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**A case study of how six small town Michigan school districts
responded to the excellence movement of 1983**

Boehme, William Walter, Ph.D.

Michigan State University, 1987

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

A CASE STUDY OF HOW SIX SMALL TOWN
MICHIGAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS RESPONDED TO THE
EXCELLENCE MOVEMENT OF 1983

By

William Walter Boehme

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF HOW SIX SMALL TOWN MICHIGAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS RESPONDED TO THE EXCELLENCE MOVEMENT OF 1983

By

William Walter Boehme

The purpose for this study was to describe and explain how six Michigan school districts in small towns responded to a nationwide thrust for public schools to produce excellence. That thrust, demand, or call for excellence was most clearly seen with the release of the 1983 A Nation at Risk report by the National Commission on Excellence.

The conceptual framework used to explore individual school district responses consisted of seven concepts: initiation, motivation, process, decision making, involvement, plans, and results--actual or anticipated. These concepts were the "vehicle" for understanding and describing how six school districts responded to the excellence movement. This conceptual framework did not grow out of empirical research but was logically developed. The concepts encompass sequential segments of a rationally developed continuum for the process of change. For the researcher, they represented a reasonable, sensible, and sequential way to describe how six Michigan school districts responded to the excellence movement.

The six school districts selected for case studies were located in central Michigan and had enrollments between 1,000 and 4,000 students.

The methodology for developing each case study was that of in-depth interviewing. Two interview procedures were used. Initially, a protocol was developed. Additional areas suggested by responses were explored in subsequent interviews. The researcher interviewed superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, board members, community leaders, teachers, and individuals serving on excellence committees.

Major findings from the study include:

1. Superintendents were the primary initiators of district responses to excellence.
2. The motivation to initiate responses came from needs to solve immediate problems and concerns.
3. The use of committees was the preferred process for addressing the excellence issue.
4. Committees were named as decision makers.
5. Curriculum changes occurred in all six districts after the release of A Nation at Risk.
6. There were no verified achievements, but many accomplishments were attributed to the excellence movement as unverified achievements.

DEDICATION

To my mother and my father, who have loved and cared for me in a very special way. That undying and unselfish love has kept me going.

My father's inspiration has resulted in countless milestones. Dad, this Ph.D. given to William Walter Boehme, is for the one that World War II kept from you.

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My deepest appreciation goes to Ruth Lindman for her gentle inspiration and encouragement. She always knew I would finish. How can I ever repay her for the countless days that she got up at 4:30 a.m. to type and edit an endless number of drafts.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who miraculously answered at least a dozen major prayers.

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Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

Background

The report of the National Commission on Excellence, A Nation at Risk, warned Americans that the nation's schools were in trouble. Like the fabled "shot heard around the world" that report struck with "megaton force" (Boyer, 1983):

. . . the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur--others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments.

The report continued:

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

Not since Sputnik has our educational system been aroused to such a national debate. Like a wind fanning a prairie fire, other school reports, citing various weaknesses in the American educational system, further fueled a storm of reaction and response. Many said "It isn't so. It can't be true." Others almost seemed euphoric in saying, "We told you so" (Boyer, 1983).

No event in recent history has had a larger impact on American education than the A Nation at Risk report.

Although only one among several critical reports, it appeared to be the stone that started the avalanche.

There are some differences in what various organizations see as the major works in providing excellence. The American Association of School Administrators lists the following: The Paideia Proposal, A Nation at Risk, Making the Grade, Academic Preparation for College, Action for Excellence, A Study of High Schools, A Place Called School, Educating Americans for the 21st Century, and High School (AASA, 1984). The Michigan State Department of Education lists all nine of the above reports plus two State commission reports and a report from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in the bibliography of a pamphlet called Better Education for Michigan Citizens: A Blueprint for Action (Michigan State Board of Education, 1984).

The Michigan Association of School Boards identified seven of the above-mentioned nine reports as the Seven Roads to Excellence (MASB, 1983). They excluded The Paideia Proposal and Educating Americans for the 21st Century. For the literature review portion of this research project, eight major excellence reports were selected which, in the researcher's opinion, best represent the excellence movement of 1983: The Paideia Proposal, A Nation at Risk, Making the Grade, Academic Preparation for College, Action for Excellence, A Study of High Schools, A

Place Called School, and High School. All seven identified by the Michigan Association of School Boards were included. Eight of the nine reports identified by AASA were also included. Educating Americans for the 21st Century was excluded because of its limited focus on developing a plan of action for improving mathematics, science, and technology education. It was the intent of the writer to include only those reports dealing with all aspects of the curriculum. Future references will simply refer to the above-named eight as the Excellence Reports.

The combined force of these reports was enough to put education at the forefront. A Nation at Risk stimulated lively discussions and provided front page news about American schools. It centered on the present and future health of schools and the need for the American people to take a deeper interest in their schools (AASA, The Excellence Report, 1983).

During the presidential campaign of 1984, President Reagan and Walter Mondale spoke of revitalizing the nation's schools. Governors, legislators, school board members, educators, parents, business and community leaders were actively involved in enacting fundamental changes in the educational system. These changes were proposed, studied and adopted in thousands of school districts across the country. All 50 states had education task forces. As of early 1984, 44 states were in the process of raising high school graduation requirements: 20 states were

considering a longer school day or year; 13 states were in various stages of adopting master teaching plans; 42 states were reexamining their laws governing teacher preparation and certification; and 36 states were seeking ways to address teacher shortages in such critical fields as science, mathematics, and computer technology (Bell, 1984).

Irrespective of what has been happening at the state and national level, the real test for significance of the excellence movement is to examine what has been happening or possibly not happening in local school systems. The ultimate value lies in what school districts have been or have not been doing about the calls for excellence. There is a strong need to see if school districts have been responding to the demand for change. If they are responding, how and through what processes have they responded? The demand for change (in this case, the call for excellence) has come from the national level through the state level and down to the local level. To meet this call for action, hundreds of commissions, task forces, and committees have been organized from coast to coast. No response has been more broadly based. Every school district has heard and has been touched by that call for excellence. Certainly there can be no question about the significance and importance of this issue.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to describe and explain how six Michigan school districts in small towns responded or failed to respond to a nationwide thrust for public schools to produce excellence. This thrust, demand, or call for excellence was most clearly seen with the release of A Nation at Risk (1983) by the National Commission on Excellence. It was a forerunner with many to follow. Other significant reports were identified in the preceding background material and will be summarized in the literature review portion of this dissertation.

The real test for the excellence movement's significance, which began in 1983, was to examine what occurred in the local school districts. The ultimate value of the excellence movement lies in what school districts have been doing about the calls for excellence. It is important to see whether or not school districts have been responding to this demand for excellence. The writer's purpose is to examine six school districts in small towns and to determine how they have responded to the demand for excellence. If they responded, how have they responded? If they have not responded, why have they not responded?

For the purpose of this study, a small town is an identifiable political entity of fewer than 15,000 people, not adjacent to a metropolitan area, and which has a single secondary school.

Each of the eight major excellence reports, including A Nation at Risk, made specific recommendations for achieving excellence. Many ancillary organizations offered local school districts condensed, consolidated or capsulated forms of the excellence reports. The Michigan State Board of Education provided its interpretation of an excellence program in Better Education for Michigan Citizens: A Blueprint for Action. The plan was developed after a review of major excellence reports. The introductory statement explained:

The content is based upon those reviews as well as the Michigan High School Commission Study; recommendations from study committees in the areas of technology, mathematics and science, foreign language, and certification; a Department of Education statewide public opinion survey; research findings; the overall authority which the State Board has for dealing with specific issues; and the various options or alternatives available to the Board (Michigan State Board of Education, 1984).

The Michigan Association of School Boards prepared a booklet called School Boards Planning for Excellence: A Guidebook for the Study of Selected Excellence Reports. This well-prepared document was designed to assist boards in meeting and implementing individual programs for excellence. It included a consolidated list of recommendations from seven excellence reports. The introductory statement urged boards to study excellence reports and to measure their local programs against the excellence reports' recommendations:

All of us must recognize, however, that the effecting of change in the operation of a school system must result from careful study of what we are presently doing and intensive examination of the impact proposals for change may have. School systems are complex organizations because of the demanding tasks they are expected to accomplish and because of the varying needs and abilities of the students they serve. We must be mindful of these complexities as we develop, implement and monitor plans for excellence. Such plans must be put in place with patience and care. This is not the time for 'quick fix' judgements (NASB, 1983).

In examining the responses of six school districts, the researcher was particularly interested in how the schools used recommendations made by the ancillary organizations mentioned above. The writer sought to determine how widely and to what extent such recommendations were used by the districts. Were recommendations adopted in their entirety or adapted to individual school needs? Did the recommendations of the eight major excellence reports play a significant part in shaping the districts' excellence responses? The answers to these questions more fully define the researcher's above-stated purpose of describing and explaining how six school districts responded to the demand for excellence.

Conceptual Framework

The author's intent for this study is to describe how six Michigan school districts responded to the excellence movement. The writer recognized that these responses would vary from school to school--some with only minimal or superficial responses, and others committing

themselves to significant curricular changes in their search for excellence. The researcher looked for commonalities and differences in the six school districts' responses. Findings from the study enabled the researcher to draw inferences and conclusions about the six school districts' responses to the excellence movement of 1983. This ability to generalize about six districts should open the possibility of exploring the same issues for the general population of school districts.

As the research progressed, the researcher constructed a conceptual framework of common and unique threads present in each district's response. The analysis of these responses should help school administrators in their understanding of what to expect and how to respond to future nationwide demands for change. The analysis may also identify critical issues or problems stimulating others to engage in empirical research. The study provides a picture of administrative behavior in the school setting which may lead to a better understanding of practice or even point the way to theoretical propositions. The study should provide a basis for generating additional research.

The conceptual framework used to explore the depths of these individual school district responses consisted of the following seven concepts: initiation, motivation, process, decision making, involvement, plans and, finally, results-actual or anticipated. These concepts were the "vehicle" for understanding and describing how six school

districts responded to the excellence movement. This conceptual framework did not grow out of empirical research but was logically developed. The concepts encompassed sequential segments of a rationally developed continuum for the process of change and represented a reasonable, sensible and sequential way to describe how six Michigan school districts responded to the excellence movement.

In analyzing the initiation and motivational phases of the districts' responses, the researcher explored how the district began its response to excellence and the motivational factors involved with that start. Was there evidence of the "band wagon" effect? Did the board seize the moment of opportunity to initiate long-desired changes? Who pushed whom into making changes? Did each administration act alone in coordinating the district's response or did the teaching staff exert an influence in developing the response? Was there evidence that the community and/or other external stimuli pressed the board into impelling the administration to action? Were these motivational factors the result of a well-established internal recognition of need or external stimulus? Did the district feel vulnerable to a powerful external stimulus?

In describing such powerful external stimuli, Sam D. Sieber said:

The vulnerability of an organization refers to the extent to which the organization is subject to powerful influences stemming from its environment irrespective of the goals and resources of the

organization. A formal definition of vulnerability, therefore, might be: the probability of being subjected to pressures that are incompatible with one's goals without the capacity to resist. If external pressures were wholly compatible with the goals of the system and resources were adequate to attain these goals, the system would be in perfect harmony with its environment (Baldrige and Deal, 1975).

If the six districts felt pressures from outside stimuli, were those external pressures wholly compatible with the systems' internal goals? Were resources available to obtain these goals?

In further describing the phenomena of external stimuli, Baldrige and Deal say that innovations persuasively publicized across the nation become candidates for adoption regardless of their educational significance. They cite the post-Sputnik years as an example. There was a powerful demand placed on school boards and personnel for new mathematics programs after Look magazine carried a feature story on new mathematics in 1963. As a result, there was a phenomenal increase in the number of new mathematics programs offered in American schools (Baldrige and Deal, 1975).

To understand the process, decision making and involvement phases of the conceptual framework, the researcher explored the processes used by each district to begin their responses. This included an investigation of roles played by the board, superintendent, committees, principals, teachers, students, and community members. If committees were used, who served on these committees? If

the administration was given responsibility for developing the district's response, did it collectively develop a response or did the superintendent formulate the district's response? The researcher determined what process was used in reaching a decision, who was involved and what individual or individuals were most instrumental in formulating that decision.

The final phase of the conceptual framework deals with the actual decisions made by each district and the anticipated results. The researcher will describe resolutions and/or excellence plans for each district. What was added or deleted from the present curriculum? What were the reasons for selecting a particular response? Were plans developed solely as a product of the local district's efforts or were they adopted and adapted from recommendations made by ancillary organizations? How consistent were each of the district's responses when compared to the recommendations of the excellence reports? Finally, what did they achieve or what did they expect to achieve as a result of their individual responses to the demand for excellence?

Definitions of Concepts in the Conceptual Framework

The words used in the conceptual framework were not chosen to represent any particular theoretical underpinning for the process of change. Rather, they were used as concepts encompassing sequential segments of a continuum

for the process of change. Some had rich theoretical meaning which were partly but not fully related to the study's purposes. For the researcher, they represented a logical and sequential method of describing how six Michigan school districts responded to the excellence movement.

Initiation

The researcher used the word initiation as the first of seven concepts in the conceptual framework. The objective for using this word was to determine which participants, either individual or group, were responsible for taking the first steps toward the district's ultimate response to the excellence movement. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the term initiation to identify who took the first action or step to begin the district's response to excellence.

Motivation

Motivation is a difficult term to define. As J. W. Atkinson so accurately noted, the term has no fixed meaning in contemporary psychology. It can be used in a variety of ways and mean a number of things (Atkinson,, 1964). For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the term motivation to identify those forces, pressures, drives, needs, or tensions acting as an incentive to produce action.

Process

Process is a British word that has many meanings. It can be used as a noun, verb or adjective. The researcher conjugates the verb and uses it as a noun. The process of turning cream into butter is an example of its use as a noun. For the purposes of this study, the word is defined as the particular method or procedure used in establishing the district's response to excellence.

Decision Making

The researcher recognized that the concept decision making has a rich heritage of theoretical propositions. It should be noted, however, that these theories encompass a far greater meaning than intended for this field study. For the purposes of this study, the researcher cast the concept with a specific and narrow meaning. The primary objective was to determine who made the decision. The concept can be defined as determining which participant, or group of participants, was responsible for making the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. That decision maker could have been the board, a board committee, a board appointed committee, the superintendent, or possibly an administrative team.

