in the survey instrument. The specific weights assigned to each item are shown in Table 1. A complete copy of the survey instrument is included in Appendix B.

An analysis of the data and the findings resulting from this study are presented in this chapter. Each objective is stated separately. Following each statement of an objective is a summary

**Table 1 The characteristics within the survey instrument and the numbers of questions included to collect data on each characteristic.**

<b>Characteristics*</b>	<b>Survey Question Number</b>	<b>Maximum Possible Score</b>
1. Continuous progress	1, 2	10
2. Multi-material	3, 4, 5, 6, 46	37
3. Flexible schedule	7, 8, 38	15
4. Social experiences	9,10,47,48,60	24
5. Physical experiences	11, 41, 42, 61	16
6. Intramural activity	12, 13, 49, 62	18
7. Team teaching	14, 15, 16, 17	20
8. Planned gradualism	18	3
9. Exploratory & enrichment programs	19, 20, 21, 50, 51	28
10. Guidance services	22, 23, 24, 43	14
11. Independent study	39, 44, 52	8
12. Basic learning experiences	25, 26, 45, 53	13
13. Creative experiences	27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 54	17
14. Student security factor	32, 33, 34	9
15. Evaluation practices	35, 40	9
16. Community relations	36, 37, 55, 56	14
17. Student services	57	9
18. Auxiliary staffing	58, 59	8

\*Characteristics are designated by numbers. A complete questionnaire may be found in Appendix B.

of the findings relating to that objective.

Demographic information was obtained on gender, age, school organization, district location and number of years as a middle school.

The data analysis is presented in the following manner:

1. Data related to demographics.
2. The objective is restated and the appropriate data and explanation are provided.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

### **Demographic Information**

The following are some of the characteristics of the subjects in the sample. There were a total of 265 respondents in this study, of which 77 percent were male and 23 percent were female. The majority, 72 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 40-50 years of age or above, 28 percent were between the ages of 21-39 years of age. Three responses did not include age. In terms of school organization, 32 percent were 5-8 grades, 50 percent were 6-8 grades, 18 percent were 7-8 grades. In terms of district location, 51 percent were rural, 19 percent were urban, 30 percent were suburban. Regarding number of years as a middle school, 27 percent were recent middle schools (1-9 years); 73 percent were established middle schools (10-26 years).

The demographic data are divided into the specific categories of superintendents, principals, female teachers and male teachers. The data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Sample Characteristics

	Superintendents' Characteristics	Principals' Characteristics	Female Teachers' Characteristics	Male Teachers' Characteristics	Overall
Total	62	75	56	72	265
Female	0%	5%			23%
Male	100%	95%			77%
Age					
21-34		7%	29%	8%	11%
35-39	7%	15%	22%	28%	18%
40-44	15%	31%	15%	31%	24%
45-49	32%	17%	22%	17%	21%
50 or above	47%		13%	17%	27%
School Organization					
Grades 5-8	44%	47%	25%	28%	32%
Grades 6-8	46%	52%	52%	50%	50%
Grades 7-8	10%	17%	23%	22%	18%
Location					
Rural	58%	47%	45%	53%	51%
Urban	8%	24%	27%	18%	19%
Suburban	34%	29%	29%	29%	30%
Years in Middle School					
1-9	19%	29%	32%	26%	27%
10-26	81%	71%	68%	74%	73%

**Presentation**

**Objective I** --- To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools in Wisconsin.

All three groups of respondents reported twelve of the eighteen middle school characteristics at or above the 50 percent and six below the 50 percent level of implementation as shown in Table 3. Also there seemed to be great similarity in ranking and percentage of middle school characteristics between respondents. For example, guidance services was ranked first in implementation by superintendents (87%) and principals (86%) and ranked second (78%) by teachers. Another example is multi-material, all three groups ranked this middle school characteristic in third place. All three groups ranked the following characteristics below the 50 percent level of implementation: flexible schedule, independent study, team teaching, intramural activity, auxiliary staffing and continuous progress.

**Objective II** --- To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, in Wisconsin.

An examination of the levels of implementation as shown in Table 4 indicated that female and male teachers stated that thirteen of the middle school characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation while five of the middle school

**Table 3 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of the superintendents, principals and teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools.**

Superintendents			Principals			Teachers		
Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Level
1. Guidance services	87%	1. Guidance services	86%	1. Guidance services	86%	1. Guidance services	78%	78%
2. Student security factor	74%	2. Basic learning experiences	70%	2. Multi-material	70%	2. Multi-material	70%	70%
3. Multi-material	71%	3. Multi-material	70%	3. Multi-material	70%	3. Basic learning experiences	69%	69%
4. Student services	71%	4. Student security factor	68%	4. Student security factor	68%	4. Student services	65%	65%
5. Physical experiences	70%	5. Student services	67%	5. Student services	67%	5. Physical experiences	65%	65%
6. Basic learning experiences	69%	6. Physical experiences	66%	6. Physical experiences	66%	6. Student security factor	64%	64%
7. Evaluation practices	61%	7. Evaluation practices	62%	7. Evaluation practices	62%	7. Evaluation practices	61%	61%
8. Creative experiences	58%	8. Creative experiences	57%	8. Creative experiences	57%	8. Creative experiences	53%	53%
9. Social experiences	57%	9. Social experiences	57%	9. Social experiences	57%	9. Social experiences	53%	53%
10. Planned gradualism	57%	10. Community relations	56%	10. Community relations	56%	10. Planned gradualism	52%	52%
11. Community relations	54%	11. Planned gradualism	54%	11. Planned gradualism	54%	11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	51%	51%
12. Exploratory & enrichment programs	52%	12. Exploratory & enrichment programs	53%	12. Exploratory & enrichment programs	53%	12. Community relations	50%	50%
13. Flexible schedule	46%	13. Flexible schedule	49%	13. Flexible schedule	49%	13. Flexible schedule	49%	49%
14. Independent study	45%	14. Independent study	47%	14. Independent study	47%	14. Intramural activity	44%	44%
15. Intramural activity	42%	15. Team teaching	47%	15. Team teaching	47%	15. Team teaching	43%	43%
16. Team teaching	40%	16. Intramural activity	46%	16. Intramural activity	46%	16. Independent study	38%	38%
17. Auxiliary staffing	29%	17. Continuous progress	31%	17. Continuous progress	31%	17. Continuous progress	32%	32%
18. Continuous progress	27%	18. Auxiliary staffing	25%	18. Auxiliary staffing	25%	18. Auxiliary staffing	23%	23%



**Table 4 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools.**

<b>Female Teachers Characteristics</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Male Teachers Characteristics</b>	<b>Level</b>
1. Guidance services	79%	1. Guidance services	78%
2. Multi-material	71%	2. Multi-material	69%
3. Basic learning experiences	70%	3. Basic learning experiences	68%
4. Physical experiences	66%	4. Student services	65%
5. Student security factor	65%	5. Physical experiences	65%
6. Student services	65%	6. Student security factor	63%
7. Evaluation practices	63%	7. Evaluation practices	59%
8. Creative experiences	57%	8. Flexible schedule	52%
9. Social experiences	56%	9. Social experiences	52%
10. Planned gradualism	56%	10. Creative experiences	51%
11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	51%	11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	50%
12. Community relations	51%	12. Planned gradualism	50%
13. Flexible schedule	50%	13. Community relations	50%
14. Intramural activity	45%	14. Team teaching	45%
15. Team teaching	42%	15. Intramural activity	44%
16. Independent study	36%	16. Independent study	39%
17. Continuous progress	33%	17. Continuous progress	32%
18. Auxiliary staffing	22%	18. Auxiliary staffing	23%

characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. Both groups ranked the following characteristics at below 50 percent level of implementation: independent study, team teaching, intramural activity, auxiliary staffing and continuous progress.

Objective III --- To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.

An examination of the levels of implementation as shown in Table 5 indicated that all groups stated that thirteen of the middle school characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation while five of the middle school characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. All groups ranked the following characteristics below the 50 percent level of implementation: independent study, team teaching, intramural activity, auxiliary staffing and continuous progress.

Objective IV --- To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.

An examination of the levels of implementation as shown in Table 6 indicated that female teachers stated that twelve of the middle school characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation while six of the middle school characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. Male teachers

**Table 5 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of the superintendents, principals and teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools, grades 5-8.**

Superintendents			Principals			Teachers		
Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Level
1. Guidance services	87%	1. Guidance experience	84%	1. Guidance experience	84%	1. Guidance experience	74%	
2. Student security factor	74%	2. Physical experiences	69%	2. Multi-material	69%	2. Multi-material	69%	
3. Physical experiences	74%	3. Basic learning experiences	68%	3. Basic learning experiences	68%	3. Basic learning experiences	69%	
4. Student services	72%	4. Multi-material	67%	4. Physical experiences	67%	4. Physical experiences	65%	
5. Planned gradualism	71%	5. Student security factor	66%	5. Student security factor	66%	5. Student security factor	63%	
6. Multi-material	71%	6. Student services	66%	6. Student services	66%	6. Student services	62%	
7. Basic learning experiences	67%	7. Social experiences	61%	7. Social experiences	61%	7. Social experiences	58%	
8. Evaluation practices	64%	8. Evaluation practices	57%	8. Evaluation practices	57%	8. Evaluation practices	57%	
9. Social experiences	62%	9. Community relations	54%	9. Community relations	54%	9. Planned gradualism	53%	
10. Creative experiences	60%	10. Exploratory & enrichment programs	54%	10. Exploratory & enrichment programs	54%	10. Exploratory & enrichment programs	51%	
11. Community relations	56%	11. Creative experiences	53%	11. Creative experiences	53%	11. Creative experiences	51%	
12. Exploratory & enrichment programs	54%	12. Planned gradualism	51%	12. Planned gradualism	51%	12. Flexible schedule	50%	
13. Flexible schedule	50%	13. Flexible schedule	50%	13. Flexible schedule	50%	13. Community relations	50%	
14. Independent study	48%	14. Intramural activity	49%	14. Intramural activity	49%	14. Team teaching	41%	
15. Team teaching	47%	15. Independent study	46%	15. Independent study	46%	15. Independent study	41%	
16. Intramural activity	39%	16. Team teaching	42%	16. Team teaching	42%	16. Intramural activity	38%	
17. Auxiliary staffing	35%	17. Continuous progress	27%	17. Continuous progress	27%	17. Continuous progress	35%	
18. Continuous progress	31%	18. Auxiliary staffing	22%	18. Auxiliary staffing	22%	18. Auxiliary staffing	27%	

**Table 6 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools, grades 5-8.**

Female Teachers Characteristics		Level	Male Teachers Characteristics	Level
1. Guidance services		74%	1. Guidance services	74%
2. Basic learning experiences		70%	2. Multi-material	70%
3. Multi-material		69%	3. Basic learning experiences	68%
4. Student security factor		67%	4. Physical experiences	64%
5. Physical experiences		66%	5. Student services	64%
6. Social experiences		66%	6. Student security factor	61%
7. Evaluation practices		61%	7. Evaluation practices	55%
8. Student services		59%	8. Social experiences	52%
9. Planned gradualism		59%	9. Exploratory & enrichment programs	51%
10. Creative experiences		53%	10. Community relations	50%
11. Flexible schedule		52%	11. Flexible schedule	49%
12. Community relations		51%	12. Creative experiences	49%
13. Exploratory & enrichment programs		49%	13. Planned gradualism	48%
14. Team teaching		44%	14. Independent study	43%
15. Intramural activity		39%	15. Team teaching	40%
16. Independent study		38%	16. Intramural activity	38%
17. Continuous progress		34%	17. Continuous progress	35%
18. Auxiliary staffing		22%	18. Auxiliary staffing	31%

indicated that ten of the middle school characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation while eight of the middle school characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. The discrepancies between the female and male teachers were in the following four middle school characteristics:

	<u>Female Teachers</u>	<u>Male Teachers</u>
Planned gradualism	59%	48%
Exploratory & Enrichment programs	49%	51%
Creative experiences	53%	49%
Flexible schedule	52%	49%

Objective V --- To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.

