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SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN

By

John Milton Phillips

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SYSTEM-WIDE
CURRICULUM COUNCIL AS AN AGENT OF CURRICULAR
CHANGE IN SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN
SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN

By

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This study deals with the system-wide curriculum council as an agent for fostering curricular change within a school district. It investigates the membership composition, types of organizational patterns, and the methods and procedures employed by 16 curriculum councils in southwestern Michigan.

School districts from southwestern Michigan were surveyed to determine the existance of system-wide curriculum councils and the availability of council minutes. Sixteen such councils were chosen for study in respect to membership, organizational patterns, methods and procedures, and specific curricular changes attributed to council action.

The curricular accomplishments were grouped into 16 categories and their significance or importance determined through the use of the Likert Scale by 65 curriculum specialists throughout the state of Michigan. As a

result, the 16 accomplishment categories were placed in rank order based upon their Likert Scale ratings and weighted according to their rank. These weighted curricular accomplishments were then used to determine the total mean summation of curricular accomplishments for each council studied.

The characteristics of each council were categorized and the significance or importance of each characteristic was determined by figuring the mean summation of curricular rankings of the councils employing that characteristic.

The data indicated that the membership of the more successful councils in terms of accomplishments consisted of 25-35 members representing 10-14% of the total staff. The average age was 35-39 years with 10-14 years tenure within the school district. Approximately 50 per cent of such council members possessed schooling beyond the bachelor's degree.

A breakdown of the membership showed less than 20 per cent administration, 41-50 per cent secondary teachers, 25-29 per cent elementary teachers, and 11-15 per cent special service personnel.

In the area of organization the more successful councils in terms of accomplishments originated through the efforts of administration and administration and staff and possessed an advisory relationship to

administration and board of education. Leadership was
determined by virtue of position and by volunteers,
while council membership was selected by virtue of
position, by administrative appointment, and by build-
ing elections. Such councils were representative of
the total staff and were served by a chairman, vice
chairman, and secretary.

Procedural data indicated that the more successful
councils in terms of accomplishments had as a main pur-
pose curriculum revision. Such councils were advisory
to administration and devoted an average of 27 hours per
school year to council meetings. They relied upon per-
sonal communication between council members and staff
and their agenda were prepared by a steering committee.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife, Peg, and sons, Mark and Paul, without whose encouragement, understanding, and sacrifices this work would not have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

> In the past, . . . , the administration
> planned the broad outlines of the curriculum.
> More or less . . . planning was based on tradi-
> tion, state laws and regulations, local school
> board rulings, and other uncoordinated forces.
> Specific courses were planned by textbook writers.
> Each of these agencies, in most cases, was quali-
> fied to make its contributions to the planning of
> the curriculum, but the entire process was un-
> democratic and uncoordinated, and has resulted in
> some serious maladjustments in our educational
> program.[1]

Today many forces exist within a school district to

initiate, foster, and develop curricular change. Community

groups, teachers, administrators, boards of education,

state and national professional groups, state departments

of education and local curriculum councils may be such

agents of change.

Although a great deal has been written on curriculum

and curriculum development, little attempt has been made

to evaluate the importance of any particular curricular

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[1]Hugh B. Wood, Foundations of Curricular Planning
and Development (Seattle: Cascade-Pacific Books, 1960),
p. 488.

agent. This study will focus on one such agent, the system-wide curriculum council within a school district. The effectiveness of the curriculum council as an agent for curricular change in a school district is the subject of this work.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is not to develop a model of a council as such, but to determine the ways in which the membership composition of councils, types of council organization, and the methods and procedures employed by councils, facilitate curricular change within a school district.

Council membership was analyzed in respect to the numbers of elementary teachers, secondary teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, and special service personnel. In addition, the average chronological age of the council member as well as the average tenure within the school district was considered. The percentage of total staff represented by the council membership was considered in addition to the percentage of council membership with schooling beyond the bachelor's degree.

Council organization was studied in respect to the methods of selecting council membership as well as the hierarchy of authority within the council and the methods employed in establishing such hierarchy.

In the area of methods and procedures consideration was given as to how the council operates. Methods of initiating and introducing ideas and actions, as well as the implementation of such innovations was studied.

In this study curricular change was assumed when and if the ideas or concepts initiated by the council were accepted by the classroom teacher. If the teacher accepted or was forced to accept through policy the innovations and ideas of the council, it was assumed that the results of this change was reflected in the classroom. No attempt was made to assess the degree of effectiveness of the teacher in employing the change.

Assumptions Underlying the Hypotheses

The study recognized the system-wide curriculum council as a potential agent for fostering curricular change within a school district.

It assumed that curriculum councils vary in their ability to initiate change within a school district.

It assumed that curriculum councils will differ in their organizational patterns.

It assumed that council membership will vary with school districts in numbers and composition.

It assumed that curriculum councils employ various methods and procedures in fostering curricular changes within their school districts.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. The membership composition of system-wide curriculum councils is a significant factor in facilitating curricular change.

Hypothesis 2. The organizational patterns of system-wide curriculum councils affect their ability to foster change.

Hypothesis 3. The methods and procedures employed by system-wide curriculum councils affect their ability to produce curricular change.

Procedure

This study was limited to K-12 school districts of southwestern Michigan with school populations of 1,000 or more according to the 1967 official enrollments. Southwestern Michigan included, Kent, Allegan, Muskegon, Barry, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Cass, St. Joseph, and Berrien counties.

Only curriculum councils which had all grade levels and departments represented were studied. In this way departmental and grade level meetings which were not an outgrowth of the council activities were eliminated.

Since a time lapse exists between the time an idea or concept is initiated by the council and until it is accepted by the individual teacher, the activities of a council were studied over the 1967-1968 school year whenever possible.

The study evolved through eight distinct phases.

Phase I. School districts from southwestern Michigan were surveyed by mail to determine:

1. The existance of system-wide curriculum councils.

2. The availability of council minutes.

Phase II. Personal visitations to such school districts which qualified under Phase I were made to determine:

1. Membership of the council.

2. Organizational patterns of the council.

3. Methods and procedures employed by the council.

4. Specific curricular changes initiated by the council.

Phase III. The list of curricular changes or accomplishments which resulted from Phase II were grouped into sixteen categories.