Involvement

The involvement phase of the conceptual framework was

meant to identify active participants in the response decision. For the purpose of the case studies, the term was defined to mean the identification of all participants involved or included in the process of formulating a district's response to the call for excellence. That may include any or all of the people listed as internal participants of the change process.

Plans

Once a decision was made to respond to the call for excellence, a plan of action was needed to implement that decision. The concept of plans in the conceptual framework implied the identification of that plan of action. It called for the presentation of resolutions and/or excellence plans for each district. The emphasis was on itemizing each plan's content or, more specifically, the details of each plan and what they add or delete from the present curriculum. The researcher used an additional meaning for the concept of plans to include a determination of how closely each district plan correlated to the excellence reports and recommendations made by ancillary organizations.

Results-Actual or Anticipated

The intent of the concept, results-actual or anticipated, was to determine what was achieved or was

expected to be achieved. These results were written as reported. It was not the purpose of the researcher to validate reported results. For each case study, the researcher included those results that interviewees described as being actual or anticipated.

Exploratory Questions

The research was guided by a number of basic exploratory questions. As a consequence of the study's exploratory nature, it was not necessary to develop hypotheses before the research. For the purposes of this study, questions were developed to provide information on how six school districts responded to the excellence movement.

1) Who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement?

- (a) Was the board influenced by the community or some other external stimuli?
- (b) Were there community pressures?
- (c) Were there any editorials from the local media?
- (d) Did the board impel the administration to produce a response?
- (e) Did the administration present the board with an unsolicited response proposal?
- (f) Was there evidence that the teaching staff

coerced the administration or board to develop a response?

- 2) What motivational factors brought about the district's response?
 - (a) Was there an internal recognition of need?
 - (b) Did the district complete a needs analysis or evaluation prior to 1983?
 - (c) Was the motivation to respond the result of an external stimuli?
 - (d) What influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond?
 - (e) What influence did the intermediate district have on the district's decision to respond?
 - (f) What influence did ancillary organizations have on the district's decision to respond?
 - (g) What influence did the State Department of Education have on the district's decision to respond?
 - (h) What influence did the calls for excellence on the national level have on the district's decision to respond?
- 3) What process was used to develop the district's response decision?
 - (a) Were committees established and, if so, who served on them?
 - (b) Was a board committee given responsibility for establishing the district's response?

- (c) Were principals given the responsibility for developing the district's response?
- (d) Was the superintendent given responsibility for developing the district's response?
- 4) What decision making level formulated the district's response?
 - (a) Did the superintendent write the proposed response?
 - (b) Did the administrative team write the proposed response?
 - (c) Did a committee write the proposed response?
 - (d) Who recommended the district's proposed response to the board for approval?
 - (e) Did the board approve a district response?
- 5) Who participated in the coordination of the district's response?
 - (a) What role did the board play?
 - (b) What role did the superintendent play?
 - (c) What role did the committees play?
 - (d) What role did the principals play?
 - (e) What role did the teachers play?
 - (f) What role did the students play?
 - (g) What role did the community play?
- 6) What was the district's response decision?
 - (a) What actions were taken?
 - (b) What was added or deleted from the curriculum?

(c) What were the reasons for selecting a particular response?

7) What results were achieved or anticipated?

Summary

This first chapter reviewed the 1983 excellence movement along with the purpose, conceptual framework, and exploratory questions for this particular study. A Nation at Risk was one of the major works responsible for igniting the 1983 and continuing excellence movement. Eight other reports were identified as having had significant influence on the overall shaping of the excellence movement. The researcher's purpose for the project was to describe and explain how six Michigan school districts in small towns responded, or failed to respond, to this nationwide thrust for public schools to produce excellence. The conceptual framework to be used to explore the depths of these individual school district responses consisted of the following seven concepts: initiation, motivation, process, decision making, involvement, plans, and the results, both actual or anticipated. The conceptual framework did not grow out of empirical research but was logically developed. The concepts encompassed sequential segments of a rationally developed continuum for the process of change. For the researcher, they represented a reasonable, sensible and sequential way to describe how six Michigan

school districts responded to the excellence movement. Exploratory questions were given to guide the research. Because of the exploratory nature of the project, it was not necessary to develop hypotheses before the research.

Chapter II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A literature review in this chapter, deals with the conceivable and possible influences of those participants capable of influencing change. The case studies in Chapter IV report the actual influences these participants had on their school districts' responses to excellence. The second part of this chapter contains a review of eight major excellence reports. These reports were named among the major excellence reports by the American Association of School Administrators, the Michigan Association of School Boards and the Michigan State Department of Education. These reports are: The Paideia Proposal, A Nation at Risk, Making the Grade, Academic Preparation for College, Action for Excellence, A Study of High Schools, A Place Called School, and High School.

Participants Influencing Change

Given that the purpose of this study was to describe how six Michigan school districts responded to the excellence movement, it was pertinent to examine the roles of individuals who may have influenced or affected the above-stated purpose. Those individuals were: superintendents, board members, principals, teachers, students and citizens from the communities. The researcher provided a sphere of influence for each of these

participants. Individuals or groups which may have been influential were described as either internal or external participants in the change process.

"Change is a process, not an event" (Fullan, 1982). Participants are the individuals or groups who are influential relative to change. These individuals or groups are capable of a wide variety of actions serving to influence or control the various components of change. Mackenzie classifies participants of change as internal or external.

Internal participants are those with a direct connection with the legal or social systems from which a particular description was taken. They have the greatest potential to affect change . . . External participants are those outside of the immediate social or legal system under consideration (Mackenzie, 1964).

Both groups of participants have the potential for the indirect action of influencing those who have the power to take direct action.

Internal Participants

Mackenzie identified the internal participants as students, teachers, principals, supervisors, superintendents, boards of education, citizens in local communities, state legislatures, state boards or departments of education, and state and federal courts. Since the purpose of this research project was to describe and explain how six Michigan school districts in small towns responded to the call for excellence, it is relevant

that the range of pertinent roles for participants who were involved in the case studies be examined. These internal participants, whom the researcher interviewed in the field study, were students, teachers, principals, superintendents, board members, and citizens in the community.

Students. Students initiate and/or affect change by making their opinions and feelings known to teachers, administrators and parents. Consciously or unconsciously, teachers modify their practices on the basis of student feedback in the form of interest and satisfaction, or apathy and lack of interest. Student groups initiate protest actions when certain teachers are dismissed by the administration (Mackenzie, 1964). The major tool used by students for initiating change is their ability to disrupt, thereby creating problems which capture the attention of officials and the public (Coombs, 1977).

Teachers. Teachers and their organizations are not only participants in affecting change in their own classrooms, but are highly capable of affecting change on a districtwide basis. They retain the ultimate power to insure or defeat the successful implementation of a change by complying or not complying with a prescription for change. The old saying, "the teacher rules once the classroom door is closed" may be only partly true, but teachers certainly have the potential for frustrating the implementation of change. Their organizations are powerful

enough to create issues, block implementation, or bias a decision for change (Coombs, 1977).

Principals.

School improvement research has documented the ability of the principal to influence change. This influence is often communicated through suasion and the assertion of high expectations. Principals who become involved in change are more likely to function in a facilitative, coordinative role rather than in a directive role (Clark, 1984).

As a participant in the change process, they have the ability to control staff and student assignments, time and money allocations, and can manipulate parental pressures (Mackenzie, 1964).

Superintendents. The school superintendent may be the most powerful single participant in change. They may intervene at all levels and in all areas. They directly influence curriculum changes, textbook selections, financial disbursements, and time allocations (Mackenzie, 1964).

[The] district administrator (superintendent and his immediate subordinates) is the single most important individual for setting the expectations and tone of the pattern of change within the local district (Fullan, 1982).

The superintendent's active involvement provides teachers with a signal that a proposed change should be taken seriously. Active involvement means specific support, not general support or verbal support alone. These are insufficient. Change at the districtwide level is not possible without the superintendent's support,

encouragement, and involvement. This support includes the provision of resources, training opportunities, and communicating the expectation that the schools will be successful in implementing the new practice or program (Clark, 1984).

Boards of Education. Boards of education do not usually initiate change. They overlook innovations or changes which cause little or no controversy in the community. A community controversy stimulates a negative board reaction (Paul, 1977). Fullan wrote that ". . .by far the most prevalent case is that school boards and communities do not initiate or have any major role in deciding about innovative programs" (Fullan, 1982). Mackenzie wrote that boards usually operate through professional personnel, but emphasized that they are in a position to mandate and order changes and sometimes do (Mackenzie, 1964).

Communities. "Most communities most of the time do not participate actively in the adoption and implementation processes of educational change" (Clark, 1984). According to Fullan, communities normally do not initiate or have a major role in the change process. However, when aroused, communities become powerful. When ignored, they may reject innovations about which they were uninformed. They may also reject ill-conceived innovations (Fullan, 1984). Douglas A. Paul wrote that communities are more likely to prevent change than they are to promote change. There are

more instances of negative community reactions to a proposed change than instances where a community initiated a positive change (Paul, 1977). Mackenzie wrote that communities participate in influencing change through citizen groups, parent-teacher associations, and regularly scheduled elections. They vote on funding for the school and elect board members. In a few cases, there are instances where communities demanded specific programs (Mackenzie, 1964).

The difficulty parents experience in organizing for effective participation is largely due to a lack of consensus upon what the school should be doing. Rallying parents to a common cause can be very difficult. The range of their pedagogical philosophies, aspirations, and values is enormous. They can be brought together in the common belief that something is wrong with the schools, but when they attempt to specify what is wrong, unanimity frequently breaks down. On the other hand, a phone call to complain to a board member, a teacher or administrator can produce substantial results (Coombs, 1977). As participants of change, perhaps this is where they assert their greatest influence.

External Participants

External participants have the potential to play major roles in the change process. They are the participants that initiated the 1983 excellence movement at the national

level. This case study was designed to examine how six Michigan schools responded to the excellence movement. This necessitated a study of internal participants and their involvement with the excellence movement. Therefore, discussion and study of the external participants will be limited to a definition of the term and the identification of various external participants.

Mackenzie (1964) defined external participants as those outside the immediate social or legal system under consideration. Many external participants operate outside the social or legal system of a specific school situation. In most cases, these external participants do not have legal authority or power of direct action. However, they can exert substantial indirect influence through such methods as disseminating information, raising expectations or invoking sanctions.

Mackenzie (1964) grouped external participants into six categories: non-educationists (individuals and groups), foundations, academicians (individual and groups), business and industry (including material and facilities producers, and agents of the mass media), educationists (individuals, groups, and organizations such as teacher-educating institutions, accrediting agencies, and professional associations), and the national government (primarily the legislative and executive branches (Mackenzie, 1964).

Many of these same external participants were credited with initiating the 1983 nationwide "call for excellence"

through techniques of disseminating information and raising expectations. A Nation at Risk was the product of a federal government commission created upon request of the President. Action for Excellence was written by the National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth and comprised a wide range of leaders: governors, legislators, corporate chief executives, state and local school board members, educators, leaders of labor, and the scientific community. A Study of High Schools, by TheodoreSizer, was sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. A Place Called School, by John Goodlad, was funded by the Kettering Foundation, the Danforth Foundation, the U.S. Office of Education, and eleven other groups. High School, by Ernest Boyer, was sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The demand for change, in this case a plurality of individual calls for excellence from the national level, was initiated by external participants. It was the researcher's objective to determine how six local school districts responded to that externally-initiated demand for change. A conceptual framework consisting of seven words will be used to accomplish that purpose.

A Review of Eight Major Excellence Reports

After an extensive review of the material written on excellence, the writer felt that the following eight reports were the most significant. These reports were also

identified by the American Association of School Administrators, the Michigan Association of School Boards and the State Department of education as major works in the excellence movement.

Paideia Proposal. Paideia (py-dee-a) is from the Greek pais, paidos, "the upbringing of a child." Paideria means a general, humanistic learning that should be the common possession of all human beings (Adler, 1982).

The task force making up the Paideria Group consisted of 22 distinguished educators including authors Ernest Boyer and TheodoreSizer; school superintendents Ruth Love of Chicago, and Alonzo Crim of Atlanta; and a predominance of elite college and university educators. Mortimer Adler, an internationally renowned thinker and educator, was the group's chairman and author for the finished proposal. The project's purpose was to study the current status of U.S. educational institutions and make recommendations for curriculum revision in order to improve individual learning. The group began its work in 1980 and published its findings in the spring of 1982. The MacArthur Foundation funded the project (Adler, 1982).

The central thesis of the manifesto is that since the United States of America is

politically a classless society . . . we should, therefore, be an educationally classless society. We should have a one-track system of schooling, not a system with two or more tracks, only one of which goes straight ahead while the others shunt the young off into sidetracks not headed toward the goals our society opens to all. The innermost measuring of social equality is: substantially

the same quality of life for all. That calls for the same quality of schooling for all (Adler, 1982).

That one-track school system should be a 12-year general and liberal education for all students. No student should be sidetracked into specialized or vocational education. The group acknowledges that although children are equal in their common humanity and fundamental human rights, they are unequal as individuals with different capacities to learn. Furthermore, the homes and environments from which they come to school are unequal. Some are predisposed to schooling; others are not. To equalize these inequities, the proposal suggests one, two, or even three years of preschool preparations for those in need (Adler, 1982).

The proposal identifies three standard objectives for all students.

- 1) The first is for personal growth and self-improvement--mental, moral, and spiritual. Our society provides all children ample opportunity for personal development. Given this opportunity, each individual is under a moral obligation to make the most of himself and his life. Basic schooling must facilitate this accomplishment.
- 2) All the children will become full-fledged citizens with suffrage and other political responsibilities. Basic schooling must do everything it can to make them good citizens, able to perform the duties of citizenship with all the trained intelligence that each is able to achieve.
- 3) Once these children are grown, they will engage in some form of work to earn a living. Basic schooling must prepare them for earning a living, but not by training them for this or that specific job while they are still in school (Adler, 1982).

The above three objectives are attainable by implementing a core curriculum for all students consisting of: 1) language, literature and the fine arts; 2) math and natural science; and 3) history, geography, and social studies. Physical education, intramural sports, and health education would be taught all 12 years. The only electives would be for a second language (Adler, 1982).