The levels of implementation reported by superintendents, principals and teachers as shown in Table 7, indicated that there were discrepancies found between them in the four middle school characteristics. The rest of the characteristics were at, above or below the 50 percent level of the implementation.

**Table 7 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of the superintendents, principals and teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools, grades 6-8.**

Superintendents			Principals			Teachers		
Characteristics	Level		Characteristics	Level		Characteristics	Level	
1. Guidance services	87%		1. Guidance services	85%		1. Guidance services	80%	
2. Student security factor	72%		2. Basic learning experiences	72%		2. Basic learning experiences	69%	
3. Multi-material	70%		3. Multi-material	70%		3. Multi-material	68%	
4. Basic learning experiences	68%		4. Student security factor	69%		4. Physical experiences	66%	
5. Student services	67%		5. Student services	67%		5. Student services	64%	
6. Physical experiences	66%		6. Physical experiences	65%		6. Evaluation practices	63%	
7. Evaluation practices	57%		7. Planned gradualism	65%		7. Student security factor	62%	
8. Creative experiences	55%		8. Evaluation practices	63%		8. Planned gradualism	54%	
9. Social experiences	53%		9. Creative experiences	58%		9. Creative experiences	54%	
10. Community relations	50%		10. Community relations	56%		10. Social experiences	52%	
11. Exploratory & enrichment program	48%		11. Social experiences	56%		11. Exploratory & enrichment program	51%	
12. Planned gradualism	48%		12. Exploratory & enrichment program	53%		12. Community relations	51%	
13. Flexible schedule	43%		13. Team teaching	51%		13. Flexible schedule	50%	
14. Intramural activity	43%		14. Flexible schedule	49%		14. Intramural activity	48%	
15. Independent study	42%		15. Independent study	48%		15. Team teaching	47%	
16. Team teaching	34%		16. Intramural activity	45%		16. Independent study	37%	
17. Continuous progress	25%		17. Continuous progress	35%		17. Continuous progress	32%	
18. Auxiliary staffing	25%		18. Auxiliary staffing	27%		18. Auxiliary Staffing	20%	

The discrepancies found are as follow:

	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Principals</u>	<u>Teachers</u>
Team teaching	34.1%	50.5%	47.0%
Flexible schedule	42.9%	48.8%	50.1%
Planned gradualism	48.0%	64.6%	54.3%
Exploratory & enrichment programs	48.2%	53.3%	51.4%

Objective VI — To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.

An examination of the responses as shown in Table 8 found that both female and male teachers stated that thirteen of the middle school characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation while five of the middle school characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. The two discrepancies found between the female and male teachers were: team teaching, females (43%) and males (50%); flexible schedule, females (52%) and males (48%). All of the characteristics for both male and female were within five percentage points. An example would be guidance services: Females 81%, males 79%. The middle school characteristics listed below the 50 percent level included: intramural activity, team teaching, independent study, continuous progress, auxiliary staffing and flexible schedule.

**Table 8 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of teachers, in selected Wisconsin middle schools, grades 6-8.**

Female Teachers Characteristics		Level	Male Teachers Characteristics		Level
1. Guidance services		81%	1. Guidance services		79%
2. Basic learning experiences		71%	2. Multi-material		68%
3. Multi-material		69%	3. Physical experiences		67%
4. Evaluation practices		65%	4. Basic learning experiences		67%
5. Physical experiences		65%	5. Student services		64%
6. Student services		64%	6. Student security factor		61%
7. Student security factor		63%	7. Evaluation practices		61%
8. Creative experiences		56%	8. Planned gradualism		54%
9. Planned gradualism		54%	9. Social experiences		53%
10. Exploratory & enrichment programs		53%	10. Creative experiences		51%
11. Flexible schedule		52%	11. Community relations		50%
12. Social experiences		52%	12. Exploratory & enrichment programs		50%
13. Community relations		51%	13. Team teaching		50%
14. Intramural activity		46%	14. Intramural activity		49%
15. Team teaching		43%	15. Flexible schedule		48%
16. Independent study		37%	16. Independent study		38%
17. Continuous progress		33%	17. Continuous progress		31%
18. Auxiliary staffing		19%	18. Auxiliary staffing		21%



**Objective VII**-- To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

The levels of implementation reported by superintendents, principals and teachers as shown in Table 9 indicated that there were three discrepancies between the groups in relation to the implementation of the middle school characteristics. The rest of the characteristics were either at, above, or below the 50 percent level. The discrepancies between the superintendents, principals and teachers were in the following middle school characteristics:

	<b><u>Superintendents</u></b>	<b><u>Principals</u></b>	<b><u>Teachers</u></b>
Intramural activity	51%	41%	42%
Planned gradualism	39%	54%	48%
Exploratory & enrichment programs	57%	52%	49%

**Objective VIII** -- To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

An examination of the responses as shown in Table 10 found that female teachers stated that eleven of the middle school characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation while seven of the middle school characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. Male teachers,

**Table 9 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of the superintendents, principals and teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools, grades 7-8.**

Superintendents			Principals			Teachers		
Characteristics	Level		Characteristics	Level		Characteristics	Level	
1. Guidance services	88%		1. Guidance services	91%		1. Guidance services	91%	81%
2. Student services	81%		2. Multi-material	74%		2. Multi-material	74%	72%
3. Student security factor	80%		3. Basic learning experiences	72%		3. Student services	72%	72%
4. Basic learning experiences	79%		4. Student security factor	69%		4. Basic learning experiences	69%	71%
5. Multi-material	77%		5. Student services	68%		5. Student security factor	68%	70%
6. Physical experiences	72%		6. Evaluation practices	65%		6. Evaluation practices	65%	60%
7. Creative experiences	68%		7. Physical experiences	64%		7. Creative experiences	64%	57%
8. Evaluation practices	63%		8. Creative experiences	64%		8. Physical experiences	64%	56%
9. Community relations	61%		9. Community relations	56%		9. Social experiences	56%	51%
10. Social experiences	58%		10. Social experiences	54%		10. Community relations	54%	50%
11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	57%		11. Planned gradualism	54%		11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	54%	49%
12. Intramural activity	51%		12. Exploratory & enrichment programs	52%		12. Planned gradualism	52%	48%
13. Independent study	48%		13. Independent study	47%		13. Flexible schedule	47%	47%
14. Flexible schedule	42%		14. Flexible schedule	47%		14. Intramural activity	47%	42%
15. Planned gradualism	39%		15. Team teaching	43%		15. Team teaching	43%	37%
16. Team teaching	38%		16. Intramural activity	41%		16. Independent study	41%	35%
17. Continuous progress	22%		17. Continuous progress	26%		17. Continuous progress	26%	30%
18. Auxiliary staffing	21%		18. Auxiliary staffing	24%		18. Auxiliary staffing	24%	22%

**Table 10 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of teachers in selected Wisconsin middle schools, grades 7-8.**

Female Teachers Characteristics		Level	Male Teachers Characteristics	Level
1. Guidance services		79%	1. Guidance services	82%
2. Multi-material		76%	2. Basic learning experiences	71%
3. Student services		74%	3. Student services	70%
4. Basic learning experiences		70%	4. Student security factor	69%
5. Student security factor		70%	5. Multi-material	69%
6. Physical experiences		67%	6. Evaluation practices	59%
7. Creative experiences		61%	7. Physical experiences	59%
8. Evaluation practices		61%	8. Creative experiences	53%
9. Planned gradualism		56%	9. Flexible schedule	50%
10. Social experiences		55%	10. Exploratory & enrichment programs	49%
11. Community relations		51%	11. Community relations	48%
12. Exploratory & enrichment programs		49%	12. Social experiences	48%
13. Intramural activity		47%	13. Planned gradualism	42%
14. Flexible schedule		43%	14. Team teaching	39%
15. Team teaching		35%	15. Intramural activity	38%
16. Independent study		33%	16. Independent study	38%
17. Continuous progress		31%	17. Continuous progress	30%
18. Auxiliary staffing		26%	18. Auxiliary staffing	20%

stated that nine of the middle school characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation, while nine of the middle school characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. The discrepancies found between female and male teachers were found in the following four characteristics:

	<u>Female Teachers</u>	<u>Male Teachers</u>
Flexible schedule	43%	50%
Planned gradualism	56%	42%
Social experiences	55%	48%
Community relations	51%	48%

Objective IX — To compare the average level of implementation score reported by schools housing grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools in Wisconsin.

Table 11 shows that the respondents of middle schools housing grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8, indicated that there was one discrepancy between them in relation to the implementation of the middle school characteristics. The rest of the characteristics were either at, above, or below the 50 percent level. The discrepancy was in the middle school characteristic: planned gradualism, grades 5-8 (58%), grades 6-8 (56%) and grades 7-8 (48%). It appeared that as the grade levels decreased from four grade levels to two grade levels the percentage of implementation of planned gradualism decreased.

**Table 11 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of selected Wisconsin middle schools grades 5-8, grades 6-8 and grades 7-8.**

Grades 5-8			Grades 6-8			Grades 7-8		
Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Level
1. Guidance services	81%	1. Guidance services	83%	1. Guidance experience	84%			
2. Multi-material	69%	2. Basic learning experiences	69%	2. Multi-material	73%			
3. Physical experiences	69%	3. Multi-material	69%	3. Student services	72%			
4. Basic learning experiences	68%	4. Student security factor	66%	4. Basic learning experiences	72%			
5. Student security factor	68%	5. Physical experiences	66%	5. Student security factor	71%			
6. Student services	66%	6. Student Services	65%	6. Physical experiences	64%			
7. Social experiences	60%	7. Evaluation practices	62%	7. Evaluation practices	62%			
8. Evaluation practices	59%	8. Planned gradualism	56%	8. Creative experiences	60%			
9. Planned gradualism	58%	9. Creative experiences	55%	9. Social experiences	53%			
10. Creative experiences	54%	10. Social experiences	53%	10. Community relations	53%			
11. Community relations	53%	11. Community relations	52%	11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	51%			
12. Exploratory & enrichment programs	53%	12. Exploratory & enrichment programs	51%	12. Planned gradualism	48%			
13. Flexible schedule	50%	13. Flexible schedule	48%	13. Flexible schedule	46%			
14. Independent study	45%	14. Intramural activity	46%	14. Intramural activity	43%			
15. Team teaching	44%	15. Team teaching	45%	15. Independent study	40%			
16. Intramural activity	41%	16. Independent study	41%	16. Team teaching	39%			
17. Continuous progress	31%	17. Continuous progress	31%	17. Continuous progress	28%			
18. Auxiliary Staffing	28%	18. Auxiliary staffing	23%	18. Auxiliary staffing	23%			

**Objective X** --- To compare the average level of implementation scores reported by rural, urban and suburban middle schools in Wisconsin.