Phase IV. In order to establish some degree of significance or importance for each of the sixteen categories of accomplishments from Phase III, an evaluative instrument based on the Likert Scale was developed and mailed to curriculum specialists in public schools throughout the state.

Phase V. The sixteen curricular categories of accomplishments were placed in rank order based on the mean summation from the Likert Scale. Each item was then weighted according to its rank.

Phase VI. Using these weighted curricular accomplishments, the total summation of curricular accomplishments for each school district was determined.

Phase VII. The characteristics of the individual councils were categorized. The summation of curricular accomplishments for each school district was used to determine the significance or importance of each characteristic.

Phase VIII. The weighted characteristics were then applied to each of the three hypotheses.

Definitions and Explanations of Terms

Agent of change. A vehicle or means for fostering or initiating change.

Curriculum.

> . . . the curriculum is the result of interaction
> of a complex of factors, including the physical
> environment and the desires, beliefs, knowledge,
> attitudes and skills of the persons served by and
> serving the schools; namely the learners, community
> adults, and educators (not forgetting the custodians,
> clerks, secretaries, and other non-teaching employees
> of the school).[1]

Curriculum council. A group of people, usually educators from a school district, who deliberate on matters affecting the learnings of students in the district.

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[1]Alice Miel, Changing the Curriculum: A Social Process (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1946), p. 10.

K-12 school district. A legally defined geographic area which provides the educational opportunities for children from kindergarten through grade twelve.

System-wide curriculum council. A group whose membership includes representation from all elementary grade levels and secondary school departments within a school district.

Curriculum specialists. Public school personnel directly responsible for curriculum revision and evaluation.

Summary

Chapter I defined the purpose of the study: to determine the ways in which the membership composition of councils, types of organizational patterns, and methods and procedures employed by councils facilitate curricular change within a school district.

The three hypotheses of the study were based on membership composition, organizational patterns, and the methods and procedures employed by curriculum councils.

This chapter also included a brief outline of the methods used in the study and outlined the eight phases.

Also included in this introduction were definitions for such terms as curriculum, curriculum council, system-wide curriculum council, K-12 school district, agent of change, and curriculum specialist.

Chapter II will review the professional literature in the areas of curriculum development with emphasis upon teacher involvement through curriculum councils.

Chapter III will describe in detail the design of the study. Chapter IV will present the data.

The summary, Chapter V, will analyze the results and state conclusions in respect to the three original hypotheses. Recommendations for future study are also included in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

The literature dealing with curriculum development
is voluminous. Emphasis has been placed upon the specific
roles of the assistant superintendent or curriculum co-
ordinator, classroom teacher, student, and parent in
curriculum development. However, not too much attention
has been given to specific agents for curricular change.

Mackenzie established two distinct groups of agents:
direct and indirect.[1] Direct agents, according to him,
included students, teachers, principals, supervisors,
superintendents, boards of education, local communities,
state legislatures, state departments of education, and
state and federal courts. Foundations, industrialists,
the national government, academicians and educationists,
and non-educationists were called indirect agents.

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[1]Gordon N. Mackenzie, "The Social Content of
Curriculum Change," Theory Into Practice, College of
Education, Ohio State University, Vol. I, No. 4
(October, 1962), p. 186.

Need for Teacher Involvement

Literature in the area of curriculum emphasizes

the need for staff involvement if curriculum develop-

ment is to be effective.

Ring maintains that:

> . . . the strongest support for the contention
> that teachers should initiate curriculum change
> is that the classroom teacher has at his disposal
> a source of highly significant data available to
> no one else: an unbroken, lengthy participation
> in the implementation of the curriculum at its
> point of culmination--the classroom.[1]

The importance of teacher involvement in order to

foster behavioral change is stressed by Verduin.

> If a behavioral change is desired, a means
> for personal learning must be incorporated into
> the educational activities of the professional
> educator. . . . Teacher involvement in curriculum
> study means more than just change in content,
> reaching out to include change in participants
> and ways of behaving.[2]

Purposes of Curriculum Councils

Two of the most commonly expressed purposes for

the establishment of curriculum councils are presented

by Zimmerman:

> (1) that of facilitating communication among the
> various buildings and system-wide groups engaged
> in curriculum study, and (2) that of stimulating

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[1]Jerry W. Ring, "Can the Teachers Initiate
Curriculum Change?" Ohio Schools, Vol. XLV, No. 7,
(October, 1967), p. 21.

[2]John R. Verduin, Jr., Cooperative Curriculum
Improvement (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,
1967), pp. 28 and 123.

interest in and awareness of specific system-wide curriculum problems and needs.1

Krug suggests two additional purposes: ". . . to organize the means and arrangements for the study of these problems, and to make recommendations on the basis of each study."[2]

Neagley and Evans further suggest that one of the main purposes of the curriculum council is: ". . . to see that curriculum development activities in the district are sensibly coordinated."[3]

In addition, the curriculum council in Racine, Wisconsin, was charged with the responsibility for planning city-wide in-service programs for teachers.[4]

Size of Curriculum Councils

Thelen suggests that the size of any group should be the smallest in which it is possible to have

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[1]William A. Zimmerman, "Organization and Staffing for Curriculum Improvement," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 232 (November, 1957), p. 126.

[2]Edward A. Krug, Curriculum Planning (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 287.

[3]Ross L. Neagley and N. Dean Evans, Handbook for Effective Curriculum Development (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 143.

[4]Harris E. Russell and Earnest G. Lake, "Curriculum Development from Kingergarten to Grade Twelve," Journal of Education, Vol. 137, No. 3 (December, 1954), pp. 2-3, 30-32.

represented at a functional level all the socialization
and achievement skills required for the particular
activity at hand.[1]

Thirty appears to be the most commonly suggested
size for curriculum councils. Willey presents a strong
case for his "Committee of Thirty" which he feels is
both representative and functional.[2]

In order to attain this size group Zimmerman
suggests:

> In school systems having less than 25 indi-
> vidual building, . . . the Central Curriculum
> Council membership may include one elected repre-
> sentative from each building, plus one or more
> representatives of the central office staff.
> If the school district is large, the system
> can be divided into districts, each district in-
> cluding a high school and feeder schools.[3]

Miel is not so concerned with group size as with
the necessity for heterogeneity. She feels that hetero-
geneous groups have two advantages:

> (1) a heterogeneous group is bound to have more
> evidence of need for change, for, because of
> differences in needs felt and facts possessed by
> members of the group, more problems will come to
> the group's attention; and (2) a heterogeneous
> group is more likely to arrive at solutions that
> contribute to the welfare of all for the reason

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[1]Herbert A. Thelen, "Principle of Lease Group
Size," The School Review, Vol. LVII, No. 3 (March, 1949),
pp. 141-147.