Upon completion of the 12 years of schooling, each student will have acquired the following: 1) an organized body of knowledge in each of the core curriculum areas; 2) intellectual skills necessary to apply that knowledge; and 3) an enlarged understanding of ideas and values necessary to expand their knowledge base. The first goal refers to acquiring basic knowledge in three subject areas. Intellectual skills needed to apply that knowledge would include language, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Also included are mathematical and scientific skills of observing, measuring, estimating, and calculating. These are the skills which enhance clear and critical thinking. All sources of written, spoken, or visual knowledge can be used for the third goal of enlarged understanding.

Teachers would use three different teaching methodologies in helping students achieve the above listed three goals: 1) didactic instruction, 2) coaching and supervised practice, and 3) Socratic questioning (Adler, 1982).

Using didactic methodology, students acquire information and knowledge about nature, man and human society from textbooks, manuals, and lectures. The teacher invites responses and tests for acquisition of learning.

Students learn how to develop habits of performance and skills from coaching and supervised practice methodology. They acquire a know-how versus a know-that-fact intelligence. They learn the skills necessary to perform well, whether involved in swimming, dancing, reading, writing, mathematics, science, or art.

The Socratic questioning methodology is designed for enlightenment. Round table discussions, seminars, and questioning are the techniques used for this mode of instructions. Students develop and broaden general understandings (Adler, 1982).

A Nation at Risk. Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell created the National Commission on Excellence in Education in August 1981. It was conceived as a result of the Secretary's concern about "the wide-spread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system." The Secretary directed a panel of 18 distinguished Americans to report on the quality of education in the United States within 18 months of its first meeting. That report, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, was given to the Secretary and the American people in April 1983 (The National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

A Nation at Risk sparked a national debate that may be perceived as a turning point in American education. It focused primarily on the high school years and represented the end product of an exhaustive collection of testimony and documents addressing the quality of education in the United States.

There were three essential messages in the report (National Committee on Excellence, 1983). The first message was that the nation was at risk. Competitors throughout the world were perceived as overtaking America's once unchallenged lead in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation. Although the problem has many dimensions, education is the primary factor undergirding American "prosperity, security, and civility." Further inattention to American schools puts the very well being of the nation at risk (Goldberg, 1983).

The second message was that mediocrity, not excellence, was the norm in American education. The report cited "a rising tide of mediocrity" which threatened to overwhelm the educational foundations of American society. The evidence of that mediocrity was staggering.

*On 19 international assessments of student achievement, U.S. students never ranked first or second; in fact, when compared only with students from other industrialized nations, U.S. students ranked in last place seven times.

*Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate.

*About 13% of U.S. teenagers (and up to 40% of minority adolescents) are functionally illiterate.

*From 1963 to 1980 a virtually unbroken decline took place in average scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

*Similarly, a dramatic decline took place in the number of students who demonstrate superior achievement on the SAT.

*Between 1975 and 1980 the number of remedial mathematics courses offered in four-year public colleges increased by 72%.

*Only about one-fourth of the recent recruits to the armed services were able to read at the ninth grade level, the minimum necessary to follow safety instructions.

*The amount of homework for high school seniors has decreased (two-thirds report less than one hour a night) and grades have risen as average student achievement has been declining.

*Too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students (Goldberg, 1983).

The third message was that Americans do not have to tolerate mediocrity. We can do better, should do better, and must do better. American education met the challenges of the past and can meet current challenges. American education provided the know-how to turn our vast country into the world's agricultural bread basket. It provided an educated workforce for the Industrial Revolution and the margin of victory in two world wars. It has and continues to transform vast waves of immigrants into productive citizens (Goldberg, 1983).

The Commission's recommendations fell into five categories: content, standards and expectations, time, teaching, and leadership and fiscal support. Implementing recommendations were offered with each of the five basic recommendations (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

The Commission found that content in secondary school curricula was "homogenized, diluted, and diffused" until there was no longer a central purpose. It described "a cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main courses." The Commission recommended that

all students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundations in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their 4 years of high school: a) 4 years of English; b) 3 years of mathematics; c) 3 years of science; d) 3 years of social studies; and e) one-half year of computer science. For the college-bound, 2 years of foreign language in high school are strongly recommended. The Commission recommended that the teaching of foreign language should begin in the elementary grades and that the fine and performing arts and vocational education should be included in the high school curriculum (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

The Commission concluded that public schools expect far too little of their students. Evidence of that low expectation was wide spread.

*The amount of required homework is decreasing while grades have risen and student achievement has declined.

*Two-thirds of the states require only one year of mathematics and one year of science for a high school diploma.

*One-fifth of all 4-year public colleges in the United States must accept every high school graduate within the state regardless of program followed or grades.

*Many United States colleges and universities lowered their admission requirements during the 1970's (Goldberg, 1983).

The Commission recommended that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards

and higher expectations for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their requirements for admission. The implementing recommendations called for:

- 1) grades to become accurate indicators of achievement
- 2) colleges and universities to raise their academic requirement
- 3) standardized achievement tests to be administered when students move from one level to another
- 4) upgrading of textbooks
- 5) new instructional materials that reflect the most current application of technology (National Commission on Excellence, 1983)

The Commission found that American students spent less time on school work than students from other nations. They discovered that time spent in the classroom and on homework was often used ineffectively and that schools were not doing enough to help children learn good study habits or cultivate a desire for school work (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

The Commission recommended that significantly more time be devoted to learning the New Basics. This required more effective use of the existing school day, a longer school day, or a lengthened school year. Implementing recommendations included more homework, providing instruction in study and work skills, and consideration of a seven-hour school day and a 200- to 220-day school year. Also discussed was the reduction of disruptions, the

improvement of classroom management, and stronger policies on school attendance (Goldberg, 1983).

The Commission concluded that not enough academically able students were being attracted to teaching; that teacher preparation programs needed substantial improvement; that the professional working life of teachers was largely unacceptable; and that a serious shortage of teachers existed in key fields (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

The recommendation on teaching had seven parts:

1. Persons preparing to teach should be required to meet high educational standards, to demonstrate an aptitude for teaching, and to demonstrate competence in an academic discipline. Colleges and universities offering teacher preparation programs should be judged by how well their graduates meet these criteria.
2. Salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based. Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated.
3. School boards should adopt an 11-month contract for teachers. This would ensure time for curriculum and professional development, programs for students with special needs, and a more adequate level of teacher compensation.
4. School boards, administrators, and teachers should cooperate to develop career ladders for teachers that distinguish among the beginning instructor, the experienced teacher, and the master teacher.
5. Substantial nonschool personnel resources should be employed to help solve the immediate problem of the shortage of mathematics and

science teachers. Qualified individuals, including recent graduates with mathematics and science degrees, graduate students, and industrial and retired scientists could, with appropriate preparation, immediately begin teaching in these fields. A number of our leading science centers have the capacity to begin educating and retraining teachers immediately. Other areas of critical teacher need, such as English, must also be addressed.

6. Incentives, such as grants and loans, should be made available to attract outstanding students to the teaching professions, particularly in those areas of critical shortage.
7. Master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs and in supervising teachers during their probationary years (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

The Commission recommended citizens hold educators and elected officials responsible for providing the leadership necessary to achieve the stated reforms. They should also provide necessary fiscal support and stability to bring about proposed reforms. The section concluded: "Excellence costs. But in the long run mediocrity costs far more" (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

Making the Grade: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund. "The Nation's public schools are in trouble," began the Report of the twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy. "By almost every measure--the commitment and competency of teachers, student test scores, truancy and dropout rates, crimes of violence--the performance of our schools falls far short of expectations." The twelve-member Task Force

recognized the commendable jobs of many teachers and school districts, but felt public school performance needed further improvement no matter how formidable the task. The report recommended that the federal government provide leadership, resources, and guidelines for that improvement (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

The Task Force acknowledged that states and localities hold the primary responsibility for educating students, but the educating of the young "is a compelling national interest" and worthy of appropriate federal government action. The report presented a variety of recommendations for the federal government to improve education. These included improving educational leadership, encouraging quality in teachers, establishing the primacy of the English language among non-English speaking students, improving science and mathematics education, fostering education research, and providing a choice of schooling to students and parents.

The Task Force called upon "the executive and legislative branches of the federal government to emphasize the need for better schools and a better education for all young Americans." In recent years, the judicial branch of government took the most active role in educational affairs largely because of a failure to act on the part of the legislative and executive branches. The Task Force urged the legislative and executive branches to take the

initiative and assert a high priority for education (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

One of the report's more interesting recommendations was the establishment of a national Master Teacher's Program, funded by the federal government, to be used to recognize several of the best teachers from every state and award them "the accolade of Master Teacher and a monetary grant--say, \$40,000 a year--above that of the ceiling for teachers' salaries for a period of five years." The five-year program would include one full year of professional development and four years of teaching or possibly helping others learn how to improve their teaching. The Task Force felt that such a program would provide an incentive for the development of outstanding teachers and possibly open the door for reconsideration of merit pay systems (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

The Task Force urged that "the federal government clearly state that the most important objective of elementary and secondary education in the United States is the development of literacy in the English language." Citizens "cannot fully participate in our society, its culture, its politics" without the ability to speak, write and think in English. The Task Force recommended "that federal funds now going to bilingual programs be used to teach non-English speaking children how to speak, read, and

write English." Furthermore, the federal government should "promote and support proficiency in English for all children in the public schools, but especially for those who do not speak English, or have only limited command of it." Finally, the Task Force "wants every American public school student to have the opportunity to acquire proficiency in a second language" (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

The Task Force said that "training in mathematics and science is critical to our economy." They recommended "that the federal government emphasize programs to develop basic scientific literacy among all students and to provide advanced training in science and mathematics for secondary school students." Scholarship programs or forgivable loans could be used to encourage more students to become mathematics and science teachers (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

The Task Force commended federal efforts to insure that the needs of the poor, the handicapped, the non-English speaking are met. They supported the continuation of "federal efforts to provide special educational programs for the poor and the handicapped.." They also believed that categorical programs established by the federal government should be paid for by the federal government (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

The Task Force drew attention to the fiscal problems of school districts with large numbers of immigrants or illegal aliens. They recommended that impact aid and federal assistance be given to these districts (Graham, 1983).

The Task Force also recognized that some students did not do well in a public school setting. They did not endorse tax credit plans or tuition vouchers, but did recommend "the establishment of special federal fellowships for them, which would be awarded to school districts to encourage the creation of small, individualized programs staffed by certified teachers and run as small-scale academies." Such fellowships would be limited to five percent of the public school enrollment (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

The Task Force acknowledged some of their proposals were costly. But they felt education was every bit as important as tanks, planes, ships and highways. "This nation's young people are our most precious and potentially our most productive asset, provided that we invest wisely in educating them." It was time for America's national political leaders to take an active part in supporting needed educational programs. Political courage was not needed for such a stand since parents all across the country were demanding more of their schools (Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983).

Academic Preparation for College. "All students entering college deserve a fair chance to succeed in higher education," begins The College Board's Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do. "To do so, they must be adequately prepared for college-level study." The student's choice of a college, an academic program and the ultimate success of his endeavor for higher education should not be limited and hindered by inadequate preparation at the secondary school level. Academic Preparation for College outlined what college entrants needed to know and be able to do for success in college. Only with adequate preparation could the student's full potential for higher education be insured (The College Board, 1983).

The College Board was made up of more than 2,500 institutions of higher and secondary education. In 1980, they made a ten-year commitment to strengthen the academic preparation of all students for college. The Educational Equality Project was developed to fulfill that commitment. The purpose of the project was to identify the essential competencies and knowledge required of college entrants. The report reflected consensus views of hundreds of academic specialists, teachers, guidance counselors and admissions officers from all parts of the country.

Since September 1980, more than 1400 people have participated in a series of consensus-building activities that culminated in May 1983 with the publication of Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do (Bailey, 1983).

"The Basic Academic Competencies are the broad intellectual skills essential to effective work in all fields of college study" (The College Board, 1983). They were the common essential link to mastering any academic discipline. These Basic Academic Competencies included reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, reasoning, and studying. Knowledge of history, science, language, and all other subjects was deemed impossible without these competencies (The College Board, 1983). The report listed specific abilities or expected objectives within each of these competencies.

The report described computer competency as an emerging need. Most future workers will either work directly with computers or at least be significantly impacted by them. Communication and information technology is making the computer a basic tool for acquiring knowledge, organizing systems, and solving problems. Students and teachers are using the computer to receive, organize, store, analyze, and interpret information. Competency in using the computer is emerging as a basic skill which will greatly profit entering college students.

The College Board listed six Basic Academic Subjects in addition to the above-listed competencies. These subjects are meant to provide the detailed knowledge and skills necessary for effective work in college. They are the academic subjects that college-bound students should be studying in high school. The Basic Academic Subjects are

English, the arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language. They were presented in two parts. The first explained why preparation in a subject was important for college entrants. The second outlined what college entrants needed to know and be able to do in that subject area (The College Board, 1983).

Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School. This was the first of three books from A Study of High Schools which was co-sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Commission on Educational Issues of the National Association of Independent Schools. TheodoreSizer was the author of this first book and the director of the five-year long study of high schools. He is a former teacher, principal, and dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Horace's Compromise was an account of the author's visits to high schools across the nation. He focused on the teaching and learning processes and the excessive compromises educators were forced to make. It dealt with what the author called the "insides" of schools--specifically, a critical triangle of student, teacher, and subject and on the climate of the school in which the triangle functions.

Sizer used the eponymous Horace, a fictional composite of the teachers he encountered, to portray the essence of his study. Horace was a fifty-three year old English teacher who had taught for twenty-eight years, nineteen at

his present high school. He worked at another job for the extra money his family needed. His "compromise" was between the teaching job he could and wanted to do and that which was possible. The constraints of the system did not allow enough time for Horace to meet his and his students' needs.

Sizer saw Horace's compromise thusly:

Most jobs in the real world have a gap between what would be nice and what is possible. One adjusts. The tragedy for many high school teachers is that the gap is a chasm, not crossed by reasonable and judicious adjustment. Even after adroit accommodations and devastating compromise--only five minutes per week of attention to the written work of each student and an average of ten minutes of planning for each fifty-minute class--the task is already crushing, in reality a sixty-hour work week. For this, Horace is paid a wage enjoyed by age-mates and semi-skilled and low-pressure blue-collar jobs and by novices, twenty-five years his junior, in some other white-collar professions. Furthermore, none of these sixty-plus hours is spent in replenishing his own academic capital. That has to be done in addition . . . (Sizer, 1984).