Table 12 shows the perception of all three groups; rural, urban and suburban middle schools. The respondents indicated that there were five discrepancies between them in relation to the implementation of the middle school characteristics. The rest of the characteristics were either at, above, or below the 50 percent level. The discrepancies were found in the following:

	<b><u>Rural</u></b>	<b><u>Urban</u></b>	<b><u>Suburban</u></b>
Intramural activity	36%	56%	49%
Exploratory & enrichment programs	48%	54%	56%
Community relations	46%	57%	60%
Flexible schedule	45%	50%	53%
Team teaching	35%	52%	53%

**Objective XI** --- To compare the average level of implementation scores reported by teachers and principals of recent (1-9 years) middle schools in comparison to teachers and principals of established (10-26 years) middle schools in Wisconsin.

Table 13 shows the perception of both groups; teachers and principals. The respondents indicated that there was only one discrepancy between them in relation to the implementation of the middle school characteristics. The recent (54%) middle school

**Table 12 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of selected Wisconsin middle schools, rural, urban and suburban.**

Rural			Urban		Suburban	
Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	Characteristics	Level	
1. Guidance services	82%	1. Guidance services	79%	1. Guidance services	86%	
2. Basic learning experiences	68%	2. Basic learning experiences	73%	2. Multi-material	75%	
3. Multi-material	67%	3. Multi-material	71%	3. Student security factor	71%	
4. Student security factor	66%	4. Student services	70%	4. Basic learning experiences	70%	
5. Student services	65%	5. Physical experiences	68%	5. Physical experiences	70%	
6. Physical experiences	64%	6. Planned gradualism	65%	6. Student services	68%	
7. Evaluation practices	58%	7. Student security factor	64%	7. Evaluation practices	64%	
8. Social experiences	53%	8. Evaluation practices	63%	8. Creative experiences	63%	
9. Planned gradualism	52%	9. Social experiences	60%	9. Community relations	60%	
10. Creative experiences	51%	10. Creative experiences	59%	10. Social experiences	56%	
11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	48%	11. Community relations	57%	11. Exploratory & enrichment programs	56%	
12. Community relations	46%	12. Intramural activity	56%	12. Planned gradualism	55%	
13. Flexible schedule	45%	13. Exploratory & enrichment programs	54%	13. Team teaching	53%	
14. Independent study	39%	14. Team teaching	52%	14. Flexible schedule	53%	
15. Intramural activity	36%	15. Flexible schedule	50%	15. Intramural activity	49%	
16. Team teaching	35%	16. Independent study	40%	16. Independent study	49%	
17. Continuous progress	27%	17. Continuous progress	33%	17. Continuous progress	35%	
18. Auxiliary staffing	22%	18. Auxiliary staffing	30%	18. Auxiliary staffing	26%	

**Table 13 The ranking of the characteristics by using the level of implementation scores in descending order of teachers and principals in comparison to selected recent (1-9 years) and established (10-26 years) middle schools in Wisconsin.**

1-9 years Characteristics		Level	10-26 Years Characteristics	Level
1. Guidance services		82%	1. Guidance services	83%
2. Multi-material		70%	2. Multi-material	71%
3. Basic learning experiences		67%	3. Student security factor	71%
4. Student security factor		66%	4. Basic learning experiences	70%
5. Physical experiences		66%	5. Student services	68%
6. Student services		65%	6. Physical experiences	67%
7. Evaluation practices		63%	7. Evaluation practices	61%
8. Planned gradualism		63%	8. Creative experiences	56%
9. Creative experiences		57%	9. Social experiences	55%
10. Social experiences		57%	10. Exploratory & enrichment programs	54%
11. Flexible schedule		54%	11. Community relations	53%
12. Community relations		52%	12. Planned gradualism	52%
13. Exploratory & enrichment programs		50%	13. Flexible schedule	47%
14. Intramural activity		49%	14. Team teaching	45%
15. Team teaching		43%	15. Independent study	45%
16. Independent study		37%	16. Intramural activity	43%
17. Continuous progress		28%	17. Continuous progress	32%
18. Auxiliary staffing		24%	18. Auxiliary staffing	25%



ranked flexible schedule at or above the 50 percent level while the established (47%) middle school ranked the characteristics below the 50 percent level. All of the rest of the characteristics were either ranked by both schools at, above, or below the 50 percent level.

### **School Visitations**

After the data was collected and analyzed, two schools were identified from a compilation of the sum of the raw scores of the superintendent, principal and teachers of each school. By using the sum of the raw scores of these groups, the schools were ranked from the highest total raw score to the lowest raw score. The school with the highest total raw score and the school with the lowest total raw score were selected for a visitation. Both principals were contacted and a visitation schedule was established during the month of May, 1987.

Both schools were located in the Milwaukee county area. The school with the highest total score housed grades 6 through 8 with an enrollment of approximately 368 students. There are 40 teachers, an assistant principal/counselor, and a principal on the professional staff. The school with the lowest score also housed grades 6 through 8, had an enrollment of approximately 840 students, a staff of 66 teachers, an assistant principal, and a principal.

The visitation at each school was divided into two time blocks, interviewing and observing. Interviews were held with three teachers, one from each grade level. A comparison was made

between the results from the original questionnaire completed by staff members in the school and the interview guide based on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. A random selection of ten students from each grade level, thirty students from each school, completed a questionnaire on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. Students completed questionnaires in groups of five according to grade level. The interview guide and students questionnaire are presented in Appendices C and D.

Materials such as parent-student handbooks, master schedules, student evaluation reports, parent materials and an overview of the school district were received and reviewed prior to the visit and were also used for further information.

Objective XII --- To determine the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics as perceived by a random selection of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the low implementation school and the high implementation school.

#### Student Questionnaire

The purpose of this portion of the study was to determine the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics as perceived by a random selection of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in two Wisconsin middle schools.

The instrument used in this study contained a total of eighteen statements, with single choice responses. Specific statement items related to each of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. The specific characteristics and the corresponding

survey items are shown in Table 14.

### Characteristics of the Subjects in the Sample

The following are the characteristics of the student subjects in the sample. There were a total of 60 student respondents, of which 48 percent were male and 52 percent were female. There were a total of 20 respondents from each grade level. There were a total of 55 percent male and 45 percent female respondents at the sixth grade level, 45 percent male and 55 percent female at the seventh grade level and 45 percent male and 55 percent female at the eighth grade level.

### Data from the 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Student Responses from the Low Implementation School.

The responses from the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students are shown in Table 15. The results indicated 'very high implementation' between 75%-100% of middle school characteristics in the following questionnaire items:

	<u>6th graders</u>	<u>7th graders</u>	<u>8th graders</u>
1. Basic learning experiences	90%	100%	100%
9. Report card	90%	80%	90%
12. Social experiences	90%	90%	100%
15. Planned gradualism/ transition	90%	100%	90%

**Table 14 Student questionnaire and characteristic list.**

Statements	Characteristics
1. My middle school is providing me with a good education.	1. Basic learning experiences
2. My teachers teach in many ways, not just by talking to the class (e.g. trips, in class activities, experiences, acting out situations).	2. Multi-materials
3. In class we are often given the chance to work on our own.	3. Independent study
4. My teachers seem to understand students my age and their needs.	4. Guidance services
5. I feel more comfortable in core/team because I know the teacher(s) and other students well.	5. Team teaching
6. There is a feeling of care and concern for one another at this middle school.	6. Student security factor
7. I think my middle school offers a good variety of subjects.	7. Exploratory & enrichment programs
8. This middle school has helped me to develop good study habits.	8. Independent study/basic learning
9. My report card helps me to understand how well I am doing in my classes.	9. Evaluation practices
10. I have talked with the guidance counselor at least once this year.	10. Guidance services/student services
11. There is always someone available to help me in the Library/Learning Resource Center.	11. Auxiliary staffing
12. I participate in school clubs, sports, and/or school interest groups outside of regular class time.	12. Social experiences/creative experiences
13. My parents are encouraged to contact or visit the school for any purpose.	13. Community relations
14. At our middle school we make use of people and places in the community (e.g. field trips, speakers or visitors from the community).	14. Exploratory & enrichment programs
15. In general, I feel this middle school has helped me make the transition from elementary school.	15. Planned gradualism
16. Our middle school offers sport activities in which all students can participate.	16. Intramural activity/physical experiences
17. Students are encouraged to work at their own pace.	17. Continuous progress
18. Teachers can shorten or lengthen class time to work around certain activities.	18. Flexible schedule

**Table 15**      **Low implementation school student responses to questions of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics.**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>
1. Basic learning experiences	90%	100%	100%
2. Multi-material	40%	40%	70%
3. Independent study	60%	60%	70%
4. Guidance services	80%	50%	70%
5. Team teaching	20%	40%	50%
6. Student security factor	90%	70%	80%
7. Exploratory & enrichment programs	10%	60%	70%
8. Independent study/basic learning	50%	60%	90%
9. Evaluation practices	90%	80%	90%
10. Guidance services/student services	10%	40%	60%
11. Auxiliary staffing	70%	90%	70%
12. Social experiences/creative experiences	90%	90%	100%
13. Community relations	50%	50%	40%
14. Exploratory & enrichment programs	50%	50%	40%
15. Planned gradualism	90%	100%	90%
16. Intramural activity/physical experiences	80%	70%	90%
17. Continuous progress	10%	30%	30%
18. Flexible schedule	30%	10%	30%

The results indicated 'high implementation' between 51%-74% of middle school characteristics in the following questionnaire items:

	<u>6th graders</u>	<u>7th graders</u>	<u>8th graders</u>
3. Independent Study	60%	60%	70%

The results indicated 'low implementation' between 10%-50% of middle school characteristics in the following questionnaire items:

	<u>6th graders</u>	<u>7th graders</u>	<u>8th graders</u>
5. Team teaching	20%	40%	50%
13. Community relations	50%	50%	40%
14. Exploratory and enrichment programs	50%	50%	40%
17. Continuous progress	10%	30%	30%
18. Flexible schedule	30%	10%	30%

The results indicated percentage discrepancies of middle school characteristics in the following questionnaire items:

	<u>6th graders</u>	<u>7th graders</u>	<u>8th graders</u>
2. Multi-material	40%	40%	70%
4. Guidance	80%	50%	70%
6. Student security factor	90%	70%	80%
7. Exploratory and enrichment programs	10%	60%	70%
8. Independent study	50%	60%	90%
10. Guidance services/ student services	10%	40%	60%
11. Auxiliary staffing	70%	90%	70%
16. Intramural activity	80%	70%	90%

**Data from the 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Student Responses from the High Implementation School.**