[2]Gilbert S. Willey, "Organizing for Curriculum
Improvement," Educational Leadership, Vol. VII, No. 1
(October, 1949), pp. 43-48.

[3]Zimmerman, op. cit., p. 127.

that different biases will tend to counteract one another. The common denominator reached is likely to serve the interests of the total group.[1]

Membership of Curriculum Councils

It is apparent in reading the literature that the curriculum council should be a democratic organization and the selection of membership to the council should reflect this goal.

Beauchamp states that ". . . in order that the curriculum council might be formed democratically, representatives from as many segments of the population of the school-community as possible should be on it."[2]

Such representatives to the council should be elected, according to Krug, and represent the various teaching levels and buildings within the school district.[3]

In Willey's discussion about the "Committee of Thirty," he suggests two representatives from each school in the district with both primary and intermediate grades represented.[4] Such a group should include principals, supervisors, superintendent of schools, as well as teachers.

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[1]Miel, op. cit., p. 88.

[2]George A. Beauchamp, The Curriculum and the Elementary School (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1964), p. 297.

[3]Edward A. Krug et al., Administering Curricular Planning (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 70.

[4]Willey, op. cit.

In respect to qualifications for council membership Saylor and Alexander suggest:

1. The representative should be elected by the staff, following careful consideration of the functions of the council and its members.
2. The representative should be one in whose ability to report honestly back and forth from unit to council, the staff has confidence.
3. The representative should understand as well as possible the total program of the local unit.
4. Each representative should serve for a term of one year, with mid-year elections in approximately half the units to provide for some continuity in the council.[1]

Organization of Curriculum Councils

Available literature has little to say about council organization. A few of the authors, such as Anderson, speak in generalities: ". . . the organization should be as simple as possible in order to avoid the red tape of going through several channels to get approval for proposed curriculum improvements."[2]

In order to expedite the planning and execution of agenda Willey suggests establishing a steering committee of six council members. In this way better direction of the total council can be given.[3]

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[1]J. Galen Saylor and William M. Alexander, Curriculum Planning for Better Teaching and Learning (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1955), p. 557.

[2]Vernon E. Anderson, Principles and Procedures of Curriculum Improvement (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1965), p. 173.

[3]Willey, op. cit., p. 43.

Chairmanship of the council is usually assumed by the administrator within the school district directly responsible for curriculum coordination. Frequently, however, curriculum councils elect their own chairman from the council membership.

Procedures of Curriculum Councils

The literature in this area is meager. The time for council meetings is varied. Usually councils meet once a month as in Racine, Wisconsin.[1]

After school meetings appear most frequently, but released time or a combination of released time and teacher time are becoming more popular.

Functions of Curriculum Councils

The main function of the curriculum council as stated by Neagley and Evans is that of recommending policy for the instructional program.[2] Such policies should be sent to the superintendent of schools for his approval and subsequently to the board of education.

However, Krug sees the primary function of the council as that of identifying problems of common concern, of developing an awareness for these problems, and of selecting problems for district study.[3]

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[1] Russell, loc. cit.

[2] Neagley and Evans, loc. cit.

[3] Krug, loc. cit.

Anderson expands the functions of the council to include:

1. Formulating a general, over-all policy for curriculum planning.
2. Approving personnel for committees.
3. Considering and recommending areas in which intensive curriculum studies need to be made within a given year or period of years.
4. Recommending the use of school time for committee work as needs arise.
5. Evaluating the curriculum program continuously.
6. Approving curriculum plans and guides for recommendation to the superintendent.
7. Approving committee work for in-service credit.[1]

Summary

This chapter reviewed selected literature in respect to the need for teacher involvement in curriculum planning, the purposes of curriculum councils, the size, membership, organizational patterns, and procedures of such councils.

Although a great deal has been written about curriculum development and the need for teacher involvement, little is specifically directed to the curriculum council as a vehicle for curriculum development.

In general, the main purpose of the curriculum council is to plan for and coordinate the instructional program within the school district.

Thirty members is most frequently recommended for council size. Such membership being elected by and representing the various buildings within the district.

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[1]Anderson, op. cit., p. 174.

Sometimes the school administrator responsible for curriculum development serves as chairman of the council, but just as frequently an elected council member serves in this capacity.

The primary function of a council is to recommend policy to the superintendent of schools who subsequently presents it to the board of education.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter will include a description of the
design of the study, the selection of school districts
to be sampled, and the instruments used.

The study developed through eight sequential
phases. Each of the phases will be discussed in detail.

Phase I

This study was limited to K-12 school districts
of southwestern Michigan with school populations of
1,000 or more according to the 1967 official enroll-
ments. Southwestern Michigan included Kent, Allegan,
Muskegon, Barry, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Cass, Saint
Joseph, and Berrien counties.

These school districts from southwestern Michigan
were surveyed by mail to determine the existance of
system-wide curriculum councils and the availability
of council minutes.[1]

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[1]See Appendix A for sample of the survey instru-
ment, page 57.

Questionnaires were mailed to 48 school districts
in these counties. Forty-four school districts replied
for approximately 92 per cent return.

Of the 44 school districts, 16 were selected for
further study: Allegan, Benton Harbor, Buchanan, Com-
stock, East Grand Rapids, Edwardsburg, Grand Rapids,
Hastings, Kentwood, Niles, Otsego, Plainwell, Reeth-
Puffer, Saint Joseph, South Haven, and Wyoming.