Sizer divided his book into four sections through which he developed his theme of the dilemma of the American high school. "Our goals have become contradictory and our methods have become confused." In the first section, "The Student," Sizer wrote, "The American high school student, as student, is all too often docile, compliant, and without initiative." The second section, "The Program," defined high school:

Taking subjects in a systematized, conveyor-belt way is what one does in high school. That this process is, in substantial respects, not related to the rhetorical purposes of education is tolerated by most people, perhaps because they do

not really either believe in those ill-defined goals or, in their heart of hearts, believe that schools can or should even try to achieve them (Sizer, 1984).

"The Teacher" was the third section of the book. Teaching was described as a form of theater or a craft. The teacher had to "explain, provoke, cajole, inspire, criticize, demand, love." It demands much of the personality. Inspired teachers are the foundation of good education and they need space, time and encouragement in order to meet their highest potential. Sizer believed that improved teaching would improve student performance. The most important teaching skill is the ability to "coach," to question and help in ways leading students to reason, justify, analyze, draw inferences, synthesize, and come to conclusions on their own. Teachers need autonomy in choosing curriculum and selecting methods and materials (Sizer, 1984).

In the last section the author wrote of the bureaucratic problems in schools and offered suggestions for better schools. The bureaucratic system forces teachers into a rigidity, a sameness and stifles initiative.

Sizer recognized that high schools were, on the whole, happy and inviting places for most adolescents. All young Americans have access to these schools. Special-needs children have never had greater access. However, Sizer identified some problems found in high schools:

- 1) The goals for high school are numerous and seem to continue multiplying, with little regard for the severe limits imposed by a lack of school staff, equipment, and time.
- 2) Many adolescents complete high school unprepared for what follows; they are marginally literate, uninspired, possessed of only rudimentary skills, and imbued with a narrow view of the world.
- 3) In spite of increasingly larger investments, schooling has become progressively less productive over the last decades.
- 4) Many students find little incentive in hard academic work. They plan on getting by with dutiful attendance rather than mastery of subjects.
- 5) Students are rarely expected to educate themselves. They are "delivered a service."
- 6) The labels of subjects are ambiguous and often misleading.
- 7) A premium is put on coverage at the expense of thoroughness. For example, the need to get through the Civil War by Christmas or to value three papers more than one paper written well.
- 8) The daily schedule of activities, academic and otherwise, that a high school student engages are numerous.
- 9) "Ahead of grade level" is preferred to ultimate mastery.
- 10) Few schools teach values.
- 11) The teaching profession has a very limited career line.
- 12) Teacher salaries and benefits are not competitive with those in fields that require comparable preparation.
- 13) Their rhetoric notwithstanding, public leaders are uninterested in the schools (Sizer, June 1983).

Sizer proposed a substantial restructuring of the high school. He attributed the current structure to the 1890's. Schools, he said, must stop the idea of giving, presenting or delivering a service, and start inspiring students to explore and learn for themselves. He urged schools to minimize the "time spent" concept as the criterion for learning--"four credit hours of service," "two years of mathematics," "at least 180 days a year." Mastery of the subject, motivation and learning style are all more important. Sizer saw several essentials necessary for restructuring the high school.

- 1) No one should enter high-school-level studies who has not clearly mastered the basic educational requirements of a citizen in a democracy--literacy, numeracy, and civic understanding. Attendance at elementary schools should be compulsory until mastery of these basic skills is obtained. Secondary schools should be non-compulsory, but available to all citizens for a period of six years, to be taken at any point during their lives. The practical effect is that high school becomes a place for only those who want to work, but a place a student can return to finish his education whenever 'he gets his act together.'
- 2) The high school should focus on helping adolescents to learn to use their minds.
- 3) The tone of the high school should be one of unanxious expectation. The primary burden for learning should be squarely on the students.
- 4) The diploma should be awarded only upon a student's exhibition of mastery of the high school's program.
- 5) The primary pedagogy of the high school should be "coaching."

- 6) The program of study must be single and universal.Sizer recommends clustering the curriculum, and its teachers, into but four areas: inquiry and expression; mathematics and science; literature and the arts; philosophy and history.
- 7) Teaching and learning must be personalized to the greatest extent possible. No high school teacher should have responsibility for more than 80 pupils. Students should learn to teach themselves. Short-term gains in mere "coverage" should be discouraged in favor of long-term gains of knowledge mastery.
- 8) Control of the detailed school program must be given to the principal and teachers at the level of each school. Decentralizing authority provokes a deeper commitment from teacher and principals (Sizer, October 1983).

Sizer summed up current conditions in the high schools with these words:

The students are happy taking subjects. The parents are happy, because that's what they did in high school. The rituals, the most important of which is graduation, remain intact. The adolescents are supervised, safely and constructively most of the time, during the morning and afternoon hours, and they are off the labor market. That is what high school is all about (Sizer, 1984).

Sizer wanted the high school to be far more.

Action for Excellence. The National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth published Action for Excellence as a comprehensive plan to improve our nation's schools. A diverse group of forty-one leaders served on the Task Force, including governors, legislators, corporate chief executives, state and local school board members, educators, leaders of labor and the scientific community. The Education Commission of the States sponsored the Task Force and its work.

Convinced that America's national survival hinged upon continued progress in its educational system, the Task Force identified the problem, summarized the challenge, prepared an action plan that outlined the new skills students will need to meet the demands of a rapidly changing workplace, and made eight major recommendations for action.

As identified by the Task Force, the problem is that the nation's once lofty position as a world innovator, technological giant, and industrial power is being shaken. Many nations have challenged that lead. Losing America's edge in inventiveness and productivity can lead to "technological or structural unemployment: joblessness that occurs because our workers, our factories and our techniques are suddenly obsolete" (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

The Task Force wrote that 13% of American 17-year-old students could not perform reading tasks considered minimal for functional literacy. Twenty-eight percent could not adequately comprehend what they had read. Fifty-three percent could not write a letter correcting a billing error. Only 15% of high school students in 1979 could write a persuasive statement. Remedial mathematics at four-year colleges increased 72% between the years 1975 and 1980 (task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

In contrast to these disheartening statistics describing a declining American school system, the Task Force found other nations moving ahead. All students in the Soviet Union completed four years of chemistry, including a full year of organic chemistry, while only 38% of American high school students took a one-year course in chemistry. In Japan, approximately 95% graduate from high school compared to only 74% of the students graduating from high schools in the United States. Most industrialized countries offer a 240-day school year versus an average of 180 days in the United States. Finally, the Task Force noted that American teaching staffs were woefully unprepared for teaching science and mathematics to students (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

In summarizing the problems faced by America, the Task Force said:

We have expected too little of our schools over the past two decades, in terms of quality and we have gotten too little. The result is that our schools are not doing an adequate job of education for today's requirements in the workplace, much less tomorrow's. If we are serious about economic growth in America, about improving productivity, about recapturing competitiveness in our basic industries and maintaining it in our newer industries, about guaranteeing to our children a decent standard of living and a rewarding quality of life, then we must get serious about improving education, and we must start now (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

The challenge, as seen by the Task Force, was to provide "new skills for a new age." Global competition and technological advancements make it essential to equip

students with skills that go beyond the basics. Students need more than minimum competence in reading, writing, mathematics, science, reasoning, the use of computers, and other areas. They need ". . . first, the ability to comprehend literally a simple written passage. Second, the ability to compute with whole numbers. Third, the mastery of writing mechanics." Increasingly, students without these expanded basic skills ". . . will be consigned to economic stagnation." The challenge, for those that have a stake, in education and economic growth ". . . is not simply to better educate our elite, but to raise both the floor and ceiling of achievement in America" (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

The thesis of the Task Force report was that America's future success as a nation, its national defense, its social stability and well-being and national prosperity, depend on its ability to improve education and training for all citizens. Sustained economic growth depends upon a high general level of education. The purpose of the Task Force was to ". . . link education to the economic well-being of our individual states and our nation as a whole" (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

In defining an expanded version of "basic skills" the Task Force borrowed directly from the Center for Public Resources and Academic Preparation for College. Competencies in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, science and reasoning were listed as necessary

basic skills. The Task Force expanded the above-listed competencies by adding three new competencies. The first was called basic employment competency. It included the ability and willingness to assume the responsibility of a good citizen, the ability to engage in interpersonal relationships, and the ability to cope with requirements concerning attendance and punctuality. The second was called economic competency and included the ability to understand personal economics and the American basic economic system. Finally, although it was listed by Academic Preparation for College, computer literacy was named as the third new competency.

In response to the problems and challenges identified, the Task Force made eight major recommendations. These recommendations, referred to as an Action Plan, called for efforts by individuals and institutions. Listed below is the executive summary of the Action Plan.

- 1) Develop--and put into effect as promptly as possible--state plans for improving education in the public schools from kindergarten through grade 12.

*Led by the governor, each state should develop a state plan for education and economic growth.

*Each governor should appoint a broadly inclusive state task force on education for economic growth.

*Each school district should develop its own plan.

- 2) Create broader and more effective partnerships for improving education in the states and communities of the nation.

- *Business leaders, labor leaders, and members of the professions should become more active in education.
 - *Business leaders should establish partnerships with schools.
 - *Governors, legislators, chief state school officers, state and local boards of education, and leaders in higher education should establish partnerships of their own.
- 3) Marshal the resources which are essential for improving the public schools.
- *School systems should enrich academic programs and improve management to make the best possible use of resources.
 - *States and communities should invest more financial, human and institutional resources in education.
 - *The federal government should continue to support education.
- 4) Express a new and higher regard for teachers.
- *States and school districts--with full participation by teachers--should dramatically improve methods for recruiting, training, and paying teachers.
 - *States should create "career ladders" for teachers.
 - *States, communities, the media and the business community should devise new ways to honor teachers.
- 5) Make the academic experience more intense and more productive.
- *States and school systems should establish firm, explicit, and demanding requirements concerning discipline, attendance, homework, grades, and other essentials of effective schooling.
 - *States and school systems should strengthen the public school curriculum.
 - *States should increase the duration and the intensity of academic learning.

6) Provide quality assurance in education.

*Boards of education and higher education should cooperate with teachers and administrators on systems for measuring the effectiveness of teachers and rewarding outstanding performance.

*States, with full cooperation by teachers, should improve the process for certifying teachers and administrators and make it possible for qualified outsiders to serve in the schools.

*States should examine and tighten procedures for deciding which teachers to retain and which to dismiss.

*Student progress should be measured through periodic tests of general achievement and specific skills; promotion from grade to grade should be based on mastery, not age.

*States and communities should identify clearly the skills they expect the schools to impart.

*Colleges and universities should raise their entrance requirements.

7) Improve leadership and management in the schools.

*Pay for principals should relate to responsibilities and effectiveness.

*States should set higher standards for recruiting, training and monitoring the performance of principals.

*Schools should use more effective management techniques.

8) Serve better those students who are now unserved or underserved. States and school districts should increase the participation of young women and minorities in courses where they are underrepresented.

*States should continue to develop equitable finance measures to insure that education resources are distributed fairly.

*States, school systems, principals, teachers, and parents should work to reduce student absences and failures to finish school.

*States and school systems should specifically include handicapped students in programs for education and economic growth (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

A Place Called School. "American schools are in trouble" were the first words in John Goodlad's 1983 book, A Place Called School. John Goodlad is the retired dean of UCLA's graduate school of education. The book is a summation of probably the largest study of schools ever undertaken in the United States. That study, from which the book was derived, was a nationwide survey called "A Study of Schooling." Conducted under the auspices of the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities, Inc., it was funded by the Kettering Foundation, the Danforth Foundation, the U.S. Office of Education, and 11 other groups. Goodlad and 43 investigators spent \$4 million and eight years completing the study. They made observations on over 1000 classrooms in 38 elementary and secondary schools in seven sections of the country. They observed 12 senior high schools plus one secondary school, 12 junior high or middle schools, and 13 elementary schools. The 13 communities, from which these schools were selected, were in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Data were gathered from 8,624 parents, 1,350 teachers, and 17,163 students (Goodlad, 1983).

The preface to A Place Called School outlined three purposes of the study. The first and primary purpose of the book was to assist in the necessary understanding of the place called school. Goodlad stressed that America must "focus on entire schools, not just teachers or principals or curricula or organization or school-community relations but all of these and more." The second purpose was to develop an agenda for reforming and improving schools based on the enhanced understanding of schools. The final purpose was "that of impressing on us the importance of bringing to the process of improvement data relevant to a particular school" (Goodlad, 1983).

Early in the first chapter, Goodlad gave three basic premises. First, schools were still needed; second, the schools needed today are not necessarily the same schools previously known; and third, the current wave of criticism lacks a diagnosis required for the reconstruction of schooling. It was Goodlad's belief "that most efforts to improve schools founder on reefs of ignorance--ignorance of the ways schools function in general and ignorance of the inner workings of selected schools in particular" (Goodlad, 1983).

Goodlad identified two pervasive themes that emerged in the study. "The first is the concept of the school as the unit for improvement." Efforts for improvement must be focused on the school as a whole and not just on individual teachers, principals, or curricula. Goodlad wrote:

"Efforts at improvement must encompass the school as a system of interacting parts, each affecting the others." Improvement could best be accomplished when Americans "cultivate the capacity of schools to deal with their own problems," rather than forcing reforms on them. The second pervasive theme was that of caring. Goodlad said, "Our schools will get better and have continuing good health only to the degree that a significant proportion of our people, not just parents, care about them" (Goodlad, 1983).

Goodlad also identified ten additional themes which were "fleshed out by the data." They "collectively define and describe schooling, to the degree that the schools in our sample are representative." The themes "help us see that schooling has a common set of characteristics and that school-to-school differences result from the sum total of how these characteristics manifest themselves in each school."

- *school functions (baby-sitting, job preparation, intellectual development)

- *school's relevance in the lives of its students

- *how teachers teach

- *the circumstances surrounding teaching

- *the curriculum

- *the distribution of resources for learning

- *equity

- *the hidden or implicit curriculum

- *satisfaction of the principal, teachers, students, and parents

- *the need for data

The multi-year Study of Schooling produced numerous findings. Some of the major findings are listed below.