The responses from the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students are shown in Table 16. The results indicated 'very high implementation' between 75%-100% of middle school characteristics in the following questionnaire items:

	<b><u>6th graders</u></b>	<b><u>7th graders</u></b>	<b><u>8th graders</u></b>
1. Basic learning experiences	90%	80%	100%
2. Multi-materials	90%	90%	80%
3. Independent study	90%	90%	100%
5. Team teaching	80%	80%	80%
7. Exploratory and enrichment programs	100%	80%	100%
9. Evaluation	100%	90%	100%
12. Social experiences	100%	80%	80%
15. Planned gradualism	90%	80%	80%



**Table 16**      **High implementation school student responses to questions of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics.**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>
1. Basic learning experiences	90%	80%	100%
2. Multi-material	90%	90%	80%
3. Independent study	90%	90%	100%
4. Guidance services	80%	70%	90%
5. Team teaching	80%	80%	80%
6. Student security factor	80%	60%	70%
7. Exploratory & enrichment programs	100%	80%	100%
8. Independent study/basic learning	90%	70%	70%
9. Evaluation practices	100%	90%	100%
10. Guidance services/student services	20%	60%	70%
11. Auxiliary staffing	90%	90%	70%
12. Social experiences/creative experiences	100%	80%	80%
13. Community relations	50%	40%	60%
14. Exploratory & enrichment programs	80%	70%	70%
15. Planned gradualism	90%	80%	80%
16. Intramural activity/physical experiences	70%	90%	90%
17. Continuous progress	60%	30%	30%
18. Flexible schedule	40%	40%	30%

The results indicated 'low implementation' between 10%-50% of middle school characteristics in the following questionnaire item:

	<u>6th graders</u>	<u>7th graders</u>	<u>8th graders</u>
18. Flexible schedule	40%	40%	30%

The results indicated percentage discrepancies of middle school characteristics in the following questionnaire items:

	<u>6th graders</u>	<u>7th graders</u>	<u>8th graders</u>
4. Guidance	80%	70%	90%
6. Student security factor	80%	60%	70%
8. Independent study	90%	70%	70%
10. Guidance services/ student services	20%	60%	70%
11. Auxiliary staffing	90%	90%	70%
13. Community relations	50%	40%	60%
14. Exploratory and enrichment programs	80%	70%	70%
16. Intramural activity	70%	90%	90%
17. Continuous progress	60%	30%	30%

Objective XIII --- To compare teacher interviews with their rating of the middle school characteristics on the questionnaire to determine consistency between them.

### Teacher Interviews

The purpose of this portion of the study was to determine consistency between teacher interviews and data collected from the eighteen basic middle school questionnaires from two Wisconsin middle schools.

A semi-structured interview format was used with three teachers from each school and was supplemented by observations. These data were then compared with the data collected from the eighteen basic middle school questionnaires to determine the consistency between these two sets of data.

### Characteristics of the Subjects in the Sample

The following are the characteristics of the teachers in the sample. There were a total of 6 teacher interviews, of which 50 percent were male and 50 percent were female. There were a total of 2 teachers from each grade level. The school districts were both located in the suburbs.

The first question addressed in the interview was: What are some strengths of the middle school concept? Some examples of typical responses were as follows:

#### High implementation school staff

"The strength of our middle school concept is the house concept. It means that we have four teachers in the academic disciplines who work in each house with approximately 90 students

in the house and we schedule them for two years. They start in the house in the 7th grade and continue through the 8th. Gives the teaching team a chance to really get to know the students. The teaching team has scheduled times for group planning. Teaching team is given lots of support and latitude in its planning for the individual house from the administration in the building. We have a teacher planning center where all teachers have a desk, it encourages sharing and communication between all teachers."

"Nice to have this age group grouped together-going through the same experiences, nice to be able to overlap teaching assignments, such as, all teach reading, etc. in house concept. Planning periods--teacher planning center."

"Team teaching affords you the opportunity to share with colleagues."

#### Low implementation school staff

"Focus is more on teaching students rather than on teaching the content area."

"Because middle school is a bridge from elementary to secondary, it allows students to develop and gently make the transition into a departmentalized secondary program and give them a sense of family."

"More flexibility in programs; they are coordinated with other house members (team teaching)."

"Allows for more interdisciplinary teaching, more sharing with other members."

"A sense of better discipline control."

"Easier for evaluation purposes; you get to know the students

better."

The second question addressed in the interview was: How is your middle school meeting the needs of the early adolescent? Some examples of typical responses were as follows:

High implementation school staff

"I think we do it very well. This school has, I would say, an average of only ten kids absent a day. We have no truancy problems. We have virtually no discipline problems that you would connect with when you say discipline. Our discipline problems are like the kid is chewing gum."

"We employ specialists in each of the different areas, and teachers are strong in their academic disciplines."

"Socially they have youth groups that meet at night. Students have the opportunity to socialize during meetings of their student council, student newspaper, etc."

"We have a guidance period, which helps meet their emotional needs. We present a variety of different topics, such as, drug abuse, divorce, physical growth."

"We have a youth activity council that's run by parents every third Friday night which provides dances, open swim, open basketball, volleyball, chaperoned by parents and we have a teacher that is in charge of the program."

"Structured cooperative groups; some of their assignments are done in groups of 2 or 3--teacher picks the groups."

"Students are not learning in isolation. The teacher chooses the groups so that they (students) can learn to get along with their fellow students and find strength and support in them."

"Honor pass system simply means the kid has demonstrated that they can follow the rules, they're trying as hard as they can. The system is based on effort not grades. The honor pass allows students to leave the classroom for specific purposes, library, bathroom, etc. without the teacher's permission."

"We use the multi-age grouping concept with the 7th and 8th graders who are grouped according to schedules for social studies and ability grouped for math and reading."

Low implementation school staff

"We have excellent academic program. However, the effectiveness of the program is totally dependent upon the individual instructor and I believe the middle school concept helps work around this by building on individual strengths (team teaching)."

"This school falls short in the developmental guidance area."

"Socially we do meet the needs of the students. We have an active student center that puts on dances, spirit point days, etc."

"Emotionally we fall short, because little or no nurturing is taking place. Students are basically left on their own."

"We have a strong athletic program that includes both intramural and interscholastic. All students are encouraged to participate."

"We've got student support groups for drug, alcohol abuse and suicide prevention."

"We've got an on-target program for students who are suffering academically."

The third question addressed in the interview was: Is there

anything you don't like about the middle school concept? Some examples of typical responses were as follows:

High implementation school staff

"Need to improve the transition of going from middle school to high school. It's very difficult to try to keep a multi-aged dimension going when you've got the 8th graders constantly being pulled away, getting ready for their high school."

Low implementation school staff

"Problems with some of the speciality areas and also some of the support systems."

"Some areas, such as allied arts have a tendency to be cut from middle school programs."

The fourth question addressed in the interview was: How has teaching in a middle school been unique from your past experience? Some examples of typical responses were as follows:

High implementation school staff

"The middle school lets me use my strengths (academic strengths)."

"I don't feel as isolated as I did in the traditional junior high school."

"Middle school students aren't locked into ability groups for all subjects."

"Middle school encourages more collegiality than in the traditional junior high school especially in house concept."

Low implementation school staff

"Middle school allows for more team teaching opportunities."

"We are allowed to work with the same group of students for a longer period of time."

"More opportunity (and time) to interact with students."

Besides asking the above four questions, the teachers were asked specific questions related to the eighteen middle school characteristics to determine if they were truly being implemented. Responses from the high implementation school as shown in Table 17 indicated that the following middle school characteristics are being implemented: continuous progress, multi-material, flexible schedule, social experiences, physical experiences, intramural activity, team teaching, planned gradualism, exploratory and enrichment programs, guidance services, basic learning experiences, creative experiences, security factor, evaluation, community relations, auxiliary staffing. Student services and independent study were not being implemented.

Examples of some of the teacher comments which indicated implementation of a middle school characteristics follows: Intramural/interscholastic "Both intramural and interscholastic programs are available with the intramural program being open to all students and includes the same sports as in the interscholastic program. All sports have boy and girl teams."

Flexible schedule "Can only change schedule if pre-planned with other team members and it's practically impossible to do on the spur of the moment. With planning time it can be extended."



**Table 17 The implementation of the characteristics as perceived by teachers in the high and low level implementation school interviews. \***

Characteristics	High Implementation School			Low Implementation School		
	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
1. Continuous progress	X	X				
2. Multi-material	X	X	X			
3. Flexible schedules	X	X				
4. Social experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Physical experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Intramural activities	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Team teaching	X	X	X			
8. Planned gradualism	X	X	X			
9. Exploratory & enrichment programs	X	X	X			
10. Guidance services	X	X	X			
11. Independent study						
12. Basic learning experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X
13. Creative experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X
14. Student security factor	X	X	X			
15. Evaluation practices	X	X	X	X	X	X
16. Community relations	X	X	X	X	X	X
17. Student services						
18. Auxiliary staffing	X	X	X			

\* X = implementation

**Team teaching** "We have the house concept, which means that we have four teachers in the academic disciplines work in a house situation."

**Basic learning experiences** "House B is set up to help the student who has remedial problems. Students are sent for specific help in deficient areas. Title I program in Math. Chapter I, a specialist is assigned to work with a student's math teacher and a specialist comes right into the classroom. After school sessions on Wednesday and Thursday for special help open to all students; after hour bus service home is offered on these nights. The bus is used as a positive reinforcement. Students held for detention are not allowed to ride on the special bus service."

**Security factor** "House concept instills a sense of security. It is used as the home base. Students have various adults to choose from, so that they can relate to at least one."

**Community relations** "We have open school board meetings where all the parents are encouraged to come any time to visit the classrooms. We provide parent orientation in the fall and we have a strong parent group."

**Auxiliary staffing** "We have some but not many volunteer parents. We do have Title I aides for reading."

**Creative experiences** "We have a school musical, drama class,

music class, student newspaper and free enterprise day. Social studies and English classes have students set up a company. They then produce a product, advertise their product and then sell their product. And when the project is completed, all of the money the children make is donated to charity."

Evaluation "We have four report cards a year, with informal reports between the formal reports in cases of deficiencies. We also have parent conferences after the first and third reports."

Guidance services "We have guidance period once a week where we show them videos on why it's not cool to use alcohol or to smoke, or driving safely and teenage suicide."

Exploratory and enrichment "We have a varied curriculum, which includes such things as theme days (industry, foreign countries)."

Social experiences "We have after school activities where students have a chance to interact. They can also interact during meetings of their student council and the school newspaper committee."

Planned gradualism "Our students are prepared for the transition from middle school to high school with several orientation programs."

Multi-material approach "Teachers supplement textbooks in their courses with a variety of materials: filmstrips, speakers,

fieldtrips, etc."

Responses from the low implementation school showed that the following middle school characteristics are being implemented: basic learning experiences, creative experiences, evaluation, community relations.

Examples of some of the teacher comments which indicated implementation of the middle school characteristics follow:  
Guidance services "We have student support groups for drug and alcohol abuse and suicide prevention, and we provide the 'on-target program' for students who are suffering academically."