Phase II

Interviews were scheduled with the chief adminis-
trator in each of these 16 school districts to determine:

1. Membership composition of the council.

2. Organizational patterns of the council.

3. Methods and procedures employed by the
   council.

4. Specific curricular changes attributed to
   council action.[1]

Council membership was studied in respect to the
number of elementary teachers, secondary teachers, adminis-
trators, school board members, parents, and special ser-
vice personnel such as librarians, nurses, and con-
sultants. In addition, the average chronological age
of the council member as well as the average tenure
within the school district was considered. The

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[1]See Appendix B for sample of the interview guide,
page 59.

percentage of total staff represented by the council
membership was determined as well as the percentage of
council membership with schooling beyond the bachelor's
degree.

Council organization was studied in respect to
the methods of selecting council membership, tenure of
membership on the council, as well as the hierarchy of
authority within the council and the methods of estab-
lishing such hierarchy.

The methods and procedures of each council were
studied in order to determine the processes of initiat-
ing and introducing ideas and actions as well as the
implementation of innovations.

Only curricular changes that were initiated or
recommended by the council were considered. Committee
action which was not an outgrowth of council action as
well as the work of sub-committees were not studied.

It is interesting to note that, without exception,
all curricular changes accomplished by the councils
studied had to be approved by administration or adminis-
tration and school board. Subsequently, such changes
became policy under which every teacher affected was
forced to comply. Therefore, no attempt was made to
evaluate the significance of the change upon the per-
formance of the individual staff member.

Phase III

As a result of the visitations to the 16 school
districts, 40 curricular changes were determined by the
school administrators to be attributable to council
action. These accomplishments were then grouped into
16 general categories as shown in Table 1.[1]

Phase IV

Obviously not all of these curricular accomplish-
ments were of equal importance. In order to establish
some degree of significance or importance for each of
these 16 categories, an evaluative instrument based on
the Likert Scale was developed and mailed to 65 curriculum
specialists in public schools throughout the state of
Michigan.[2] Those schools that participated in the study
were not included.

Forty-seven completed evaluative instruments were
returned giving a percentage return of 72.3.

Phase V

The 16 curricular accomplishment categories were
placed in rank order based on the mean summation from
the Likert Scale. Each item was then given a simple
weight according to its rank as shown in Table 2.

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[1]No relationship to the number of school districts
studied.

[2]See Appendix C for sample instrument, page 62.

TABLE 1.--Curricular accomplishments attributed to individual councils.

School District	Revised Criteria for Evaluating Curriculum	Additional Courses	Course Revision	Textbook Adoptions	Revised Graduation Requirements	K-12 Program Revision	Team Teaching	Textbook Rental	Revised Philosophy of Education	15-Year Study Plan	Improved Communication Between Home and School	Staff In-service	Experimentation and Research	Additional Staff	Established Study Committee	Provisions for Special Education
Allegan		X	X	X		X										X
Benton Harbor		X	X	X		X	X				X					
Buchanan			X													
Comstock		X				X										
East Grand Rapids		X				X										
Edwardsburg																
Grand Rapids									X					X	X	
Hastings								X								
Kentwood		X	X	X								X				X
Niles		X	X			X							X			
Otsego																
Plainwell																
Reeth-Puffer		X	X	X		X										
Saint Joseph			X	X						X						
South Haven	X															
Wyoming		X	X	X	X											

TABLE 2.--Mean summation, weight and rank of 16 curricular
accomplishment categories.

Category	Mean Summation	Weight and Rank
Development of Staff In-service Programs	4.4	16
Revision of Criteria for Evaluating Curriculum	4.28	15
K-12 Program Revision in a Subject Area	4.19	14
Revision in the District's Philosophy of Education	4.1	13
Provisions for Experimentation and Research in Curriculum Areas	4.08	11.5
Establishment of Curriculum Study Committees	4.08	11.5
Revision of Existing Courses	3.78	10
Addition of New Courses	3.76	9
Improved Communication Between Home and School	3.4	8
Textbook Adoptions	3.2	7
Development of Team Teaching	3.02	5.5
Creation of Special Education Programs	3.02	5.5
Development of a 15 Year Curriculum Study Plan	2.9	4
Revision of Graduation Requirements	2.8	3
Creation of Additional Staff Positions	2.75	2
Development of Textbook Rental Program	1.7	1

Phase VI

This phase involved determining the total degree
of significance or importance of the curricular accom-
plishments for each of the 16 school councils. The
weighted curricular accomplishment categories from
Table 2 were used. By adding the weighted values for
each category that was attributed to that council, a
total summation of accomplishment was determined. The
council with the highest summation was considered to be
the most successful during the time of the study.

Figure 1, page 25, presents the results.

Phase VII

The characteristics of the councils were cate-
gorized so that they could be applied to the three
hypotheses: membership characteristics, organizational
characteristics, and procedural characteristics. The
details of this part of the study will be presented in
Chapter IV.

Using the summation of curricular accomplishments
for each council studied, the importance of individual
council characteristics was determined by figuring the
total mean summation of the rankings of the councils
employing that particular characteristic.

Phase VIII

After determining the relative importance of
individual council characteristics, the data was then
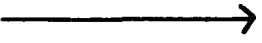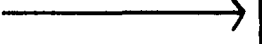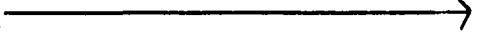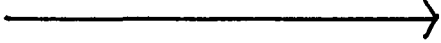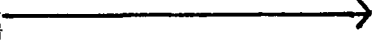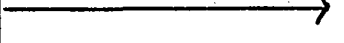
School District	Ranking	
Allegan	53.5	————————————————→
Benton Harbor	24	————————→
Buchanan	24	————————→
Comstock	23	————————→
East Grand Rapids	14.5	———→
Edwardsburg	0	
Grand Rapids	26.5	—————————→
Hastings	1	
Kentwood	47.5	——————————————→
Niles	44.5	—————————————→
Otsego	0	
Plainwell	0	
Reeth-Puffer	40	————————————→
Saint Joseph	17	—————→
South Haven	32	——————————→
Wyoming	29	—————————→

FIGURE 1.--Summation of accomplishment rankings
for individual school districts.

applied to the three hypotheses. The weighted charac-
teristics of membership composition were used to study
hypothesis 1, while hypothesis 2 was analyzed by apply-
ing the data concerning characteristics of the organi-
zational patterns of the councils. Likewise, by using
the weighted characteristics in the area of methods and
procedures, hypothesis 3 was studied.