The study made a strong indictment of the tracking system. Students in the low track are put into vocational courses in high school and fail to get a core education. Goodlad concluded that many students are denied equal access to knowledge. These findings do not support the popular belief that vocational education is an alternative to academic subjects and a conduit to jobs. To the contrary, the study concluded that vocational education in the schools was virtually irrelevant to whether or not a student obtained a job (Lieberman, 1984). The report concluded that "given appropriate support, corrective feedback, and time" nearly all children can learn--and succeed--at the "high track" level (Goodlad, 1983).

Data from the study revealed a curricular dominance of English/language arts and mathematics. Surveys showed over 70% of total time was spent on instruction and 54% of the weekly instructional time was being given to these basics. The return to the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic has already happened. However, there was little evidence to show that instruction was "likely to go much beyond mere possession of information to a level of understanding its implications and either applying it or exploring its possible applications" (Goodlad, 1983). Students demonstrated little or no ability to think rationally or to use, evaluate, and accumulate knowledge. They also showed

little desire for further learning. There was an absence of activities "likely to arouse students' curiosity or to involve them in seeking solutions to some problems not already laid bare by teachers or textbooks" (Goodlad, 1983).

Goodlad and his colleagues examined a vast array of documents reporting on the efforts to define the goals of education. He concluded that four broad areas of goals for the schools have emerged. These goals were academic, vocational, social and civic, and personal. Goodlad asked parents, teachers and students what their preferences were among the four goals. He found that intellectual development was considered most important by all three groups. However, it was Goodlad's conclusion that "parents, teachers and students see as important all four of those goal areas which have emerged over the centuries." He concluded that "when it comes to education, it appears that most parents want their children to have it all" (Goodlad, 1983).

The researchers for A Study of Schooling found that students had little or no active involvement in what went on in the classroom. Each student "essentially works and achieves alone." The teacher selects the materials, organizes the class, and chooses the instructional techniques. The student is confronted day after day with teacher talk, individual seat work, and testing. Seldom are students given the opportunity to learn from each other

or to initiate interaction with the teachers. Students did not always understand what the teachers wanted nor have enough time to finish their lessons. There was "a paucity of praise and correction of students' performance, as well as of teacher guidance in how to do better next time." Much of the teaching and ambience of the classroom was described as "neither harsh and punitive nor warm and joyful . . . but flat." Surprisingly, students seem "passively content with classroom life." Students "felt positive about both peers and teachers . . . and expressed considerable liking for all subjects and classroom activities" (Goodlad, 1983).

The study produced some contradictory views of schools which should make us cautious about accepting simple solutions to complex problems. Curriculum has direction in some schools while it only drifts in others. Principals and teachers respect each other in some schools while in other schools they view each other as the enemy. While parents are supportive in some schools, they are uninvolved in other schools. Creativity is visible in the lower grades but gives way to increased uniformity in the higher grades (Lieberman, 1984).

Even though there are differences, Goodlad noted an essential sameness in schooling. "Schools differ; schooling is everywhere very much the same." Students and parents have a high level of satisfaction with the curriculum. This meant to Goodlad that schools would be difficult to reform (Goodlad, 1983).

Goodlad proposed numerous reforms and recommendations in his last two chapters. Chapter 9 dealt with "Improving the Schools We Have," while Chapter 10 looked at long-range alternatives to reshaping American education. The following paragraphs categorize some of Goodlad's major recommendations:

Recommendations on the state's role for improving education. The district should be accountable to the state for

communicating the state's goals for education in schools, developing balanced curricula in each school, employing qualified teachers, providing time and resources for local school improvement, and assuring equity in the distribution of these resources.

They should back away from the tendency to focus on principals, teachers and individual schools in their effort to assure accountability. The state should be held accountable for articulating a comprehensive set of goals for the schools (Goodlad, 1983).

Recommendations on the district level. Superintendents should "take as first order of business responsibility for selecting promising prospective principals and developing in them--and in present principals--the ability to lead and manage." Goodlad proposed giving more authority and responsibility to individual schools. Each school should be accountable for planning, developing, budgeting and presenting a balanced program of studies. The superintendent and board should

concern themselves with the balance in curricula rather than school-to-school uniformity. Goodlad's picture of decentralization was not "schools cut loose, but rather of schools linked both to a hub--the district office--and to each other in a network" (Goodlad, 1983).

Recommendations on the individual school level.

Goodlad's guiding principle was that individual schools must become largely self-directing. They must become self-renewing. They need the ability to diagnose and then implement the appropriate solutions to their individual school problems. Mandates from central office can be insensitive to individual building needs. Those closest to the problem are in the best position to make improvements (Goodlad, 1983).

Recommendations on teachers.

Goodlad believed that teachers need more time for planning. He recommended that teachers be employed for a minimum of 180 days of teaching and an additional 20 days for planning and effecting school improvement. Head teachers should be employed for instructional leadership in a salary range above that of the regular teacher salary scales. This would provide the incentive for keeping high-quality teachers in the classroom. These specialists would teach part-time, hold doctorate degrees, serve as role models, provide inservice, and diagnose problems for other staff members (Goodlad, 1983).

Recommendations on curriculum. Greater efforts should be made to teach all students equally from within five subject areas of human knowledge: Mathematics and science; literature and language; society and social studies; the arts; and the vocations.. Goodlad preferred the following allocation of time: up to 18% of a student's program (averaged for the secondary years) to be in math and science; up to 18% in literature and language; up to 15% in society and social studies; up to 15% in the arts; and up to 15% for vocational. In addition to the five subject areas, 10% should be in physical education and a remaining 10% should be for individual choice with the help of staff guidance. This last 10% is only possible when slightly less than the maximum allocation is used in another area. Two-thirds of all student programs should be common. Schools should be providing students with a general, not a specialized, education. Goodlad would totally eliminate ability grouping and tracking, which deny whole classes of people access to important spheres of knowledge. Finally, Goodlad recommended that schools make better use of the time they have before extending the school day or simply adding mandates which attempt to raise standards. They may only increase the dropout rate (Goodlad, 1983).

Recommendations on reshaping the school. Children should begin school at age four and finish at age 16. Schooling would be divided into three closely linked

phases: an ungraded primary for ages four to seven; a nongraded elementary school for ages eight to eleven; and finally a secondary school for ages twelve to fifteen. Peer-group teaching should receive greater emphasis, particularly by using older students within a four-year unit to teach younger students. Upon reaching the age of sixteen, the student could join the workforce, go to college or enter a fourth phase of education that Goodlad envisioned as being a combination of work, study and service (Goodlad, 1983).

Recommendations for establishing research and development centers. Goodlad recommended that each state create "a network of district-based schools, specifically charged with the responsibility of developing exemplary practices." These schools would provide greater prestige and a higher salary for the most gifted educators. Their key purpose would be to "develop programs and disseminate descriptions and evaluations of practices brought to a level of successful operation." They would be closely linked to universities and to one another (Goodlad, 1983).

Goodlad concluded his book with an expression of hope that schools in America could be improved. However, mere tinkering with the curriculum, with standards of student performance, with the credentialing of teachers, was not likely to do very much to improve the public school. America must approach "the challenge as most nations, including our own, have approached wars, for example--with the expectation of winning" (Goodlad, 1983).

High School. "Academic standards have slipped and test scores have declined. Teachers who are less than competent are protected and school systems have become disturbingly bureaucratic. In short, the goals of education are confused" (Boyer, 1983). With these words from the dust jacket, the reader is introduced to the 1983 book High School. A study of American high schools, the report was sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and written by Foundation president and former U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest L. Boyer. A team of twenty-five educators spent two years and over two thousand hours visiting fifteen public high schools. Visits were scheduled for twenty days. The "schools were geographically dispersed. They were large and small; urban, suburban, and rural; comprehensive and specialized; rich and poor; homogeneous and culturally and racially mixed" (Boyer, 1983).

Boyer's goal for the study was "to examine the current condition of American secondary education. The focus of the study was

. . . on the high school as an educational institution, a place where people come to study and to learn. Our specific aim was to look at teachers, at students, at what is being taught, searching for ways to strengthen the academic quality of the high school.

In a prologue to the study, Boyer stated:

[This] report on the American high school begins with the conviction that the time for renewing education has arrived. We believe that, today, America has the best opportunity it will have in this century to improve the schools. There is a

growing national consensus that our future depends on public education . . . There is an eagerness to move beyond the alarming headlines, to begin to rebuild, with confidence, the public schools (Boyer, 1983).

The Carnegie report concluded that "the academic report card on the nation's schools is mixed."

For a small percentage of students--10 to 15 percent perhaps--the American high school provides an outstanding education, the finest in the world. Their schooling combines a solid curriculum with good teaching. Students not only are expected to remember and recite, but also to explore, to think creatively, and to challenge. A larger percentage of students--perhaps 20 to 30 percent--mark time in school or drop out. For them, the high school experience occasionally may be socially supportive, but academically it's a failure. The majority of students are in the vast middle ground. They attend schools . . . where pockets of excellence can be found but where there is little intellectual challenge.

Boyer wrote that most secondary schools in the United States are "like the communities that surround them--surviving but not thriving" (Boyer, 1983).

The report rejected the underlying finding of the Commission on Excellence in Education that American high schools are plagued by a "rising tide of mediocrity that threatens to place the nation at risk" (The National Commission on Excellence, 1983). The researchers found that the mediocrity emphasized in the A Nation at Risk report came to a head in the late 1970's.

There remains, however, a large, even alarming gap between school achievement and the task to be accomplished. A deep erosion of confidence in our schools, coupled with disturbing evidence that at least some of the skepticism is justified, has made revitalizing the American high school an urgent matter (Boyer, 1983).

Regardless of the problems, the Foundation report said:

American public education is beginning to improve. After years of decline, test scores have leveled off and in some states modest gains have been recorded. A core curriculum is beginning to be shaped. College admissions standards are being tightened.. Most importantly, there is a revival of interest in the nation's schools. Business leaders and governors are promoting education and there are stirrings at the federal level, too. . . America is turning once again to education (Boyer, 1983).

Boyer identified four "essential goals." (1) The high school should help students think critically and communicate effectively. (2) The high school should provide a core curriculum. (3) It should prepare all students for work or college. (4) Finally, the high school should fulfill its civic obligation through school and community. To meet the last goal, Boyer recommended a "new Carnegie Unit" of required service. These four "essential goals" were included in twelve general themes that provided a framework for reforming the American high school (Boyer, 1983).

I. Clarifying Goals

A high school must have a clear, vital mission. Goals must be clearly stated and widely shared by teachers, students, administrators, and parents. Goals should "focus on the mastery of language, on a core of common learning, on preparation for work and further education, and on community and civic service" (Boyer, 1983).

II. The Centrality of Language

Students must become skilled in the written and oral use of English. "The mastery of English is the first and most essential goal of education." For those deficient in the use of English, pre-high school summer programs and freshman year remediation should be provided. "Clear writing leads to clear thinking; clear thinking is the basis of clear writing." All high school students should complete a basic English course on writing. The curriculum should also include the study of the spoken word (Boyer, 1983).

III. The Curriculum Has a Core

"A core of common learning is essential." Required courses in the core curriculum should equal two-thirds of total units for graduation. Traditional courses in literature, history, mathematics and science should be offered. In addition, "emphasis should also be given to foreign language, the arts, civics, non-Western studies, technology, the meaning of work, and the importance of health." During their senior year, students should complete a Senior Independent Project. This would be a "written report that focuses on a significant social issue and draws upon the various fields of study in the academic core" (Boyer, 1983).

IV. Transition: To Work and Learning

Today, students are tracked into programs for those who "think" and those who "work" when, in fact, life for all of us is a blend of both. There should be a single track for all students. The first two years should be devoted almost exclusively to the common core and a portion of this work would continue into the third or fourth year. The last two years are for purposes of transition with about half the time devoted to "elective clusters." An elective cluster would include advanced study in selected academic subjects, the exploration of a career option, or both. To offer a full range of elective clusters, high schools must become connected to speciality schools, libraries, museums, art galleries, colleges, and industrial laboratories.

To help students decide what to do after graduation, guidance services should be expanded. A new Student Achievement and Advisement Test should be developed. The test would be linked to the core curriculum to determine what the student had learned. Personal characteristics and interests would be assessed to help students make decisions about their futures. Finally, the United States Department of Education should expand its national survey of schools to include a sampling of graduates

from all high schools at four-year intervals to learn about their post-high school placement and experience (Boyer, 1983).

V. Service: The New Carnegie Unit

All high school students should complete a service requirement, called a new Carnegie unit, that would involve them in volunteer work in the community or school. The requirement could be met during weekends, evenings or the summer. The students should have the responsibility of organizing and monitoring the new service program (Boyer, 1983).

IV. Teachers: Renewing the Profession

High school teachers should have four regular classes plus one period to help students with independent projects each day. At minimum, they should have an hour for class preparation and be exempt from all recess duties. Every school should have a Teacher Excellence Fund to enable teachers to compete for funds to carry out special professional projects. Good teachers should be recognized and outstanding teachers should be honored annually in every district. The governor, legislature, newspapers, parents, students, and businesses may be involved in this recognition. Teacher salaries should be increased at least 25% beyond the rate of inflation.

Every high school should have a cadet teacher program to encourage gifted students to become teachers. Colleges and universities should give full tuition scholarships to the top 5% of students who plan to teach. The federal government should establish a National Teacher Service tuition scholarship for students in the top third of their class who plan to teach in science and math.

Prospective teachers should have a 3.0 grade point average or better, a letter of recommendation from at least two professors, and should complete a core of common learning paralleling in broad outline the high school core curriculum proposed in this report. Once admitted to the program, prospective teacher candidates should complete an academic major, outside of education, and systematically visit schools. A fifth-year education core should be built around the following subjects: Schooling in America, Learning Theory and Research, The Teaching of Writing, and Technology and Its Uses. This fifth year should also include classroom observation, teaching experience and a series of six one-day learning seminars in which students meet with outstanding arts and science scholar-teachers.

Lifelong learning and retraining is essential for every teacher. Boyer proposed a two-week Teacher Professional Development Term for teachers to study, improve instruction, and expand knowledge. Based on competitive application, each district should have Teacher Travel Funds to allow teachers to travel to professional meetings to keep current in their fields. Every five years, teachers should be eligible to apply for a paid Summer Study Term.

A career path or ladder for teachers should be developed. "The irony is that to get ahead in teaching, you must leave it." Credentialing should be removed from college preparation and a written exam should have to be passed. Once credentialed, a career path moving from associate to senior teacher, with appropriate salary increases, should be provided. Teacher performance evaluation should largely be governed by teachers who have been judged to be outstanding.