Physical experiences/intramural "We have a wide range of classes from gymnastics to square dancing and body conditioning. We also have an adapted physical education program for students who are less coordinated. We have two basketball teams at the 8th grade level: 2 girls, 2 boys teams."

Creative experiences "Our journalism class produces the school newspaper once a quarter. We have a drama class that puts on a school wide play and a school musical and a music program that runs most of the winter."

Evaluation "We have four 9 week report cards and parent conferences are on a first come first serve basis because we don't have enough slots for all parents."

Community relations "We have an active volunteer group and an

open door policy to all in the community."

Basic learning experiences "We have remedial reading, math and the 'on-target program' which was initially intended to be for a student of average intelligence who just really wasn't making it, but they didn't qualify for the LD program, and weren't special ed, but they were having trouble, and would possibly be the drop out student at the high school level."

Social experiences "We have an active student center which holds dances and spirit point days. We have a student center advisor (teacher) in the building."

### Discussion of Interview Findings

The teacher interviews resulted in each school retaining its rating as either a low or high implementation school. The more successful school, particularly the one functioning as a true middle school, was differentiated from the less successful school by the level of implementation of the basic eighteen middle school characteristics.

The high implementation school did in fact implement the following middle school characteristics: continuous progress, multi-material, flexible schedule, social experiences, physical experiences, intramural activity, team teaching, planned gradualism, exploratory and enrichment programs, guidance

services, basic learning experiences, creative experiences, security factor, evaluation, community relations, auxiliary staffing. Student services and independent study were not being implemented.

The low implementation school remained as a low implementation school which was borne out by the interviews. They implemented the following middle school characteristics: social experiences, physical experiences, intramural activity, basic learning experiences, creative experiences, evaluation, community relations.

### **Summary**

Findings related to the thirteen objectives posed in the study were presented in this chapter. All thirteen objectives addressed the presence or absence of differences as related to the eighteen basic middle school characteristics.

With regard to objective I, no discrepancies were found between the superintendents, principals and teachers responses. They each indicated the same twelve middle school characteristics as being implemented at, or above the 50 percent level and the same six characteristics below the 50 percent level of implementation.

With regard to objective II, female and male teachers indicated that thirteen of the characteristics were at, or above the 50 percent level of implementation. No discrepancies were found between male and female responses.

With regard to objective III, the superintendents, principals and teachers of schools housing grades 5-8 indicated the same

thirteen middle school characteristics as being implemented at or above the 50 percent level of implementation while five of the characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation.

With regard to objective IV, the female teachers of the middle school housing grades 5-8 indicated that twelve of the characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation and male teachers indicated that ten of the characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Discrepancies found between female and male responses included: planned gradualism, creative experiences, flexible schedule, exploratory and enrichment.

With regard to objective V, the superintendents of schools housing grades 6-8 indicated that ten of the middle school characteristics were implemented at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Principals and teachers responses indicated thirteen characteristics were at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Discrepancies found between superintendents, principals and teachers were: flexible schedule, team teaching and planned gradualism.

With regard to objective VI, the responses of the female and male teachers of the middle school housing grades 6-8 indicated thirteen of the characteristics at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Discrepancies found between female and male teachers were: flexible schedule and team teaching.

With regard to objective VII, the responses of the superintendents and principals of schools housing grades 7-8 indicated twelve of the middle school characteristics implemented

at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Teachers indicated ten of the characteristics implemented at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Discrepancies found between superintendents, principals and teachers were: planned gradualism, intramural activity, exploratory and enrichment programs.

With regard to objective VIII, the responses of the female teachers of the middle school housing grades 7-8 indicated eleven of the characteristics implemented at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Male teachers indicated nine characteristics implemented at or above the 50 percent level of implementation. Discrepancies found between female and male teachers were: community relations, social experiences, planned gradualism, flexible schedule.

With regard to objective IX, the average perception of all three groups, schools housing grades 5-8, grades 6-8 and 7-8, indicated that there was only one discrepancy found between the groups. The discrepancy was the middle school characteristic planned gradualism.

With regard to objective X, the average perception of all three groups, rural, urban and suburban, indicated that there were five discrepancies between the groups in relation to the middle school characteristics. The discrepancies were: intramural activity, exploratory and enrichment programs, community relations, flexible schedule, team teaching.

With regard to objective XI, the average level of implementation scores reported by teachers and principals of recent (1-9 years) middle schools in comparison to teachers and



principals of established (10-26 years) middle schools in Wisconsin indicated that there was only one discrepancy between the groups. The discrepancy was flexible schedule.

With regard to objective XII, the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students of the low implementation school perceived the following questionnaire items in the 'very high implementation' (75%-100%) percentile: 1. good education, 9. report card, 12. social experiences, 15. planned gradualism/transition. The following questionnaire item was perceived in the 'high implementation' (51%-74%) percentile: 3. independent study. The following questionnaire items were perceived in the 'low implementation' percentile (10%-50%): 5. team teaching, 13. community relations, 14. exploratory and enrichment programs, 17. continuous progress, 18. flexible schedule. Discrepancies in the following questionnaire items were: 2. multi-material, 4. guidance services, 6. student security factor, exploratory and enrichment programs, 8. independent study, auxiliary staffing, 16. intramural activity.

The high implementation school perceived the following questionnaire items in the 'very high implementation' (75%-100%) percentile: 1. basic learning experiences, 2. multi-materials, 3. independent study, 5. team teaching, 7. exploratory and enrichment programs, 9. evaluation, 12. social experiences, 15. planned gradualism and the following questionnaire item in the 'low implementation' (10%-50%) percentile: 18. flexible schedule. Discrepancies were found in the following questionnaire items: 4. guidance services, 6. student security factor, 8. independent study, 10. guidance services/student services, 11. auxiliary staffing, 13.

community relations, 14. exploratory and enrichment programs, 16. intramural activity, 17. continuous progress.

With regard to objective XIII, teacher interviews were compared with the school rating to determine consistency of rankings. It was concluded that there was consistency between the written questionnaires by the teachers and the interviews held. The high implementation school remained as a high implementation school while the low implementation school remained as a low implementation school.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

Chapter V is presented in three parts. In the first section, the study is summarized through a brief review of the background, need, and design of the study. In the second section of the chapter, conclusions are drawn from the findings of the study. The third and final portion of the chapter includes implications and recommendations for future research.

#### **Literature Review**

The literature reviewed addressed the major areas of the middle school movement. Studies regarding middle school characteristics and their implementations were cited.

Various reasons, in many manifestations, contributed to the widespread reorganization after 1960 of the middle years of schooling. Perhaps its early beginning was believed justified because of the changes in the levels of maturation for adolescents, demands of a changing society, and in general, the dissatisfaction of many parents and educators with the junior high school and its similarity to the senior high school.

The early literature of the new middle school placed greater emphasis on the age group function than had been true of early

junior high programs. The early and continuing publications on the middle school have given great emphasis to the need for a program devoted to the in-between (childhood and adolescence) years, the period Eichhorn (1966) named "transescence" and which was described in Chapter II.

Educators have generally agreed that the educational programs of our public schools should be designed and developed to meet the needs of each child at each stage of his/her development. The middle school is an attempt to provide a program based on the unique needs of students from ten to fourteen years old. To implement a program specifically designed for the transescent, each middle school must strive to create a learning environment that is flexible enough to meet the diversity of needs unique to this age group.

As the numbers of middle schools have increased, so has the literature defining and clarifying aspects of middle school programs. Middle school authorities consider that certain characteristics are essential to the middle school concept. However, research to date has noted frequent inconsistency between theory and practice. If more comprehensive planning and evaluation of middle school programs are not forthcoming, the middle school as such may exist in little more than name only.

### **Purpose of Study**

How well are Wisconsin's public schools housing grades 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8 accomplishing this task of providing programs specifically designed for the transescent? This study was

concerned with answering that question. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to determine the current level of implementation of eighteen basicmiddle school characteristics as perceived by superintendents, principals and teachers of selected Wisconsin middle schools.

### **Design of the study**

The study involved a random selection of public schools in Wisconsin housing grades 6-8, 5-8 or 7-8. The study was based upon the superintendents', principals' and teachers' perceptions of the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics in their schools. It was assumed that the respondents were knowledgeable about the middle school characteristics and the level of implementation in their middle schools.

The Wisconsin Educational Directory was consulted and 127 schools were selected which met the criteria of housing grades 6-8, 5-8 or 7-8. A survey instrument originally developed by Riegler was replicated for use in this study. The survey instrument seeking data related to the level of implementation being made of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics was mailed to the principals of the 127 schools housing grades 6-8, 5-8 or 7-8. The total number of survey instruments received by March 31, 1987 was 265. Survey instruments were returned by 59 percent of the superintendents, 60 percent of the principals and 50 percent of the teachers for an overall 54 percent return.

Two schools were selected for a visitation. One school scored

the highest on the survey and the other scored the lowest in the implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. The purpose of the visitation was to observe the accuracy of the responses of the individuals surveyed. Three teachers one from each grade level from each school were interviewed. A comparison was made between the results from the original questionnaire completed by staff members in the school and the interview guide based on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. A random selection of 10 students from each grade level, thirty students from each school, completed a questionnaire on the eighteen basic middle school characteristics.

### **Conclusions**

In this section, conclusions drawn from the findings of the study as reported in Chapter IV are first offered in relation to each of the thirteen objectives. Additional conclusions are then offered in relation to the various patterns of similarities and differences evident within the data.

Conclusions related to each of the objectives are offered below.

**Objective I:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools in Wisconsin.

**Conclusion 1:** Superintendents, principals and teachers reported the same twelve middle school characteristics at, above or below the 50 percent level. The six characteristics that were included

below the 50 percent level included: flexible schedule, independent study, intramural activity, team teaching, auxiliary staffing and continuous progress. Teachers ranked the lowest percentage scores on nine of the characteristics. It is concluded that administrators (superintendents and principals) perceived more characteristics as being implemented a higher percentage of the time in their middle schools. (Table 3)

Objective II: To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, in Wisconsin.

Conclusion 2: Among the thirteen characteristics that both groups rated at or above the 50 percent level of implementation, female teachers scored highest on twelve of the eighteen characteristics and lowest on six characteristics. Male teachers scored highest on six characteristics and lowest on twelve characteristics. It is concluded that female teachers perceive more middle school characteristics as being implemented in their middle schools than male teachers.

(Table 4)

Objective III: To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.

Conclusion 3: Teachers had the lowest scores on twelve of the

eighteen basic middle characteristics and the highest score on one of the characteristics. Superintendents had the highest score on fifteen of the characteristics and the lowest score on one. Principals scored highest on three characteristics and lowest on five characteristics. It is concluded that administrators (superintendents and principals), of schools housing grades 5-8, scored higher than teachers in their perceptions of the implementation of the middle school characteristics in their schools. (Table 5)

Objective IV: To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 5-8, in Wisconsin.

Conclusion 4: Male teachers rated ten of the middle school characteristics at or above the 50 percent level while eight of the characteristics were below the 50 percent level of implementation. Female teachers rated twelve of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics at or above the 50 percent level. The discrepancies found between the female and male teachers were in planned gradualism, exploratory and enrichment programs, creative experiences and flexible schedules. (Table 6)

Objective V: To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.