Details of the applications of data to the three
hypotheses will be presented in Chapter IV.

Summary

In Chapter III the design and procedures for the
study were established and the eight phases were reviewed
in detail.

The Likert Scale was employed to determine the
degree of significance or importance for each of the 16
curricular changes initiated by councils and the councils
were then analyzed as to the curricular changes attri-
buted to their actions. Table 1 presented these changes.

Figure 1 graphically portrayed the summation of
rankings of the 16 school districts based upon these
curricular changes. The total mean summation for the
school districts employing a particular characteristic
was determined by using these rankings.

In Chapter IV the data concerning the importance
of individual council characteristics will be applied to
the three hypotheses.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter deals with the methods for treating

the data and applying them to the three original hy-

potheses. Each hypothesis will be presented with the

appropriate data in a separate section. A brief sum-

mary will conclude each section.

Presentation of Data

Test of Hypothesis 1

The effect of various membership characteristics
upon the significance of curriculum council
accomplishments as measured by the mean summation
of the rankings of the individual councils employ-
ing that particular characteristic.

Table 3 shows the total council membership and the

mean summation of the rankings of the councils using

that number.[1]

Since there is less than one difference between

the two highest groupings, they will be merged. There-

fore the councils with the highest rankings had between

25-35 members.

---

[1]The groupings in Tables 3-11 were based upon the
clusterings of individual councils.

TABLE 3.--Mean summation of total council membership.

Number of Members	N[a]	Mean Summation
35-30	4	34.9
29-25	2	35.8
24-20	2	20
19-15	1	1
14-10	4	27.6
9 or less	3	4.8

[a]The N factor in Tables 2-23 denotes the number of councils involved.

Table 4 portrays the council membership as a percentage of the total staff for that school district and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils involved.

TABLE 4.--Council membership as a percentage of the total staff.

Percentage of Total Staff	N	Mean Summation
25-20	2	38.8
19-15	2	28.5
14-10	3	41.3
9-5	6	8
Less than 5	3	23.3

Apparently the most effective councils in terms
of curricular accomplishments represented 10-14 per
cent of the total staff.

Table 5 presents the percentage of administrators
represented by council membership and the mean summation
of the rankings of the councils involved.

TABLE 5.--Percentage of administrators represented by
council membership.

Percentage of Administrators	N	Mean Summation
50-40	6	19.2
39-20	4	25.4
Less than 20	6	30

Administrative representation on the councils with
the highest accomplishment rankings was less than 20
per cent.

Table 6 shows the percentage of elementary teachers
represented by council membership along with the mean
summation of the rankings of the councils with that per-
centage.

The percentage of elementary teachers on the
councils with the highest curricular accomplishments
was between 25-29 per cent.

TABLE 6.--Percentage of elementary teachers represented by council membership.

Percentage of Elementary	N	Mean Summation
35-30	5	27.3
29-25	2	34.2
24-20	5	31.2
19-15	1	0
14-10	3	.33

Table 7 presents the percentage of secondary teachers represented by council membership and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils with that percentage.

TABLE 7.--Percentage of secondary teachers represented by council membership.

Percentage of Secondary	N	Mean Summation
60-51	3	23.5
50-41	3	36.2
40-31	3	32.6
30-21	4	19.1
20 or less	3	7.6

The percentage of secondary teachers serving councils with the highest curricular accomplishments was between 41-50 per cent. The increase of secondary teachers over elementary teachers on curriculum councils was likely due to the numerous departments at the high school level.

Table 8 shows the percentage of special service personnel (nurses, librarians, consultants) on council memberships and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils employing that percentage.

TABLE 8.--Percentage of special service personnel on councils.

Percentage of Specials	N	Mean Summation
20-16	1	0
15-11	2	32
10-6	3	28.5
5 or less	10	22.7

The above data show that the percentage of specials serving on the councils with the highest accomplishment rankings was between 11-15 per cent.

Table 9 presents the average chronological age of the council member and the mean summation of the rankings of the curriculum councils exhibiting this average.

TABLE 9.--Average chronological age of council member.

Age in Years	N	Mean Summation
50-45	3	21.7
44-40	7	20
39-35	2	39.7
34-30	4	23

Although the greatest number of councils had an average chronological age of 40-44, the most effective councils had membership between 35-39 years of age.

Table 10 shows the average tenure of the council member within the school district and the mean summation of the councils where this is true.

TABLE 10.--Average tenure of council member.

Tenure in Years	N	Mean Summation
18-15	3	24.3
14-10	4	27.5
9-5	9	2.16

Although most of the 16 councils had members who averaged 5-9 years in terms of tenure, members of the councils with the highest curricular accomplishments had between 10-14 years tenure.

Table 11 portrays the percentage of council member-
ship with schooling beyond the bachelor's degree and the
mean summation of the rankings of the councils involved.

TABLE 11.--Percentage of council members with schooling
beyond the bachelor's degree.

Percentage	N	Mean Summation
100	4	16.2
90	1	17
80	2	32
70	4	18.4
60	1	24
50	4	41.2

No council had less than 50 per cent of its
members with work beyond the bachelor's degree. Certifi-
cation requirements and salary adjustments for additional
course work probably account for this high percentage.

Hypothesis 1 was tested by the data in respect to:

1. Total council membership.

2. Council membership as a percentage of total
   staff.

3. Percentage of administrators.

4. Percentage of elementary teachers.

5. Percentage of secondary teachers.

6. Percentage of specials.

7. Average chronological age of council member.

8. Average school tenure of council member.

9. Percentage of council members with schooling beyond the bachelor's degree.

From the data it appeared that total council membership, percentages of total staff, percentages of elementary, secondary, and special teachers, average age of council member, the percentage of members with schooling beyond the bachelor's degree, and years of tenure did affect a council's ability to foster change.

Test of Hypothesis 2

The effect of various organizational characteristics upon the significance of curriculum council accomplishments as measured by the mean summation of the rankings of the individual councils employing that particular characteristic.