School districts should establish a lectureship program to permit qualified non-academic professionals to teach part-time. They may include professionals from business, government or law or be retired personnel. Schools should consider joint appointments with business and industry. Flexibility in teacher terms should allow a

professional to teach one to three years, step out, and the return for another one to three-year term. Every state should create a Part-Time Practitioner Credential to implement the above recommendations (Boyer, 1983).

VII. Instruction: A Time for Learning

Teachers should use a variety of teaching styles: lecturing, coaching and Socratic questioning. Special emphasis should be on active student participation. Classroom expectations should be high, standards clear, and evaluations fair. Students should be held accountable for their work. Teachers should expand the use of original source materials. States should give local districts greater authority over textbook selection and the local district should give the teacher a greater voice in selecting appropriate materials (Boyer, 1983).

VIII. Technology: Extending the Teacher's Reach

The purpose and use of school computers should be linked to school objectives. Unfortunately, the strategy seems to be "buy now and plan later." Computer purchasing decisions should be based on equipment quality, material availability, and the computer company's commitment to develop instructional materials. Every computer company should establish a Special Instructional Materials

Fund to develop school software and provide inservice for teachers.

Federal funds should be used to establish ten Technology Resource Centers to demonstrate the latest technology. A National Commission on Computer Instruction should evaluate software. Schools should relate computer resources to their educational objectives. Students should learn about the social importance of technology of which the computer is a part. They should learn about computers, learn with them and learn from them (Boyer, 1983).

IX. Flexibility: Patterns to Fit Purpose

Class schedules should be flexible to permit larger blocks of time in such areas as laboratory science, foreign language, and creative writing. Small high schools should expand their offerings by using off-campus sites, mobile classrooms, or part-time professionals. Large high schools (over 2000) should organize into "schools within schools" for a more cohesive and supportive social setting for all students.

Special arrangements such as credit by examination, independent study, and special study with universities should be available to gifted students. Federal funds should establish a network of Residential Academies in Science and

Mathematics. Title I (the federally-funded Elementary and Secondary Education Act) should be fully funded to support all students eligible to participate in remedial programs. Working in cooperation with a community college, every high school should have a re-entry program to allow dropouts to complete their education (Boyer, 1983).

X. The Principal as Leader

As the key educator, the principal should complete all licensing requirements for a teacher. Before becoming a principal, potential candidates should serve one year as an "administrative intern" and at last two years as an assistant.

Principals and their staffs should have greater control over their budgets. Every principal should have a School Improvement Fund to provide discretionary money for special programs, materials, seminars, inservice, etc. Principals should have greater control of the selection and rewarding of their teachers. A network of Academies for Principals should be established to keep principals current with the latest developments in education (Boyer, 1983).

XI. Strengthening Connections

High schools are connected to elementary, junior high and higher education. The quality of American high schools will largely be shaped by the quality

of these connections. All states should establish a School-College Coordination Panel to define recommended academic requirements to enter higher education. Colleges and universities should form a comprehensive partnership with high schools. Early admission, advanced placement, and credit by examination should be available for the able students.

Schools should strengthen ties to business and industry. Business expertise can be very helpful to schools in strengthening new technologies, math and science programs, facility improvement, inventories, and training programs. They can provide cash awards or grants to outstanding teachers or principals. They can help establish family counseling programs, tutorial programs, or even an apprenticeship program for high risk students (Boyer, 1983).

XII. Excellence: The Public Commitment

School improvement depends on public commitment. Parent volunteer programs and Parent-Teacher-Student Advisory Councils should be established at all schools. Parents should be actively involved in school board meetings and elections.

Community coalitions--Citizens for Public Schools--should be formed to support education. Boards of education should have special meetings for

their employees. The states should recognize that their primary responsibility is to establish general standards and to provide fiscal support.

The federal government should be a partner in establishing excellence. A new School Building and Equipment fund should be established to provide short-term, low interest loans to schools for plant rehabilitation and for purchase of special equipment. All high schools should take steps to achieve excellence. The Carnegie Foundation believes that the schools can meet the challenge to provide excellence (Boyer, 1983).

Summary

This chapter contained a literature review of participants influencing change and a review of eight major excellence reports. Both internal and external participants of the change process were reviewed. For this project, the researcher examined how internal participants were capable of influencing change. These internal participants were identified as superintendents, board members, principals, teachers, students and citizens. A sphere of possible influences was given for each participant. The eight major excellence reports were identified by the American Association of School Administrators, the Michigan Association of School Boards and the Michigan State Department of Education, as major

works in the excellence movement. The recommendations from these reports ranged from subject matter to curriculum organization; from institutional strategies to graduation requirements and extended school years; and from teacher training to involving business and industry in the instructional program--and more. The following is a short review of these eight excellence reports.

Mortimer Adler's Paideia Proposal proposed to strengthen America's democratic institutions with a one-track, 12-year system of public education dedicated to a thorough general liberal education for all students. Three primary goals were identified as: (1) mental, moral and spiritual growth and improvement; (2) the making of good citizens; and (3) the capacity for every adult to earn a living in our advanced industrial economy. These objectives can be attained by implementing a core curriculum for all students consisting of: (1) language, literature and the fine arts; (2) math and natural science; and (3) history, geography, and social studies. Physical education, intramural sports, and health education would be taught all 12 years. The only elective would be for a second language. Upon completion of the 12 years of schooling, each student would have acquired the following: (1) an organized body of knowledge in each of the core curriculum areas; (2) intellectual skills necessary to apply that knowledge; and (3) an enlarged understanding of ideas and values necessary to expand their knowledge base.

Teachers could use three different teaching methodologies: (1) didactic instruction; (2) coaching and supervised practice; and (3) Socratic questioning.

The A Nation at Risk report focused primarily on the high school years and represented the end product of an exhaustive collection of testimony and documents addressing the quality of education in the United States. There were three essential messages in the report: (1) the nation is at risk; (2) mediocrity, not excellence, was the norm in American education; and (3) Americans do not have to tolerate mediocrity. We can do better, should do better, and must do better. The Commission's recommendation fell into five categories: content, standards and expectations, time, teaching, and leadership and fiscal support. Implementing recommendations were offered with each of the five basic recommendations.

Making the Grade: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund focused on the legitimate and essential role of the federal government in supporting elementary and secondary education. The report presented a variety of recommendations for the federal government to improve education. These included improving educational leadership, encouraging quality in teachers, establishing the primacy of the English language among non-English speaking students, improving science and mathematics education, fostering education research, and providing a choice of schooling to students and parents. The report

indicated that the most important objective of education was the development of literacy in the English language. One of the report's more interesting recommendations was the establishment of a national Master Teacher's Program. The Task Force acknowledged that many of their proposals were costly. But they felt education was every bit as important as tanks, planes, ships and highways.

Academic Preparation for College outlined what college entrants needed to know and be able to do for success in college. The report reflected consensus views of hundreds of academic specialists, teachers, guidance counselors and admissions officers from all parts of the country. Basic academic competencies were identified as the broad intellectual skills essential to effective work in all fields of college study. They are reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, reasoning, and studying. Knowledge of history, science, language, and all other subjects is impossible without these competencies. In addition to the basic competencies, the College Board also identified English, the arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language as the basic academic subject.

Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School is the first of three books from A Study of High Schools. Horace's Compromise is an account of the author's visits to high schools across the nation. He focused on the teaching and learning processes and the excessive

compromises that educators are forced to make. It deals with what the author, TheodoreSizer, calls the "insides" of schools--specifically, a critical triangle of student, teacher, and subject and on the climate of the school in which the triangle functions. Sizer divided his book into four sections through which he developed his theme of the dilemma of the American high school: the student, the program, the teacher, and the bureaucratic problems. Sizer proposed a substantial restructuring of the high school. Schools must stop the idea of giving, presenting or delivering a service and start inspiring kids to explore and learn for themselves. Mastery of the subject matter, motivation and learning style are the important elements.

Action for Excellence addressed the relationship between a strong national economy and the educational support needed to foster and sustain it. The task force wrote that students needed more than minimum competence in reading, writing, mathematics, science, reasoning, the use of computers, and other areas. They need the ability to comprehend a simple written message, to compute with whole numbers and the mastery of writing mechanics. The thesis of the task force report was that our future success as a nation, our national defense, our social stability and well being and national prosperity, will depend on our ability to improve education and training for our citizens. The report listed basic skills as reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, science and reasoning. The

report listed three new areas as employment competencies, basic economic competency and computer literacy.

A Place Called School culminated John Goodlad's multi-year "Study of Schooling." Goodlad and 43 investigators spent \$4 million and eight years making observations on over 1000 classrooms in 38 elementary and secondary schools. The study produced many findings. Goodlad found that most classrooms were "emotionally flat" and that students lose interest as they move from grade to grade. Part of the reason is that teachers talk too much, curriculum planning is not given enough attention and schools are too large. Goodlad recommended that children start school on their fourth birthday, that all children receive a general education, and that elementary school enrollments not exceed 400 and that secondary schools should have between 600 and 800 students. He further recommended the establishment of "head teachers" and the elimination of "tracking." Other findings showed that over 70% of total student time was spent on instruction with a curricular dominance of English/language arts and mathematics. Recommendations for improvement were given at the state, district and school level. Specific recommendations were given for teachers, curriculum, the reshaping of the school and the establishment of research and development centers.

High School is the study of American high schools by a team of twenty-five educators who spent two years and over

two thousand hours visiting fifteen public high schools. The report called for a "renewal" of American education, an emphasis on teaching students to master written communication skills, and higher pay and improved working conditions for teachers. The report rejected the contention that American high schools are plagued by a "rising tide of mediocrity." The report contended that such mediocrity came to a head in the late 1970's and since that time education has experienced modest improvement in standardized test scores, tightening of the curriculum and more stringent college admissions standards. For fifteen percent of American students, public high schools offer an excellent education--the best in the world. For the majority of students, public education has been adequate, at times achieving excellence. But for about twenty to thirty percent of the nation's students, the schools have failed. Other findings included the rejection of the idea that the school year should be lengthened. Rather, the report called for better use of current instructional time.

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

Chapter III discusses the methodology used for this research project and includes the interview questions asked each participant. The study was both qualitative and exploratory. The methodology used for developing each of the six case studies was that of in-depth interviewing. Initial interviewing was done with a protocol of questions. These first questions were developed and substantiated with the assistance of three well-known professionals within the field of education. Follow-up questions and additional areas were explored as a result of the initial interview questions.

Methodology

The research project consisted of six case studies of six Michigan school districts located in small towns. It was an exploratory study. Each case study represented approximately a dozen in-depth interviews. The researcher interviewed superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, board members, community leaders, teachers, and individuals serving on excellence committees. The qualitative method of research was chosen because a school district's response to the excellence movement could not easily be extracted into numbers. There were simply too many things happening to reduce to numbers.

sociologists usually use this method (qualitative) when they are especially interested in understanding a particular organization or substantive problem rather than demonstrating relations between abstractly defined variables (Becker, 1985).

The six school districts selected for case studies were chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

- (1) School size as measured by enrollment varied between 1000 and 4000 students. Districts within these enrollments represent the majority of school districts in Michigan.
- (2) The districts selected for case study were located in central Michigan.
- (3) Each district had a single senior high school.
- (4) The superintendent served in his/her assignment for a minimum of three years.

The methodology for developing each case study was that of in-depth interviewing. Two interviewing procedures were used. Initially a protocol was developed. Additional areas suggested by the responses were explored. In some cases, interviewees were interviewed more than once.

After spending some time getting acquainted with the superintendent, the researcher asked questions concerning the district's response to the excellence movement. The superintendent's response indicated other key individuals who played an important part in the district's response to the call for excellence. Within each school district, the researcher interviewed all active participants who

contributed to the shaping of the district's response to excellence. These individuals included the superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, board members, teachers, and individuals serving on excellence committees.

For this study, interviewing seemed the only suitable methodology. Although there are problems inherent with interviewing, the researcher was confident these problems could be overcome. The disadvantages were that the technique placed total reliance on the subjects being interviewed for validity. Multiple interviews within each district provided a measure of validity as to the accuracy of the district's response. There was little reason to believe that the interviewees prevaricated from the truth. The researcher presented an objectivity and did not represent any special interest group.

The researcher attempted to satisfy validity and reliability with a dozen or more interviews per school district. The most serious objection was whether the synthesis describing the responses of six school districts could be used to generalize to other similar school districts. In an article on theoretical sampling, Glaser and Strauss wrote:

Conventional theorizing claims generality of scope; that is, one assumes that if the relationship holds for one group under certain conditions, it will probably hold for other groups under the same conditions. This assumption of persistence is subject only to being disproven--not proven--when other sociologists question its credibility (Glaser, 1967).

Mintzberg maintained that "such direct research is a technique that makes up in depth what it lacks in breadth" (Mintzberg, 1979).

Review and Verification of the Interview Questions

In developing a protocol of questions for each participant, the researcher acknowledged the importance of having well-qualified professional educators assist in the making and the reviewing of the initial interview questions. For this purpose, the researcher chose three individuals: a past dean of the College of Education at Michigan State University, a retired superintendent from a large city school system, and the current executive director for the Michigan Association of School Boards. Each of these gentlemen possesses a broad range of educational experience. They have all reached the summit within their respective areas of education. This particular mix of expertise from the university, public schools and the school boards was devised to give the greatest possible credence to the interviewing questions. Listed below, alphabetically, are the qualifications of these gentlemen to serve in the review capacity along with their suggestions and comments for the interview questions and format. Each of these comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft of interview questions.

Dr. Harry Howard is the retired superintendent of schools for Ann Arbor, Michigan. He has been a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent for two of Michigan's best known school systems. Ann Arbor, his last school district, is the home of the University of Michigan and is well recognized as one of the most difficult of all Michigan superintendencies. For many years, Dr. Howard served as a leader and leading spokesman for the Michigan Association of School Administrators. He is currently the president of Cleary College and one of three senior partners in a prestigious Michigan-based educational consulting firm.

Dr. Howard reviewed the original questions very carefully. He made keen observations and suggestions which led to the revision of many questions and the addition of several new questions. One of his keenest observations was that individual perceptions about who initiated and who motivated a district's response to excellence will undoubtedly be different depending upon who the researcher was interviewing. Dr. Howard, displaying a visible expression of intrigue, said that these perceptions should be written down exactly as reported and that they would therefore add greatly to the richness of the study.