**Conclusion 5:** The level of implementation as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers found four discrepancies. The discrepancies were: team teaching, flexible schedule, planned gradualism, exploratory and enrichment programs. (Table 7)

**Objective VI:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 6-8, in Wisconsin.

**Conclusion 6:** Male teachers had the lowest scores on twelve and the highest scores on five of the characteristics. Female teachers had the highest scores on thirteen and lowest on five of the characteristics. It is concluded that female teachers in schools housing grades 6-8, perceive more middle school characteristics as being implemented a higher percentage of the time in their middle schools than male teachers. (Table 8)

**Objective VII:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by superintendents, principals and teachers, of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

**Conclusion 7:** There was consistency between all three groups, superintendents, principals, and teachers in reporting the middle school characteristics except for two characteristics, intramural activity, superintendents (51%), principals (41%) and teachers (42%), and planned gradualism, superintendents (39%), principals (54%) and teachers (48%). (Table 9)

**Objective VIII:** To measure the degree of implementation, as reported by female and male teachers of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics practiced by selected middle schools, housing grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

**Conclusion 8:** Male teachers had the lowest scores on fourteen and the highest scores on four of the characteristics. Female teachers had the highest scores on fourteen and lowest on four of the characteristics. It is concluded that female teachers in schools housing grades 7-8, perceive more characteristics as being implemented a higher percentage of the time in their middle schools than male teachers. (Table 10)

**Objective IX:** To compare the average level of implementation score reported by schools housing grades 5-8, grades 6-8 and grades 7-8, in Wisconsin.

**Conclusion 9:** There was consistency in the level of implementation in schools housing grades 5-8, grades 6-8 and grades 7-8, except for one middle school characteristic, planned gradualism. As grade level configuration decreased from four to two grade levels so did the implementation of the middle school characteristic planned gradualism. (Table 11)

**Objective X:** To compare the average level of implementation scores reported by rural, urban and suburban middle schools in Wisconsin.

**Conclusion 10:** There was consistency in the level of implementation in all three groups; rural, urban and suburban middle schools except

for five middle school characteristics. The discrepancies were found in the following: intramural activity, exploratory & enrichment programs, community relations, flexible schedule, team teaching. The rest of the characteristics were either at, above, or below the 50 percent level. Urban and suburban middle schools consistently scored the implementation of the middle school characteristics at a higher percentage rank than rural middle schools. (Table 12)

Objective XI: To compare the average level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics by teachers and principals of recent (1-9 years) middle schools in comparison to teachers and principals of established (10 or more years) middle schools in Wisconsin.

Conclusion 11: Middle schools in existence for 1-9 years had the lowest scores on twelve of the characteristics and the highest score on six characteristics. Middle schools in existence for 10-26 years had the lowest score on six of the characteristics and the highest score on twelve of the characteristics. It is concluded that established schools (10-26 years) perceived that more middle school characteristics are implemented in their schools. One explanation for this could be that they have been in existence longer as a middle school. (Table 13)

Objective XII: To determine the level of implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics as perceived by a random selection of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the low

implementation school and the high implementation school.

**Conclusion12:** With regard to objective 14, the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students of the low and high implementation school perceived as 'very high implementation' (75%-100%) the following items: 1. basic learning experiences, 9. evaluation practices, 12. social experiences, 15. planned gradualism. The discrepancies in the 'very high implementation' level were that the high implementation school also ranked the following characteristics 'very high': 2. multi-material, 3. independent study, 5. team teaching, 7. exploratory and enrichment. The low implementation school perceived as 'high implementation' (51%-74%) the following item: 3. independent study. While both schools ranked 18. flexible schedule, as 'low implementation' (0%- 50%), the low implementation school also ranked the following characteristics as 'low implementation': 5. team teaching, 13. community relations, 14. exploratory and enrichment programs, 17. continuous progress. The same discrepancies in both schools were found in the following items: 4. guidance, 6. student security factor, 8. independent study, 10. guidance, 11. auxiliary staffing, 16. intramural activity. In addition the low implementation school also had discrepancies in the following: 2. multi-material, 7. exploratory and enrichment. The high implementation school also had discrepancies in the following: 13. community relations, 14. exploratory and enrichment programs, 17. continuous progress. In comparing the staff responses to student responses, the staff perceived more characteristics as being implemented in both the low and high schools. (Tables 15 and 16).

**Objective XIII:** To compare teacher interviews with their rating of the middle school characteristics on the questionnaire to determine consistency between them.

**Conclusion 13:** Teacher interviews were consistent with the questionnaire findings. High implementation of the eighteen basic middle school characteristics remained at this level as perceived by the teachers in the high implementation school. Low implementation of the basic eighteen middle school characteristics remained at this level as perceived by the teachers in low implementation schools. (Table 17)

### **Discussion**

The following characteristics were consistently rated at the low level of implementation by all groups: auxiliary staffing, continuous progress, independent study, intramural activity, team teaching. There are numerous explanations for the schools' failure to implement all of the eighteen middle school characteristics. One possible explanation may be in the lack of understanding and ability to deal with the change process. Various reasons have been stated for the difficulty that many schools encounter when they try to change existing programs. Support for this explanation is found in the conclusions indicating that certain middle school characteristics are implemented more often because they are probably those which call for the least amount of effort to implement, while the middle school characteristics with the lowest level of implementation are more difficult to implement for various reasons. For example, in implementing multi-material and physical

experiences one would not expect much resistance from the faculty and community because the implementation of these examples of the middle school characteristics do not require drastic changes in the roles of faculty members. Also, chances are great that these characteristics have been a part of the school program from the beginning.

At the other end of the implementation spectrum is the process of implementing continuous progress, flexible schedules, team teaching, exploratory and enrichment programs based on students' interests and hobbies which would require the faculty and community to extensively redefine the educational process. New roles would have to be adopted. The change process would most likely be complicated and brought about through resistance. The final results are that these middle school characteristics are implemented less frequently for various reasons.

Another explanation could be that the lack of funds often prohibits the hiring of the professionals and para-professionals needed to implement an outstanding middle school program. This statement is supported by the low percentage level of implementation of the following characteristics: auxiliary staffing, continuous progress, independent study, intramural activity, and team teaching. It was found that most schools did not employ teacher aides or clerical aides to help teachers. Lack of funds also influences the development of the much needed inservice programs necessary to provide knowledge of the eighteen middle school characteristics and middle school ideology, thus affecting their level of implementation.

Middle school certification for teachers and administrators may be an effective way to increase the level of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics and develop the middle school program. Historically, the middle/junior high school has often been called the "school without teachers" because there is no middle level certification and accompanying training programs designed specifically for the teacher of transescents. At present there is progress being made toward the establishment of a middle level certification for teachers in Michigan and other states.

By establishing middle level certification and training programs designed specifically for the middle school personnel, it is hoped that it will meet the challenge of increasing the level of understanding of the middle school concept. If such a certification were established for middle schools it would instill a requirement at the middle level to implement programs designed specifically for the transescent.

From the findings it was generally concluded that whether a middle school houses two, three or four grades is not significantly related to the level of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics by grades 6-8, 5-8 and 7-8 public schools in Wisconsin. This conclusion is supported by the data shown in Table 11.

In summary, two conclusions are supported by the findings of this study. First, in general, the grades 6-8, grades 5-8 and grades 7-8 public schools in Wisconsin have not implemented the eighteen middle school characteristics to a great degree. Second, in general, whether a middle school houses two, three or four grade levels is

not significantly related to the overall level of implementation of the eighteen middle school characteristics. However, noticeable differences in the level of implementation of the characteristics such as team teaching, exploratory-enrichment studies, and planned gradualism tend to indicate that in grade 5-8 public schools, grades 5-6 are often treated as one entity and grades 7-8 as another entity.

### **Implications**

In the past, opinions and speculations were the only means of determining how well middle schools in Wisconsin were implementing the eighteen basic middle school characteristics. Through this study, empirical information has been obtained and presented as to how well the eighteen characteristics are implemented in the schools surveyed. The levels of implementation reported in this study will retain value over a period of time as reference points for other studies and information for educators in the State of Wisconsin.

The findings of the study show that superintendents, principals and teachers were not in agreement on the level of implementation of some of the characteristics, such as creative experiences. These discrepancies could be brought about by the lack of involvement of each group in in-service efforts within the school district. There is a lack of consistency between principals and teachers in their responses which indicated a need for more open communication channels. An effective school is one in which the principal and teachers work together. If a school is going to



become a middle school then it seems imperative that there be far more dialogue between administrators and teachers toward a common understanding of what is to be included in the school program. The interviews also indicated that there was a lack of common understanding of curriculum, scheduling procedures, and definitions of some of the eighteen basic characteristics.

Emphasis needs to be placed on achieving a much higher level of implementation of the eighteen basic characteristics. One approach to increase the level of implementation, not only in Wisconsin but throughout the United States, is through staff development. In establishing middle school programs that are appropriately responsive to the needs of adolescents, it is essential that an ongoing staff development program be an important ingredient in the total effort of these schools. Middle schools, because of the changing nature of their students, must be on an ever moving cycle of self-renewal.

Finally, the middle school concept and its basic characteristics have been well defined in the literature. The challenge facing middle school educators is the implementation of the basic characteristics in the middle schools throughout the country.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

The wide discrepancy between the basic middle school concept and current middle school practice should be cause for concern about the future direction of the middle school in Wisconsin.

1. This study reports only one point in time, a replication of this study in the Wisconsin schools in the near future would provide a measure of the progress being made toward full implementation of a middle school program.

2. There is a need to compare the middle school programs in Wisconsin with other middle schools in the United States. This information would provide data on how Wisconsin middle schools compare with middle schools in other states.

3. This study was designed to measure the degree of implementation of basic middle school characteristics. A need exists to determine the quality of application. All the respondent schools in this study made some degree of implementation of the eighteen characteristics when considered as a group. When considered individually, some schools were making slight application of some characteristics, while others were making no application of the same characteristics. Several schools, however, were substantially implementing most of the eighteen characteristics. It would be worthwhile to investigate what factors caused this increased implementation.

4. As there is a discrepancy between the basic middle school characteristics as described in the literature and as implemented in grades 6-8, grades 5-8 and grades 7-8 public schools in Wisconsin, a need exists to determine the reasons for the failure of many schools to implement the basic characteristics of middle schools.

5. Another area of research that would provide needed information would be a study designed to provide an indication of the level of knowledge middle school teachers and administrators have of the middle school concept.

6. It is interesting that administrators (superintendents and principals) scored higher than teachers in their perceptions of the implementation of the middle school characteristics in their schools. A study to determine the reasons for these differences would provide information to schools concerning communication and understanding of the total middle school program in their district.

7. The approach to training students is different for elementary trained and secondary trained teachers. A study to determine if there is a difference between elementary and secondary trained teachers in adapting and implementing the middle school ideology would also be of value.

8. Only public schools designated as middle schools and housing grades 5-8, grades 6-8 and grades 7-8 were included in the sample. It would be significant to determine if these schools are making a much higher degree of application of middle school characteristics than those schools maintaining a junior high school identification.