Table 12 designates the origin of the individual council and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils in which this was true.

TABLE 12.--Origin of individual councils.

Origin	N	Mean Summation
Administration and Staff	4	33.6
Administration	5	34.2
Negotiations	1	26.5
Master Contract	4	13.9
Master Contract and Citizen Council	1	1
Staff	1	0

Since there is less than one point difference be-
tween the two highest groupings they will be merged.
Perhaps the fact that the most successful councils
originated by administration and administration and
staff guaranteed to a greater extent administrative
support of council actions.

Table 13 presents the method of selecting council
membership and the mean summation of the rankings of
the councils employing that method. The multiple group-
ings are indicative of the variety of ways council
membership is determined.

TABLE 13.--Method of selecting council membership.

Method of Selection	N	Mean Summation
Virtue of Position[a] and Administrative Appoint-ment	4	33.8
Administrative Appointment	1	17
Elected by Building and Virtue of Position	3	30.8
Appointed by Education Association and Virtue of Position	4	11.4
Elected by Building and Virtue of Position and Administrative Appointment	1	40
Virtue of Position and Voluntary	2	23.8
Appointed by Education Association and by Board	1	0

[a]An administrator with curricular responsibilities.

Apparently building elections were not the only means for selecting council membership. Perhaps adequate council direction was guaranteed through administrative appointment and by including administrators with curricular responsibilities.

Table 14 presents the type of council hierarchy and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils employing this type of organization.

TABLE 14.--Type of council hierarchy.

Type of Hierarchy	N	Mean Summation
Chairman-Vice Chairman- Secretary	6	28.1
Chairman-Secretary	10	20.8

Although a larger number of councils had the chairman-secretary type of hierarchy, the councils employing the chairman-vice chairman-secretary type were more effective in terms of accomplishments.

Table 15 shows the methods used in selecting council leadership and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils employing that method.

Although more of the councils elected their leadership, the most effective councils in terms of curricular accomplishments employed other means.

TABLE 15.—Methods used in selecting council leadership.

Method of Selection	N	Mean Summation
Elected by Council	10	18.2
Virtue of Position[a]	2	35.8
Virtue of Position and Administrative Appointment	1	24
Elected by Council and Virtue of Position	1	14.5
Virtue of Position and Voluntary	1	44.5
Elected by Council and Virtue of Position and Administrative Appointment	1	40

[a]An administrator charged with the responsibility of directing the council.

Table 16 presents the council's relationship to the rest of the teaching staff and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils in which this is true.

TABLE 16.—Relationship of council to total staff.

Relationship	N	Mean Summation
Representative	7	32.4
Communicative	3	19
Vehicle for Expressing Ideas	5	18.6
Vehicle for Initiating Change	1	0

It appeared that the most successful councils in terms of curricular accomplishments are representative of the total staff.

Table 17 shows the relationship of the council to the board of education in the school district and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils in which the relationship exists.

TABLE 17.--Relationship of council to board of education.

Relationship	N	Mean Summation
Advisory through Administration	3	36.8
Advisory	9	21.6
Advisory and Communicative	2	22.8
Communicative	1	0
None Defined	1	26.5

Clearly the majority of councils were advisory to the board of education. However, the councils which were advisory through administration were more effective in terms of curricular accomplishments.

Table 18 shows the relationship of the council to administration and the mean summation of the rankings of the councils in which this relationship exists.

TABLE 18.--Relationship of council to administration.

Relationship	N	Mean Summation
Advisory	9	38.3
Vehicle for Change	2	23.5
Advisory and Communicative	3	25
Communicative	1	0

The advisory relationship of the council to administration appeared to be not only the most popular but also the most effective in terms of curricular accomplishments.

Hypothesis 2 was tested by the data in respect to:

1. The origin of the council.

2. Method of selecting council membership.

3. Type of council hierarchy.

4. Method of selecting council leadership.

5. Council's relationship to teaching staff.

6. Council's relationship to board of education.

7. Council's relationship to administration.

From the data it appeared that certain organizational patterns such as origin, relationships to staff, administration, board of education, and the method of selecting council membership did affect a council's ability to foster curricular change.

TABLE 20.--Average number of hours per year spent in council meetings.

Hours per Year	N	Mean Summation
54	1	26.5
36	1	23
27	1	47.5
18	8	19.9
12	1	24
9	3	24

Half of the councils studied spent approximately 18 hours per year in council meetings, but they were not the most effective councils in terms of curricular change.

Table 21 focuses on the method of communicating between the council and the rest of the teaching staff by determining the mean summation of the rankings of the councils employing that method.

TABLE 21.--Method of communicating between council and staff.

Method	N	Mean Summation
Published Minutes	6	14.8
Responsibility of Council Members	5	35.2
Newsletter	1	26.5
Building Principals and Department Heads	4	25.3

TABLE 23.--Authority of the council to initiate change.

Authority	N	Mean Summation
Advisory to Administration	4	31.2
Advisory to Board	4	13.5
Advisory to Superintendent	6	25
Autonomous	2	23.8

The majority of councils studied were advisory.
The councils which were advisory to administration were
more effective in fostering curricular change.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by the data in respect to:

1. The primary purpose of the council.

2. Hours per year spent in council meetings.

3. Method of communicating with staff.

4. Method of preparing agenda.

5. Authority of the council to initiate change
   within a school district.

From the data it appeared that all of these areas
were significant in respect to their effect upon the
curricular accomplishments of councils.

Summary

Hypothesis 1 was tested with the data appearing
in Tables 3-11. The studies focused on the make-up of
council membership including the percentages of ele-
mentary teachers, secondary teachers, administrators,

and special service personnel. In addition, the data
presented analyzed the average chronological age of the
council member, his tenure within the school district,
and the percentage of council members with schooling
beyond the bachelor's degree.

From the data it appeared that certain member-
ship characteristics employed by various curriculum
councils did affect their ability to foster curricular
change.

Tables 12-23 presented data applicable to
hypothesis 2. Organizational patterns of the councils
were studied in respect to their origin, method of
selecting council members, and the type of council
hierarchy. The council's relationships to the teach-
ing staff, administration, and board of education were
also considered.