Dr. Keith Goldhammer is the retired dean of the College of Education at Michigan State University. He has been a teacher, principal, school superintendent, author, professor, and dean. Most significantly, Dr. Goldhammer is

nationally known as one of the great educators of our time. He is currently one of three senior partners in a prestigious Michigan-based educational consulting firm.

Dr. Goldhammer was first to suggest the need for this particular study. The author of several case studies himself, he felt that the in-depth interview and the development of individual case studies was the best method for thoroughly understanding how small Michigan school districts were responding to the excellence movement. Dr. Goldhammer was instrumental in the development of the format and the language for the interview questions.

In light of the fact that the researcher attempted to determine how six Michigan school districts responded to the 1983 excellence movement, Dr. Goldhammer indicated that the questions chosen for interviewing would serve as a good guide for interviewing participants within the school system. He stressed that the language for each question should be reduced to its simplest form and be as explicit as possible. Finally, noting that the format of the interview was open-ended and being the veteran of many interviews and case studies himself, Dr. Goldhammer suggested that if the researcher could more or less commit each question to memory, the individual interviews would flow more naturally at a conversational level and that the richness of the overall study could be greatly increased. In making that suggestion, he emphasized several times that the essential information from each question had to be sufficiently and thoroughly provided.

Dr. Norman Weinheimer is the current executive director for the Michigan Association of School Boards. He has been a teacher, principal, school superintendent, and professor at Michigan State University. Prior to his current position, he was superintendent of schools for Grand Rapids, one of Michigan's largest and most challenging school districts. His position as executive director for the Michigan Association of School Boards places him clearly at the summit of Michigan public school education. For many years, the name of Norm Weinheimer has been widely recognized in and out of Michigan education. This researcher and many others see Dr. Weinheimer as Michigan's senior spokesman for education. He has been a trusted and highly respected personal advisor for this researcher for many years.

Dr. Weinheimer reviewed the original questions very carefully. He was openly interested in the research topic and the focus of the questions. His organization has been very instrumental in leading school districts toward programs of excellence. He thought that the interview questions and the resulting case studies would provide valuable information as to how Michigan school districts have responded to the excellence movement. For consistency and comparability, he stressed that participants should be asked each question as written.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT

General Questions for Opening the Interview Discussion

- I. As I'm sure you know, the release of the Nation at Risk report in the spring of 1983 is generally credited with the beginning of a nation-wide thrust to provide for excellence in the nation's schools. That initial report was followed by scores of new reports, task forces, special legislation and recommendations from numerous organizations.
 1. Do you think this excellence movement will eventually prove to be just another passing fad with no lasting benefits or do you believe that American education has been permanently changed with long-lasting benefits?
 2. Did your district respond with a program for excellence?
 3. If there was a response, do you think that response was largely an effort to satisfy various groups such as the board, staff, community, state department, MASB or do you think there was a sincere recognition that the district needed to improve its standards and provide for excellence?
- II. The following questions are designed to look more specifically at your district's response to the excellence movement. In this first set of questions, I am interested in discovering who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement. The word

initiate is used to identify who took the first action to respond with a program for excellence.

1. Would you describe any newspaper, radio, or T.V. editorials that may have influenced your school to make a response to the excellence movement?
2. Were there any community groups which requested either you or your Board to make a response for excellence?
3. Would you describe the influence of any individual community members who suggested the need for the school to make a response to the excellence movement?
4. Did members from the teaching staff ever suggest that the school should develop an excellence response?
5. Was the Board first to request that either you or your administration develop an response to the excellence movement?
6. If so, in your opinion, who or what influenced the Board to make their initial request to develop a policy or program for dealing with excellence?
7. Did you or your administration present the Board with an unsolicited response to the excellence movement?

8. In your opinion, what factors influenced you or your board to make this initial proposal of providing for excellence?

III. In this second set of questions, I am interested in identifying those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have been the motivation for the district to develop its response to excellence.

1. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
2. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the intermediate district have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
3. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the State Department of Education have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
4. In your opinion, what motivational influence did ancillary organizations such as AASA, MASB, MASA, MEA have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
5. Which ancillary organizations were most influential and in what way were they influential?
6. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the major excellence reports, such as Nation at Risk, A Place Called School, High School, Making

the Grade have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

7. In your opinion, what motivational influence did television, radio, newspaper and magazine news media have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
8. Had your district completed a needs analysis or an evaluation of need prior to 1983?
9. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to external stimuli as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
10. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to an internal recognition of need as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

IV. In this third set of questions, I am interested in determining what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence.

1. Did the Board establish a committee for dealing with the issue of providing for excellence?
2. If so, what segments of the community served on this committee?
3. Were there any other committees or subcommittees established and what segments of the community did they represent?

4. Was a committee given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 5. Were you, as superintendent, given the main responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 6. Was any other administrator given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 7. Was an administrative team given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 8. If so, was the administrative team given that responsibility by you or the Board?
- V. In this fourth set of questions, I am interested in determining who actually made the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. I would assume that the decision maker could have been the Board, a Board committee, a Board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team.
1. Has the Board approved a district-wide program, proposal or resolution to provide for excellence?
 2. Would you identify the individual or group that wrote this program, proposal or resolution?
 3. Was the writer of the proposal also the decision maker?

4. If not, who in your opinion was the decision maker?

5. Who recommended the district's response to the Board for approval?

VI. In this fifth set of questions, I am interested in identifying all participants who were involved or included in the process of formulating the district's response to the call for excellence.

1. What role did the Board play?

2. What role did you, as superintendent, play?

3. What role did the assistant superintendent play?

4. What role did committees play?

5. What role did the principals play?

6. What role did the teachers play?

7. What role did the students play?

8. What role did the community play?

VII. In this sixth set of questions, I am looking for the details or specifics for your school's program for excellence. In other words, what programs, proposals or resolutions were adopted?

1. What was added or deleted from the prior curriculum?

2. What resolutions, programs, proposals or plans were adopted?

3. In your words, would you describe your district's plan of action for addressing the call for excellence?

4. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after one of the major excellence reports?
5. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after the State Department of Education "Blueprint for Action" plan?
6. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after MASB's "School Board's Planning for Excellence" reports?
7. Would you identify any other plans used as a model for your district's plan?
8. Did your plan contain an assessment model and if so would you describe it?

VIII. In this last set of questions, I am interested in what your district has achieved or what is expected to be achieved as a result of your district's response to the demand for excellence.

1. Would you identify any verified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence.
2. What instruments were used for verification?
3. Would you identify any unverified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence?
4. Would you identify the achievements which you anticipate as a result of your district's response to excellence?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

General Questions for Opening the Interview Discussion

I. As I'm sure you know, the release of the Nation at Risk report in the spring of 1983 is generally credited with the beginning of a nation-wide thrust to provide for excellence in the nation's schools. That initial report was followed by scores of new reports, task forces, special legislation and recommendations from numerous organizations.

1. Do you think this excellence movement will eventually prove to be just another passing fad with no lasting benefits or do you believe that American education has been permanently changed with long-lasting benefits?

2. Did your district respond with a program for excellence?

3. If there was a response, do you think that response was largely an effort to satisfy various groups such as the board, staff, community, state department, MASB or do you think there was a sincere recognition that the district needed to improve its standards and provide for excellence?

II. The following questions are designed to look more specifically at your district's response to the excellence movement. In this first set of questions, I am interested in discovering who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement. The word

initiate is used to identify who took the first action to respond with a program for excellence.

1. Would you describe any newspaper, radio, or T.V. editorials that may have influenced your school to make a response to the excellence movement?
2. Were there any community groups which requested either you or your Board to make a response for excellence?
3. Would you describe the influence of any individual community members who suggested the need for the school to make a response to the excellence movement?
4. Did members from the teaching staff ever suggest that the school should develop an excellence response?
5. Was the Board first to request that either you or your administration develop an response to the excellence movement?
6. If so, in your opinion, who or what influenced the Board to make their initial request to develop a policy or program for dealing with excellence?
7. Did you or your administration present the Board with an unsolicited response to the excellence movement?

8. In your opinion, what factors influenced you or your board to make this initial proposal of providing for excellence?

III. In this second set of questions, I am interested in identifying those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have been the motivation for the district to develop its response to excellence.

1. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
2. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the intermediate district have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
3. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the State Department of Education have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
4. In your opinion, what motivational influence did ancillary organizations such as AASA, MASB, MASA, MEA have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
5. Which ancillary organizations were most influential and in what way were they influential?
6. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the major excellence reports, such as Nation at Risk, A Place Called School, High School, Making

the Grade have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

7. In your opinion, what motivational influence did television, radio, newspaper and magazine news media have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 8. Had your district completed a needs analysis or an evaluation of need prior to 1983?
 9. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to external stimuli as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 10. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to an internal recognition of need as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
- IV. In this third set of questions, I am interested in determining what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence.
1. Did the Board establish a committee for dealing with the issue of providing for excellence?
 2. If so, what segments of the community served on this committee?
 3. Were there any other committees or subcommittees established and what segments of the community did they represent?

4. Was a committee given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 5. Were you, as assistant superintendent, given the main responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 6. Was any other administrator given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 7. Was an administrative team given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 8. If so, was the administrative team given that responsibility by the superintendent or the Board?
- V. In this fourth set of questions, I am interested in determining who actually made the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. I would assume that the decision maker could have been the Board, a Board committee, a Board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team.
1. Has the Board approved a district-wide program, proposal or resolution to provide for excellence?
 2. Would you identify the individual or group that wrote this program, proposal or resolution?

3. Was the writer of the proposal also the decision maker?
4. If not, who in your opinion was the decision maker?
5. Who recommended the district's response to the Board for approval?

VI. In this fifth set of questions, I am interested in identifying all participants who were involved or included in the process of formulating the district's response to the call for excellence.

1. What role did the Board play?
2. What role did you, as assistant superintendent, play?
3. What role did the superintendent play?
4. What role did committees play?
5. What role did the principals play?
6. What role did the teachers play?
7. What role did the students play?
8. What role did the community play?

VII. In this sixth set of questions, I am looking for the details or specifics for your school's program for excellence. In other words, what programs, proposals or resolutions were adopted?

1. What was added or deleted from the prior curriculum?
2. What resolutions, programs, proposals or plans were adopted?

3. In your words, would you describe your district's plan of action for addressing the call for excellence?
4. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after one of the major excellence reports?
5. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after the State Department of Education "Blueprint for Action" plan?
6. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after MASB's "School Board's Planning for Excellence" reports?
7. Would you identify any other plans used as a model for your district's plan?
8. Did your plan contain an assessment model and if so would you describe it?

VIII. In this last set of questions, I am interested in what your district has achieved or what is expected to be achieved as a result of your district's response to the demand for excellence.

1. Would you identify any verified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence.
2. What instruments were used for verification?
3. Would you identify any unverified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence?

4. Would you identify the achievements which you anticipate as a result of your district's response to excellence?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

General Questions for Opening the Interview Discussion

- I. As I'm sure you know, the release of the Nation at Risk report in the spring of 1983 is generally credited with the beginning of a nation-wide thrust to provide for excellence in the nation's schools. That initial report was followed by scores of new reports, task forces, special legislation and recommendations from numerous organizations.
1. Do you think this excellence movement will eventually prove to be just another passing fad with no lasting benefits or do you believe that American education has been permanently changed with long-lasting benefits?
 2. Did your district respond with a program for excellence?
 3. If there was a response, do you think that response was largely an effort to satisfy various groups such as the board, staff, community, state department, MASB or do you think there was a sincere recognition that the district needed to improve its standards and provide for excellence?
- II. The following questions are designed to look more specifically at your district's response to the excellence movement. In this first set of questions, I am interested in discovering who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement. The word

initiate is used to identify who took the first action to respond with a program for excellence.

1. Would you describe any newspaper, radio, or T.V. editorials that may have influenced your school to make a response to the excellence movement?
2. Were there any community groups which requested either the Board or the administration to make a response for excellence?
3. Would you describe the influence of any individual community members who suggested the need for the school to make a response to the excellence movement?
4. Did members from the teaching staff ever suggest that the school should develop an excellence response?
5. Was the Board first to request that the administration develop an response to the excellence movement?
6. If so, in your opinion, who or what influenced the Board to make their initial request to develop a policy or program for dealing with excellence?
7. Did the administration present the Board with an unsolicited response to the excellence movement?
8. In your opinion, what factors influenced the Board or the administration to make this initial proposal of providing for excellence?

III. In this second set of questions, I am interested in identifying those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have been the motivation for the district to develop its response to excellence.

1. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
2. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the intermediate district have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
3. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the State Department of Education have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
4. In your opinion, what motivational influence did ancillary organizations such as AASA, MASB, MASA, MEA have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
5. Which ancillary organizations were most influential and in what way were they influential?
6. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the major excellence reports, such as Nation at Risk, A Place Called School, High School, Making the Grade have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

7. In your opinion, what motivational influence did television, radio, newspaper and magazine news media have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 8. Had your district completed a needs analysis or an evaluation of need prior to 1983?
 9. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to external stimuli as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 10. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to an internal recognition of need as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
- IV. In this third set of questions, I am interested in determining what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence.
1. Did the Board establish a committee for dealing with the issue of providing for excellence?
 2. If so, what segments of the community served on this committee?
 3. Were there any other committees or subcommittees established and what segments of the community did they represent?
 4. Was a committee given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?

5. Did the Board give the superintendent responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 6. Was any other administrator given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 7. Was an administrative team given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 8. If so, was the administrative team given that responsibility by the Board or administration?
- V. In this fourth set of questions, I am interested in determining who actually made the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. I would assume that the decision maker could have been the Board, a Board committee, a Board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team.
1. Has the Board approved a district-wide program, proposal or resolution to provide for excellence?
 2. Would you identify the individual or group that wrote this program, proposal or resolution?
 3. Was the writer of the proposal also the decision maker?
 4. If not, who in your opinion was the decision maker?

5. Who recommended the district's response to the Board for approval?

VI. In this fifth set of questions, I am interested in identifying all participants who were involved or included in the process of formulating the district's response to the call for excellence.