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **LETTERS**

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING  
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)  
238 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
(517) 355-2186

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1046

March 26, 1987

Ms. Sara Magana  
1539 A Spartan Village  
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Dear Ms. Magana:

Subject: Proposal Entitled, "A Study to Determine the Current Level  
of Implementation of Eighteen Basic Middle School  
Characteristics as Reported by Teachers, Principals and  
Superintendents in Selected Wisconsin Middle Schools"

UCRIHS' review of the above referenced project has now been completed. I am pleased to advise that since the reviewer's comment has been satisfactorily addressed, the conditional approval given by the Committee at its March 2, 1987 meeting has now been changed to full approval.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval prior to March 2, 1988.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by the UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notified promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Henry E. Bredeck, Ph.D.  
Chairman, UCRIHS

HEB/jms

cc: Dr. Louis Romano

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION  
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1034

## LETTER TO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS TO ACCOMPANY QUESTIONNAIRES

February 23, 1987

Dear Teachers and Administrators,

I am currently working on a Ph.D. in Educational Administration at Michigan State University and have chosen middle schools as my dissertation topic. I am asking superintendents, principals and teachers from selected middle schools in the state of Wisconsin to complete the enclosed questionnaire(s). I need your help, knowledge and expertise in filling out this questionnaire.

Your school has been selected randomly from the Wisconsin school directory to participate in this study regarding middle schools. This is voluntary and you have the right to refuse to participate with no penalty. Your assistance and cooperation in conducting this study would be greatly appreciated. The selection criteria for teachers are that there be one female and one male selected randomly by the principal. Since this is voluntary teachers chosen randomly have the right to refuse to participate.

**SUPERINTENDENTS:** Please fill out the questionnaire for middle schools and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

**PRINCIPALS:** Three questionnaires are enclosed, one for principals to complete and the other two to be completed by one female and one male TEACHER selected at random by the principal. The results should be returned in the enclosed self-addressed envelopes.

**PLEASE RETURN ALL QUESTIONNAIRES WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK.**

If you would like to receive a summary of the results please indicate by filling in the space provided on the separate sheet attached to the questionnaire.

I would like to thank you in advance for your interest and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Sara Magaña

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION  
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1034

## FOLLOW-UP LETTER

March 13, 1987

Dear Teachers and Administrators,

Recently you should have received a letter and questionnaire about middle schools. Your response is important to this study therefore I am enclosing additional questionnaires.

**SUPERINTENDENTS:** Please fill out the questionnaire for middle schools and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

**PRINCIPALS:** Three questionnaires are enclosed, one for principals to complete and the other two to be completed by one female and one male TEACHER selected at random by the principal. The results should be returned in the enclosed self-addressed envelopes.

Please take some time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. A prompt response from all superintendents, principals and teachers is critical to the success of this project.

**PLEASE RETURN ALL QUESTIONNAIRES WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK.**

I would like to thank you for your interest and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Sara Magaña



## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION  
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1034

**LETTER TO PRINCIPALS FOR SCHOOL VISITATION**

April 30, 1987  
Sara Magaña  
1529A Spartan Village  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
517-355-2976

\_\_\_\_\_, Principal  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Principal,

In a few days I will be contacting you by telephone to request your permission to carry out a continuation of a research project your school participated in earlier this year. The title of the project is "A Study to Determine the Current Level of Implementation of Eighteen Basic Middle School Characteristics as Perceived by Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents in Selected Wisconsin Middle Schools."

There are 3 phases to the study:

- I: Questionnaires which were sent to selected middle schools.
- II: On-site school visitations.
- III: On-site interviews with 3-4 teachers and a questionnaire to be administered to 30 students (10 students from each grade level).

Your school has been selected as one of two schools in Wisconsin I would like to visit and continue with phase 2 and 3 in the study. Enclosed please find a copy of the interview format and the student questionnaire for your inspection and consideration.

Your participation in the continuation of this project would be greatly appreciated. I look forward to talking with you in a few days.

Respectfully,

Sara Magaña

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

**A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF  
IMPLEMENTATION OF EIGHTEEN BASIC MIDDLE SCHOOL  
CHARACTERISTICS AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS  
AND SUPERINTENDENTS IN SELECTED WISCONSIN MIDDLE  
SCHOOLS**

**A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND  
SUPERINTENDENTS OF SELECTED MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

**PLEASE RETURN IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO:**

**SARA MAGAÑA/DR.L. ROMANO  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
ERICKSON HALL, 419  
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN 48824**

**General Information: (CONFIDENTIAL)****Title of Respondent:**

(Check one)

Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**Sex:**    ☐ Female                      ☐ Male**Age:**    ☐ 21-24    ☐ 25-29    ☐ 30-34    ☐ 35-39    ☐ 40-44    ☐ 45-49  
                 ☐ 50 & above.**Please place a check mark before the grades served by your school:**☐ 5            ☐ 6            ☐ 7            ☐ 8**Number of years as a middle school?**                      \_\_\_\_\_**School District:**            ☐ Rural            ☐ Urban            ☐ Suburban**If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please include name and address.**


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Your response to all questions will be greatly appreciated.  
All respondents can be assured of COMPLETE ANONYMITY.  
Please feel free to make additional comments when  
believed necessary.

**Part I:** Place a check mark before the  
SINGLE BEST answer that explains your  
current program as it relates to the  
question.

1-A. Continuous progress programs (A non  
graded program which permits students to  
progress at their own educational pace  
regardless of their chronological age.) are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not used at this time.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2) used with special groups.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3) used for the first two years.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4) used by selected students.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (5) used by all students.

2-A. Continuous progress programs are  
planned for a student over a CALENDAR  
year span of:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not used.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2) one year.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3) two years.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4) three years.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (5) more than three years.

3-A. The multi-textbook approach to  
learning is currently:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not used.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2) used in a FEW courses.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3) used in MOST courses.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4) used in NEARLY ALL courses

4-B. The instructional materials center in  
this building houses:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) 1000 books or less.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2) 1001 to 3000 books.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3) 3001 to 4000 books.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4) 4001 to 5000 books.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (5) more than 5000 books.

5-B. The materials center has a paid  
certified librarian:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) no.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2) part-time only.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3) one full-time.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4) more than one full-time.

6-B. For classroom instruction, AUDIO  
VISUAL MATERIALS other than motion  
pictures are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not used.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2) rarely used.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3) occasionally used.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4) frequently used.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (5) very frequently used.

7-C. The basic time module used to build the schedule is:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) 10 to 29 minutes.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 30 to 44 minutes.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 45 to 59 minutes.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 60 minutes.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (5) a combination of time  
 \_\_\_\_\_ so diversified that no basic  
 \_\_\_\_\_ module is defined.

8-C. Which of the below best describes your schedule at present:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) traditional.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) traditional, modified by  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "block-time," "revolving  
 \_\_\_\_\_ period," or other such  
 \_\_\_\_\_ regularly occurring  
 \_\_\_\_\_ modifications.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) flexible to the degree that  
 \_\_\_\_\_ all periods are scheduled  
 \_\_\_\_\_ but are not identical in  
 \_\_\_\_\_ length.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) flexible to the degree that  
 \_\_\_\_\_ changes occur within  
 \_\_\_\_\_ defined general time limits.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (5) flexible to the degree that  
 \_\_\_\_\_ students and teachers control the daily time usage  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and changes occur  
 \_\_\_\_\_ regularly.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (6) other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9-D. How are sponsorships for club activities handled?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) staff members DO NOT work  
 \_\_\_\_\_ with club activities.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) staff members are ASSIGNED  
 \_\_\_\_\_ WITHOUT PAY.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) staff members are ASSIGNED  
 \_\_\_\_\_ WITH PAY.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) staff members VOLUNTEER  
 \_\_\_\_\_ WITHOUT PAY.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (5) staff members VOLUNTEER  
 \_\_\_\_\_ AND ARE PAID.

10-D. What percent of your student body regularly participates in at least one club activity?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) we have no club program.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 25% or less.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 26% to 50%.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 51% to 75%.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (5) 76% to 100%.

11-E. How is the physical education program individualized?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not at all.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) slightly.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) moderately.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) highly.

12-F. Inter-scholastic competition is:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) not offered.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) offered in one sport only.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (1) offered in two or more  
 \_\_\_\_\_ sports.

13-F. Intramural activities often use the same facilities as interscholastic activities. When this causes a time conflict, how do you schedule?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) we have no INTRAMURAL program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) interscholastic activities take first priority and others must schedule around their needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) we have no INTERSCHOLASTIC PROGRAM
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) intramural activities take first priority and others schedule around their needs.

14-G. How many students participate in team teaching programs? (Two or more teachers administratively organized to provide opportunities for them to maximize their teaching talents and allow students to interact with teachers responsible for a broad range of subject areas.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) none.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 25% or less.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 26% to 50%.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 51% to 75%.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) 76% to 100%.

15-G. What percentage of your teaching staff is involved in team teaching programs?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) none.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 25% or less.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 26% to 50%.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 51% to 75%.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) 76% to 100%

16-G. How many minutes per day does a student in grades FIVE or SIX average in a team teaching program?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) none.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 40 minutes or less.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 41 to 80 minutes .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 81 to 120 minutes .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) more than a 121 minutes .

17-G. How many minutes per day does a student in grades SEVEN or EIGHT average in a team teaching program.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) none.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 40 minutes or less.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 41 to 80 minutes .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 81 to 120 minutes .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) more than a 121 minutes .

18-H. Which of the following best describes your school program as it evolves from enrollment to completion of the last grade? (i.e., grades FIVE thru EIGHT).

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) completely self contained  
\_\_\_\_\_ and/or completely  
\_\_\_\_\_ departmentalized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) modified departmentalized  
\_\_\_\_\_ (blocktime, core, etc.).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) program moves from  
\_\_\_\_\_ largely self contained to  
\_\_\_\_\_ partially departmentalized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19-I. How many years is ART instruction required for all students.?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) none.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) one year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) two or more years.

20-I. How many years is MUSIC instruction required for all students?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) none.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) one year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) two or more years.

21-I. The amount of student schedule time set aside for elective courses.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) decreases with each  
\_\_\_\_\_ successive grade or, is the  
\_\_\_\_\_ same for all grades or, does  
\_\_\_\_\_ not exist at any grade level.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) varies by grade level but  
\_\_\_\_\_ not in any systematic  
\_\_\_\_\_ manner.

22-J. For what percent of students are guidance services normally available.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 25% or less.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 26% to 50%.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 51% to 75%.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) 76% to 100%

23-J. Guidance staff members:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) never work with teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) SELDOM work with teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) OFTEN work with teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) ALWAYS work with teachers

24-J. Guidance counselors are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not expected to help  
\_\_\_\_\_ teachers build their  
\_\_\_\_\_ guidance skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) EXPECTED to help teachers  
\_\_\_\_\_ build their guidance skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) EXPECTED and REGULARLY  
\_\_\_\_\_ encouraged to help teachers  
\_\_\_\_\_ build their guidance skills.

25-L. Clinics or special classes to treat the problems of students with poor basic learning skills are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) available only to the most  
\_\_\_\_\_ critically handicapped  
\_\_\_\_\_ learners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) available to all students  
\_\_\_\_\_ needing such help.