From the data it appeared that certain organi-
zational patterns employed by various curriculum councils
did affect their ability to foster curricular change.

Hypothesis 3 was tested with the data appearing
in Tables 19-23. Procedural characteristics of the
councils were studied which included primary purposes
of the councils, hours per year devoted to council
meetings, and the method of communicating with the
teaching staff. Included in this area were data focus-
ing on the method of preparing agenda and the authority

of the council to initiate curricular change within the school district.

From the data it appeared that certain procedures employed by various curriculum councils did affect their ability to foster curricular change.

Conclusions based upon the applications of data to the three hypotheses will be presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Introduction

Chapter V will be concerned with an analysis of the results from Chapter IV. It will draw some conclusions which seem warranted through analysis of the data as applied to the three hypotheses.

The last section of the chapter will suggest some related research that might be profitable to pursue as a result of this study.

Analysis of the Results

In analyzing the results it appears that this study involved too many variables that were difficult to isolate and treat independently.

Probably the most serious was in assuming that all councils began at the same stage or level of opportunity for curricular improvement. Obviously, major curriculum revisions were more needed in one school district than another.

In addition, no attempt was made to ascertain the attitude of the staff toward the curriculum council

and its accomplishments. The opinion of the adminis-
trator interviewed would not necessarily be the opinion
of the average classroom teacher.

Hypothesis 1

The variables involved in membership character-
istics were numerous and difficult to isolate and treat
independently. In figuring the percentages of ele-
mentary teachers and secondary teachers on the councils,
it was assumed that each individual had equal ability to
serve in this capacity.

In considering the years of tenure within the
school district for individual council members, it was
assumed that each year was as valuable as another.

The advanced schooling item assumed that all
course work was of equal importance in respect to ser-
vice on the council.

The data did support Willey's theory that thirty
was an ideal size for a committee.[1]

Hypothesis 2

In collecting data in this area, the ability of
the individual in charge of the curriculum council was
ignored. The amount and quality of leadership afforded
a council could affect its ability to initiate change.

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[1]Willey, loc. cit.

The amount of coercion used by this council leader or the degree of resistance on the part of council members to organizational procedures was not considered. Whether these procedures originated from council action or through the prerogative of the chairman could affect the functions of the council.

The criteria for selection of council members employed by the various school districts could affect the ability of the council to initiate change. In many cases council elections were basically popularity polls.

The relationships of councils to staff, administration, and boards of education were the opinions of the administrator interviewed. No attempt was made to validate them.

Hypothesis 3

The primary purpose of the council was not always in writing. Consequently, in some instances, this was the opinion of the administrator interviewed. However, the data did support Zimmerman's second purpose which was creating an awareness of curriculum problems.[1]

In computing the amount of hours per school year only the actual time spent in curriculum council meetings was considered. The efforts of the sub-committees were ignored.

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[1]Zimmerman, loc. cit.

The size of the school district was not considered in determining the method of communicating between council and staff. Consequently, more formal methods, such as newsletters and bulletins, might be more effective in larger school districts.

Some relationship might exist between the authority of an individual council to initiate change and the origin of that council. In some instances such authority was carefully defined in the master contract of that school district.

The data did support Anderson's idea for simplicity in channeling suggested curriculum revision.[1]

Conclusions

Hypothesis 1

The councils with the highest accomplishment rankings had memberships of 25-35 members, representing 10-14 per cent of the total staff. The average age of the member was between 35-39 years and over 50 per cent possessed work beyond the bachelor's degree.

The membership of the councils with the highest curricular accomplishments showed less than 20 per cent administration, 41-50 per cent secondary teachers, 25-29 per cent elementary teachers, and 11-15 per cent special service personnel. Such members had between 10-14 per cent years tenure within the school district.

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[1]Anderson, loc. cit.

Councils with the lowest accomplishment rankings possessed memberships of 15-19 members representing 5-9 per cent of the total staff. The average age of such members was 40-44 years and all of them possessed work beyond the bachelor's degree. A breakdown of their memberships showed administration accounting for 40-50 per cent, elementary teachers 15-19 per cent, secondary teachers 20 per cent or less, and special service personnel 16-20 per cent. Members had between 5 and 9 years tenure.

Hypothesis 2

The councils with the highest accomplishment rankings originated through the efforts of administration and staff and administration. The relationship of such councils to administration and to the board of education was advisory while being representative of the total staff. Council leadership was determined by virtue of position and by volunteers, while the method of selecting council membership was be virtue of position, administrative appointment, and through building elections. These councils were served by a chairman, vice chairman, and a secretary.

Councils with the lowest accomplishment rankings originated through staff efforts and had a communicative relationship to administration and board of education. Such councils served as a vehicle for initiating change

and their leadership was determined by virtue of position and through council elections. The members were appointed by the local education association and by the board of education. Such councils were served by a chairman and a secretary.

Hypothesis 3

The most successful curriculum councils in terms of accomplishments had as a primary purpose curriculum revision. The time spent in actual council meetings was approximately 27 hours per school year. Communication between the council and the staff was the responsibility of the individual council member. Such councils were advisory to administration and their agenda were prepared by a steering committee.

Community liason was the primary purpose of those councils with the lowest accomplishment rankings. Approximately 18 hours per school year were spent in council meetings without benefit of agenda. The results of such meetings were communicated to the staff by means of published minutes. Their authority was advisory to the board of education.

Suggested Research

The origin of individual curriculum councils should be given greater consideration. Whether a council develops through administrative decision or through the

felt needs of the district's staff as evidenced in the
master contract could affect the ultimate curricular
contributions of that council. Conceivably, a district
whose staff must resort to negotiations to affect the
machinery for change could reflect a greater need.
Subsequently, such changes could be more significant
than those produced by councils dominated by adminis-
tration.

Along this same line, a study of the curricular
contributions of councils directed by administrators in
comparison to those chaired by elected staff members
would be worthwhile.

The whole area of teacher attitude in connection
with curricular change needs study. Resistance to such
change on the part of the staff members has an ultimate
effect upon the ability of councils to affect curriculum
revision. Results of such studies would have impli-
cations for teacher training institutions.

In respect to council membership, further analysis
is needed as to the type of schooling beyond the bachelor's
degree. Conceivably those members whose work was directed
toward curriculum improvement would be more effective
members than those whose work was limited to their
academic areas. Also whether the council leadership
was centered among secondary or among elementary teachers
needs to be studied.

Procedural characterictics in respect to the pri-
mary purpose of the council merits further consider-
ation. Whether the purpose of the council was deter-
mined by administration or school board or whether it
was an outgrowth of recognized needs of the council is
significant. Lastly, an analysis of the time spent in
meetings of council sub-committees would give additional
insight as to the leadership exerted by that council
within the school system.

Summary

In analyzing the results it was determined that the
study involved many variables that were difficult to iso-
late.

The data did support some general characteristics
of the councils with the highest and the lowest accomplish-
ment rankings. Table 24 presents these characteristics.

The latter part of the chapter suggested some
areas which would support further study. These centered
around teacher attitude and the role of the adminis-
trator in curriculum development.

TABLE 24.--Comparison of the highest and lowest ranking characteristics.

Highest Rankings	Lowest Rankings
Membership Characteristics	
25-35 members	15-19 members
Represented 10-14 per cent of total staff	Represented 5-9 per cent of total staff
35-39 years old	40-44 years old
Over 50 per cent possessed work beyond the bachelor's degree	100 per cent possessed work beyond bachelor's degree
Less than 20 per cent administration	40-50 per cent administration
41-50 per cent secondary teachers	20 per cent or less secondary
25-29 per cent elementary teachers	15-19 per cent elementary
11-15 per cent special service	16-20 per cent special service
10-14 years tenure	5-9 years tenure
Organizational Characteristics	
Originated through administration and administration and staff	Originated through staff
Advisory relationship to administration and board	Communicative relationship
Representative of total staff	Vehicle for change
Leadership determined by virtue of position and by volunteers	Leadership elected by council and by virtue of position
Membership determined by virtue of position, administrative appointment, and building elections	Membership selected by education association and by board
Chairman-vice chairman-secretary	Chairman-secretary
Procedural Characteristics	
Curriculum revision as primary purpose	Community liason as primary purpose
27 hours per school year in council meetings	18 hours per school year
Advisory to administration	Advisory to board
Council members communicated with staff	Published minutes
Agenda prepared by steering committee	No agenda

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCREENING

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCREENING
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. What is the legal name of your school district?

   _____

2. Do you have a system-wide curriculum council involving all grade levels and departments?

   _____

3. Who is in charge or chairman of the council?

   _____
   Position?_____
   May subsequent correspondence be directed to him?

   _____

4. How long has your council been in operation?

   _____

5. Are the recorded minutes of past council meetings available?_____

6. If necessary, would it be possible to visit your school district on a pre-arranged date and interview the person in charge of the council and/or some of your teachers concerning the activities of the council?_____

APPENDIX B

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. Name of the school district_____

2. Membership:

   a. Total number of members on council_____

   b. This number is _____ per cent of total staff?

   c. Average tenure per council member in this
      school district_____

   d. Per cent of members with schooling beyond the
      bachelor's degree_____

   e. Average age of council member_____

   f. Professional organizations represented by council
      members_____

   g. Number of administrators on council_____

   h. Number of elementary teachers on council_____

   i. Number of secondary teachers on council_____

   j. Number of special service personnel_____

3. Organization:

   a. Officers: chairman_____ vice chairman_____

      secretary_____ others_____

   b. Method of selecting officers_____
      _____

   c. Method of selecting council membership_____
      _____

d. Origin of council_____._____

e. Council's relationship to total staff_____

f. Council's relationship to administration_____

g. Council's relationship to the board of education

4. Methods and procedures:

a. Primary purpose of council_____

b. Average number of hours per school year spent in council meetings_____

c. Method employed in communicating between council and staff_____

d. Agenda?_____ How prepared?_____

e. What authority does the council have to initiate change within the school district?_____

5. What specific curricular changes or activities do attribute to council action over the last year?

a._____

b._____

c._____

APPENDIX C

INSTRUMENT EMPLOYED FOR DETERMINING IMPORTANCE
OF CURRICULAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I am in the process of studying curriculum councils in selected school districts in southwestern Michigan. As a result of this study specific curricular accomplishments have been attributed to council action.

Not all of these curricular accomplishments appear to have the same degree of importance. In order to establish some degree of importance to each curricular accomplishment, persons such as yourself who are in leadership roles in the area of curriculum are being asked to evaluate them on a 1-5 scale.

Numeral 1 designates little or no importance from a curricular standpoint, while numeral 5 denotes extreme importance. The following chart represents the degree of importance attributed to each of the numerals:

1 - not important

2 - slightly important

3 - important

4 - very important

5 - extremely important

Please place a circle around the numeral that you consider to be most indicative of the general importance of the particular accomplishment.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is included for your convenience in returning the completed form.

Your cooperation is sincerely appreciated.

<div style="margin-left:40%">
John M. Phillips
1415 Fisk S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
49506
</div>

Scale: 1 - not important
       2 - slightly important
       3 - important
       4 - very important
       5 - extremely important

1. Revision of the criteria for evaluating the curriculum.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

2. Addition of new course offerings.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

3. Revision of existing courses.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

4. Textbook adoptions.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

5. Revision of graduation requirements.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

6. K-12 program revision in a subject area.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

7. Development of team teaching.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

8. Development of textbook rental program.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

9. Revision in the district's philosophy of education.

    1--------2---------3---------4--------5

Scale: 1 - not important
        2 - slightly important
        3 - important
        4 - very important
        5 - extremely important

10. Development of a 15-year curriculum study plan.

    1--------2--------3--------4--------5

11. Improved communication between school and home.

    1--------2--------3--------4--------5

12. Development of staff in-service programs.

    1--------2--------3--------4--------5

13. Provisions for experimentation and research in
    curriculum areas.

    1--------2--------3--------4--------5

14. Creation of additional staff positions (both
    teaching and supervisory).

    1--------2--------3--------4--------5

15. Establishment of curriculum study committees.

    1--------2--------3--------4--------5

16. Creation of special education programs.

    1--------2--------3--------4--------5

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