**26-L. The amount of time provided in the classroom for instruction in basic learning skills:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) remains constant or  
\_\_\_\_\_ increases with each  
\_\_\_\_\_ successive grade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) decreases with each  
\_\_\_\_\_ successive grade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) varies greatly due to  
\_\_\_\_\_ individualization of  
\_\_\_\_\_ program by teachers.

**27-M. Does your school have an official newspaper?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) no.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) yes, and publishes four or  
\_\_\_\_\_ less issues per year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) yes, and publishes five or  
\_\_\_\_\_ more issues per year.

**28-M.. Do students get experiences in creative dramatics?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) no.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) yes.

**29-M. Dramatic productions at this school are produced from:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) does not apply.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) purchased scripts only.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) materials written by  
\_\_\_\_\_ students only.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) materials written by  
\_\_\_\_\_ students and purchased  
\_\_\_\_\_ scripts.

**30-M. This school has oratorical activities such as debate, public address, etc.:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) no.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) yes, as a part of its enrichment program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) yes, as a part of its planned program of instruction.

**31-M. Talent shows are:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not a part of our program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) produced on an all school basis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) produced at each grade level
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) produced at each grade level  
\_\_\_\_\_ with some of the acts entering an all school talent show.

**32-N. In the operational design of this school the role of the teacher as a guidance person is:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) left strictly to the individual teacher's personal motivation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) mentioned to the teacher BUT NOT emphasized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) emphasized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) strongly emphasized.

**33-N. As a general policy, provisions are made for the teacher to provide guidance services:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) no.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) yes, to a limited number.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) yes, to all their students.

**34-N.** How many times per year is a student's academic progress formally reported to parents?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) zero to two times.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) three to five times.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) six times or more.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**35-O.** How many times per year are parent-teacher or parent-teacher-student conferences held on a school wide basis?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not at all.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) once.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) two times.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) three times.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (5) four or more times.

**36-P.** Community service projects by students in this school are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not a part of our program.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) carried out occasionally for a special purpose.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) an important part of the planned experiences for all students.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**37-P.** What is the status of the parents' organization in your school?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) none.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) relatively inactive.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) active.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) very active.

**38-C.** The master class time schedule can be changed by teachers when need arises by:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) requesting a change for next year.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) requesting a change for next semester.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) requesting administrative approval.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) planning with other teachers on a WEEKLY BASIS  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (5) planning with other teachers on a DAILY BASIS.

**39-K.** Students working in independent study situations work on topics that are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) we have no independent study program.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) assigned to them by the teacher.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) of personal interest and approved by the teacher.

**40-O.** Formal evaluation of student work is reported by use of:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) letter or number grades.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) teacher comments written on a reporting form.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) parent-teacher conferences  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) parent-teacher-student conferences.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (5) other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**41-E. What percentage of physical education class time is devoted toward COMPETITIVE TYPE ACTIVITIES:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) 25% or less.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 26% to 50%.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 51% to 75%.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 76% to 100%

**42-E. What percentage of physical education class time is devoted toward DEVELOPMENTAL TYPE ACTIVITIES:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) 25% or less.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (2) 26% to 50%.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 51% to 75%.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4) 76% to 100%

**43-J. Do your guidance counselors offer regular group guidance sessions?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) no.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (1) yes.

**44-K. Independent study opportunities are provided for:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) some students.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) all students.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not provided.

**45-L. Daily instruction in a developmental reading program is provided for:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) poor readers only.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) all students.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (1) not provided.

**PART II: For each question in this section check ALL THE ANSWERS that apply to your school.**

**46-B. Which of the following types of materials are housed in your instructional materials center?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ general library books.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ current newspapers.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ below grade level reading materials.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ current magazines.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ files of past issues of newspapers.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ above grade level reading materials.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ card catalogue of materials housed.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ student publications.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ files of past issues of magazines.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ filmstrips.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ collections (coins, insects, art, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ motion pictures (include if you are a member of central service.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ micro-films.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ overhead transparencies.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ computers.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ditto and/or mimeo machines.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ photo or thermal copy machines.

\_\_\_\_\_ maps, globes and charts.

\_\_\_\_\_ display cases or areas.

**47-D. School dances ARE NOT held for:**

\_\_\_\_\_ grade five.

\_\_\_\_\_ grade six.

\_\_\_\_\_ grade seven.

\_\_\_\_\_ grade eight.

**48-D. A club program for students is offered in:**

\_\_\_\_\_ grade five.

\_\_\_\_\_ grade six.

\_\_\_\_\_ grade seven.

\_\_\_\_\_ grade eight.

**49-F. The intramural program includes:**

\_\_\_\_\_ team games.

\_\_\_\_\_ individual sports.

\_\_\_\_\_ various activities.

**50-I. Students are allowed to elect course of interest from a range of elective offerings:**

\_\_\_\_\_ no.

\_\_\_\_\_ in grade five.

\_\_\_\_\_ in grade six.

\_\_\_\_\_ in grade seven.

\_\_\_\_\_ in grade eight.

**51-I. Electives offered in this building are:**

\_\_\_\_\_ art.

\_\_\_\_\_ band.

\_\_\_\_\_ vocal music.

\_\_\_\_\_ drawing.

\_\_\_\_\_ drama.

\_\_\_\_\_ journalism.

\_\_\_\_\_ foreign language.

\_\_\_\_\_ family living.

\_\_\_\_\_ unified arts.

\_\_\_\_\_ orchestra.

\_\_\_\_\_ wood shop.

\_\_\_\_\_ speech.

\_\_\_\_\_ typing.

\_\_\_\_\_ natural resources.

\_\_\_\_\_ creative writing.

\_\_\_\_\_ computers.

**52-K. How much time would you estimate the average student spends in independent study?**

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) 30 minutes or MORE per day  
in grades seven or eight.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) 20 minutes or MORE per day  
in grades five or six.

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) less than the above.

**53-L.** Students with poor basic skills can receive special help on an individual basis from a special staff member trained to treat such situations in the following areas:

- \_\_\_\_\_ reading.
- \_\_\_\_\_ spelling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ physical education.
- \_\_\_\_\_ mathematics.
- \_\_\_\_\_ grammar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

**54-M.** Dramatic presentations by students are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ not a part of the school program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ a part of the activities program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ a part of certain class activities planned by the teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

**55-P.** In regard to community relations this school:

- \_\_\_\_\_ does not send out a parent news letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ sends out a parent news letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ uses the commercial newspaper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ uses a district wide newsletter to send out information related to this school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

**56-P.** The staff presents informational programs related to the school's functions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ when requested by parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ once or twice a year at regular parent meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ at open house programs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ at regularly scheduled "seminar type" meetings planned for interested parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

**57-Q.** From the specialized areas listed below, check each service which is AVAILABLE to students in your building.

- \_\_\_\_\_ guidance counselors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ school nurse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ school psychologist.
- \_\_\_\_\_ diagnostician.
- \_\_\_\_\_ speech therapist.
- \_\_\_\_\_ visiting teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ clinic services for the emotionally disturbed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ special education programs for the mentally handicapped.
- \_\_\_\_\_ special reading teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

**58-R. Teaching teams are organized to include:**

\_\_\_\_\_ fully certified teachers.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ para-professionals.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ clerical helpers.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ student teachers.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**59-R. Teaching teams are organized to include:**

\_\_\_\_\_ paid para-professionals.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ volunteer helpers from the community.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ student teachers and interns.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ high school "future teachers" students.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**60-D. School social functions are held at this school:**

**During the afternoon:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade 5  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 6  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 7  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 8  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Not scheduled

**During the evening:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade 5  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 6  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 7  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 8  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Not scheduled

**61-E. The physical education program serves all students in:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade 5.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 6.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 7.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 8.

62-F. Intramural activities are scheduled  
for :

**BOYS ONLY**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 6
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 7
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 8
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not scheduled

**GIRLS ONLY**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 6
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 7
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 8
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not scheduled

**THANK YOU SINCERELY FOR YOUR  
ASSISTANCE.**

Please return to:  
**Sara Magaña/Dr. L. Romano**  
**Michigan State University**  
**Erickson Hall, room 419**  
**East Lansing, Michigan 48824**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE**



**Students' Questionnaire**

**Please answer the statements to the best of your knowledge.  
Check one response for each statement.**

**sex:** \_\_\_\_female      \_\_\_\_male      **Grade:** \_\_\_\_5,\_\_\_\_6,\_\_\_\_7,\_\_\_\_8

**Responses:** Yes    No    Don't know

- 1. My middle school is providing me with a good education.**
- 2. My teachers teach in many ways, not just by talking to the class, (e.g. trips, in-class activities, experiments, acting out situations).**
- 3. In class we are often given the chance to work on our own.**
- 4. My teachers seem to understand students my age and their needs.**
- 5. I feel more comfortable in core/team period because I know the teacher(s) and other students well.**
- 6. There is a feeling of care and concern for one another at this middle school.**
- 7. I think my middle school offers a good variety of subjects.**
- 8. This middle school has helped me to develop good study habits.**

Responses: Yes    No    Don't know

9. My report card helps me to understand how well I am doing in my classes.
10. I have talked with the guidance counselor at least once this year.
11. There is always someone available to help me in the library/learning resource center.
12. I participate in school clubs, sports, and/or school interest groups outside of regular class time.
13. My parents are encouraged to contact or visit the school for any purpose.
14. At our middle school we make use of people and places in the community, (e.g. field-trips, speakers or visitors from the community).
15. In general, I feel this middle school has helped me make the change from elementary school.
16. Our middle school offers sport activities in which all students can participate.
17. Students are encouraged to work at their own pace.
18. Teachers can shorten or lengthen class time to work around certain activities.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**Consent Form-Confidential**

**Teachers' Voluntary Interview**

**\*\*\*\*Interviews will be taped. After tapes have been  
transcribed they will be destroyed\*\*\*\***

**Sex:** \_\_\_\_Female      \_\_\_\_Male

**Age:** \_\_\_\_21-24, \_\_\_\_25-29, \_\_\_\_30-34, \_\_\_\_35-39, \_\_\_\_40-44,  
\_\_\_\_45-49, \_\_\_\_50 & above.

**School District:** \_\_\_\_Rural      \_\_\_\_Urban      \_\_\_\_Suburban

### **Teachers' Interview Questions**

1. **What are some strengths of the middle school concept (what do you like about it)?**
2. **How is your middle school meeting the needs of the early adolescent in the following areas: academic, social and emotional?**
3. **Is there anything you would like changed about the middle school concept?**
4. **How has teaching in a middle school been unique from your past experience?**

**In answering the above questions, teachers will be asked to consider the following areas:**

<b>Continuous progress</b>	<b>Multi-material</b>
<b>Flexible schedules</b>	<b>Social experiences</b>
<b>Physical experiences/intramural</b>	<b>Team teaching</b>
<b>Planned gradualism</b>	<b>Guidance services</b>
<b>Exploratory/enrichment</b>	<b>Independent study</b>
<b>Basic skill repair/extension</b>	<b>Security factor</b>
<b>Creative experiences</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Community relations</b>	<b>Student services</b>
<b>Auxiliary staffing</b>	

## ENDNOTES

## **Notes**

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