1. What role did the Board play?
2. What role did the assistant superintendent play?
3. What role did the superintendent play?
4. What role did committees play?
5. What role did the principals play?
6. What role did the teachers play?
7. What role did the students play?
8. What role did the community play?

VII. In this sixth set of questions, I am looking for the details or specifics for your school's program for excellence. In other words, what programs, proposals or resolutions were adopted?

1. What was added or deleted from the prior curriculum?
2. What resolutions, programs, proposals or plans were adopted?
3. In your words, would you describe your district's plan of action for addressing the call for excellence?
4. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after one of the major excellence reports?

5. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after the State Department of Education "Blueprint for Action" plan?
6. To what extent was your district's plan modeled after MASB's "School Board's Planning for Excellence" reports?
7. Would you identify any other plans used as a model for your district's plan?
8. Did your plan contain an assessment model and if so would you describe it?

VIII. In this last set of questions, I am interested in what your district has achieved or what is expected to be achieved as a result of your district's response to the demand for excellence.

1. Would you identify any verified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence.
2. What instruments were used for verification?
3. Would you identify any unverified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence?
4. Would you identify the achievements which you anticipate as a result of your district's response to excellence?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

General Questions for Opening the Interview Discussion

I. As I'm sure you know, the release of the Nation at Risk report in the spring of 1983 is generally credited with the beginning of a nation-wide thrust to provide for excellence in the nation's schools. That initial report was followed by scores of new reports, task forces, special legislation and recommendations from numerous organizations.

1. Do you think this excellence movement will eventually prove to be just another passing fad with no lasting benefits or do you believe that American education has been permanently changed with long-lasting benefits?

2. Did your district respond with a program for excellence?

3. If there was a response, do you think that response was largely an effort to satisfy various groups such as the board, staff, community, state department, MASB or do you think there was a sincere recognition that the district needed to improve its standards and provide for excellence?

II. The following questions are designed to look more specifically at your district's response to the excellence movement. In this first set of questions, I am interested in discovering who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement. The word

initiate is used to identify who took the first action to respond with a program for excellence.

1. Would you describe any newspaper, radio, or T.V. editorials that may have influenced your school to make a response to the excellence movement?
2. Are you aware of any community groups or individual community members which may have requested either the administration or the Board to make a response to excellence?
3. Would you describe the influence of any individual community members who suggested the need for the school to make a response to the excellence movement?
4. To your knowledge, did members of the teaching staff ever suggest that the school should develop an excellence response?
5. To your knowledge, was the Board first to request that the administration develop a response to the excellence movement?
6. If so, in your opinion, who or what influenced the Board to make their initial request to develop a policy or program for dealing with excellence?
7. To your knowledge, did the administration present the Board with an unsolicited response to the excellence movement?

8. In your opinion, what factors influenced the school to make their initial proposal of providing for excellence?
- III. In this second set of questions, I am interested in identifying those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have been the motivation for the district to develop its response to excellence.
1. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 2. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the intermediate district have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 3. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the State Department of Education have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 4. In your opinion, what motivational influence did ancillary organizations such as AASA, MASB, MASA, MEA have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 5. Which ancillary organizations do you feel were most influential and in what way were they influential?
 6. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the major excellence reports, such as Nation at

Risk, A Place Called School, High School, Making the Grade have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

7. In your opinion, what motivational influence did television, radio, newspaper and magazine news media have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 8. To your knowledge, had your district completed a needs analysis or an evaluation of need prior to 1983?
 9. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to external stimuli as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 10. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to an internal recognition of need as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
- IV. In this third set of questions, I am interested in determining what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence.
1. Did the Board establish a committee for dealing with the issue of providing for excellence?
 2. If so, what segments of the community served on this committee?

3. Were there any other committees or subcommittees established and what segments of the community did they represent?
 4. Was a committee given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 5. Was an administrator given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 6. Was an administrative team given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 7. If so, was the administrative team given that responsibility by the superintendent or the Board?
- V. In this fourth set of questions, I am interested in determining who actually made the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. I would assume that the decision maker could have been the Board, a Board committee, a Board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team.
1. Has the Board approved a district-wide program, proposal or resolution to provide for excellence?
 2. Would you identify the individual or group that wrote this program, proposal or resolution?

3. Was the writer of the proposal also the decision maker?
4. If not, who in your opinion was the decision maker?
5. Who recommended the district's response to the Board for approval?

VI. In this fifth set of questions, I am interested in identifying all participants who were involved or included in the process of formulating the district's response to the call for excellence.

1. What role did the Board play?
2. What role did the assistant superintendent play?
3. What role did the superintendent play?
4. What role did committees play?
5. What role did you, as principal, play?
6. What role did the teachers play?
7. What role did the students play?
8. What role did the community play?

VII. In this sixth set of questions, I am looking for the details or specifics for your school's program for excellence. In other words, what programs, proposals or resolutions were adopted?

1. What was added or deleted from the prior curriculum?
2. What resolutions, programs, proposals or plans were adopted?

3. In your words, would you describe your district's plan of action for addressing the call for excellence?
4. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after one of the major excellence reports?
5. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after the State Department of Education "Blueprint for Action" plan?
6. To your knowledge, was your district's plan modeled after MASB's "School Board's Planning for Excellence" reports?
7. Would you identify any other plans used as a model for your district's plan?
8. Do you know if your plan contained an assessment model and if so would you describe it?

VIII. In this last set of questions, I am interested in what your district has achieved or what is expected to be achieved as a result of your district's response to the demand for excellence.

1. Would you identify any verified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence.
2. Do you know what instruments were used for verification?

3. Would you identify any unverified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence?
4. Would you identify the achievements which you anticipate as a result of your district's response to excellence?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

General Questions for Opening the Interview Discussion

- I. As I'm sure you know, the release of the Nation at Risk report in the spring of 1983 is generally credited with the beginning of a nation-wide thrust to provide for excellence in the nation's schools. That initial report was followed by scores of new reports, task forces, special legislation and recommendations from numerous organizations.
1. Do you think this excellence movement will eventually prove to be just another passing fad with no lasting benefits or do you believe that American education has been permanently changed with long-lasting benefits?
 2. Did your district respond with a program for excellence?
 3. If there was a response, do you think that response was largely an effort to satisfy various groups such as the board, staff, community, state department, MASB or do you think there was a sincere recognition that the district needed to improve its standards and provide for excellence?
- II. The following questions are designed to look more specifically at your district's response to the excellence movement. In this first set of questions, I am interested in discovering who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement. The word

initiate is used to identify who took the first action to respond with a program for excellence.

1. Would you describe any newspaper, radio, or T.V. editorials that may have influenced your school to make a response to the excellence movement?
2. To your knowledge, were there any community groups or individual community members which requested the administration or the Board to make a response to excellence?
3. Are you aware of any individual community members who suggested the need for the school to make a response to the excellence movement?
4. Did members of the teaching staff ever suggest that the school should develop an excellence response?
5. To your knowledge, was the Board first to request that the administration develop a response to the excellence movement?
6. If so, in your opinion, who or what influenced the Board to make their initial request to develop a policy or program for dealing with excellence?
7. To your knowledge, did the administration present the Board with an unsolicited response to the excellence movement?

8. In your opinion, what factors influenced the superintendent or the Board to make this initial proposal of providing for excellence?

III. In this second set of questions, I am interested in identifying those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have been the motivation for the district to develop its response to excellence.

1. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
2. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the intermediate district have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
3. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the State Department of Education have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
4. In your opinion, what motivational influence did ancillary organizations such as AASA, MASB, MASA, MEA have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
5. In your opinion, which ancillary organizations do you feel were most influential and in what way were they influential?
6. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the major excellence reports, such as Nation at

Risk, A Place Called School, High School, Making the Grade have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

7. In your opinion, what motivational influence did television, radio, newspaper and magazine news media have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 8. To your knowledge, had your district completed a needs analysis or an evaluation of need prior to 1983?
 9. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to external stimuli as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
 10. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to an internal recognition of need as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
- IV. In this third set of questions, I am interested in determining what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence.
1. Did the Board establish a committee for dealing with the issue of providing for excellence?
 2. If so, what segments of the community served on this committee?

3. Were there any other committees or subcommittees established and what segments of the community did they represent?
 4. Was a committee given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 5. Was the superintendent given the main responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 6. Was any other administrator given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 7. Was an administrative team given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 8. If so, was the administrative team given that responsibility by the superintendent or the Board?
- V. In this fourth set of questions, I am interested in determining who actually made the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. I would assume that the decision maker could have been the Board, a Board committee, a Board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team.
1. Has the Board approved a district-wide program, proposal or resolution to provide for excellence?

2. Would you identify the individual or group that wrote this program, proposal or resolution?
3. Was the writer of the proposal also the decision maker?
4. If not, who in your opinion was the decision maker?
5. Do you know who recommended the district's response to the Board for approval?

VI. In this fifth set of questions, I am interested in identifying all participants who were involved or included in the process of formulating the district's response to the call for excellence.

1. What role did the Board play?
2. What role did the superintendent play?
3. What role did the assistant superintendent play?
4. What role did committees play?
5. What role did the principal play?
6. What role did the teachers play?
7. What role did the students play?
8. What role did the community play?

VII. In this sixth set of questions, I am looking for the details or specifics for your school's program for excellence. In other words, what programs, proposals or resolutions were adopted?

1. What was added or deleted from the prior curriculum?

2. What resolutions, programs, proposals or plans were adopted?
3. In your words, would you describe your district's plan of action for addressing the call for excellence?
4. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after one of the major excellence reports?
5. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after the State Department of Education "Blueprint for Action" plan?
6. To your knowledge, was your district's plan modeled after MASB's "School Board's Planning for Excellence" reports?
7. Can you identify any other plans used as a model for your district's plan?
8. Do you know if your plan contained an assessment model and if so would you describe it?

VIII. In this last set of questions, I am interested in what your district has achieved or what is expected to be achieved as a result of your district's response to the demand for excellence.

1. Can you identify any verified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence.
2. Do you know what instruments were used for verification?

3. Can you identify any unverified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence?
4. Can you identify the achievements which your district anticipates as a result of their response to excellence?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

General Questions for Opening the Interview Discussion

- I. As I'm sure you know, the release of the Nation at Risk report in the spring of 1983 is generally credited with the beginning of a nation-wide thrust to provide for excellence in the nation's schools. That initial report was followed by scores of new reports, task forces, special legislation and recommendations from numerous organizations.
1. Do you think this excellence movement will eventually prove to be just another passing fad with no lasting benefits or do you believe that American education has been permanently changed with long-lasting benefits?
 2. Did your district respond with a program for excellence?
 3. If there was a response, do you think that response was largely an effort to satisfy various groups such as the board, staff, community, state department, MASB or do you think there was a sincere recognition that the district needed to improve its standards and provide for excellence?
- II. The following questions are designed to look more specifically at your district's response to the excellence movement. In this first set of questions, I am interested in discovering who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement. The word

initiate is used to identify who took the first action to respond with a program for excellence.

1. Would you describe any newspaper, radio, or T.V. editorials that may have influenced your school to make a response to the excellence movement?
2. Were there any community groups which requested either the superintendent or the Board to make a response to excellence?
3. Would you describe the influence of any individual community members who suggested the need for the school to make a response to the excellence movement.
4. To your knowledge, did members of the teaching staff ever suggest that the school should develop an excellence response?
5. In your opinion, what factors influenced the administration or the Board to make their initial proposal of providing for excellence?

III. In this second set of questions, I am interested in identifying those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have been the motivation for the district to develop its response to excellence.

1. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
2. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the State Department of Education have on your

district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

3. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the major excellence reports, such as Nation at Risk, A Place Called School, High School, Making the Grade have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
4. In your opinion, what motivational influence did television, radio, newspaper and magazine news media have on your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
5. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to external stimuli as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?
6. What percentage of motivational influence would you assign to an internal recognition of need as the reason for your district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

IV. In this third set of questions, I am interested in determining what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence.

1. Did the Board establish a committee for dealing with the issue of providing for excellence?
2. If so, what segments of the community served on this committee?

3. Were there any other committees or subcommittees established and what segments of the community did they represent?
 4. Was a committee given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 5. Was the superintendent given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 6. Do you know if there was any other administrator given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
 7. Was an administrative team given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
- V. In this fourth set of questions, I am interested in determining who actually made the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. I would assume that the decision maker could have been the Board, a Board committee, a Board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team.
1. Has the Board approved a district-wide program, proposal or resolution to provide for excellence?
 2. Would you identify the individual or group that wrote this program, proposal or resolution?

3. Was the writer of the proposal also the decision maker?
4. If not, who in your opinion was the decision maker?
5. Who recommended the district's response to the Board for approval?

VI. In this fifth set of questions, I am interested in identifying all participants who were involved or included in the process of formulating the district's response to the call for excellence.

1. What role did the Board play?
2. What role did the superintendent play?
3. What role did the assistant superintendent play?
4. What role did committees play?
5. What role did the principal play?
6. What role did the teachers play?
7. What role did the students play?
8. What role did the community play?

VII. In this sixth set of questions, I am looking for the details or specifics for your school's program for excellence. In other words, what programs, proposals or resolutions were adopted?

1. What was added or deleted from the prior curriculum?
2. What resolutions, programs, proposals or plans were adopted?

3. In your words, would you describe your district's plan of action for addressing the call for excellence?
4. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after one of the major excellence reports?
5. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after the State Department of Education "Blueprint for Action" plan?
6. To your knowledge, was your district's plan modeled after MASB's "School Board's Planning for Excellence" reports?
7. Can you identify any other plans used as a model for your district's plan?
8. Do you know if your plan contained an assessment model and if so would you describe it?

VIII. In this last set of questions, I am interested in what your district has achieved or what is expected to be achieved as a result of your district's response to the demand for excellence.

1. Can you identify any verified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence.
2. Do you know what instruments were used for verification?

3. Can you identify any unverified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence?
4. Can you identify the achievements which your district anticipates as a result of their response to excellence?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

General Questions for Opening the Interview Discussion

- I. As I'm sure you know, the release of the Nation at Risk report in the spring of 1983 is generally credited with the beginning of a nation-wide thrust to provide for excellence in the nation's schools. That initial report was followed by scores of new reports, task forces, special legislation and recommendations from numerous organizations.
1. Do you think this excellence movement will eventually prove to be just another passing fad with no lasting benefits or do you believe that American education has been permanently changed with long-lasting benefits?
 2. Did your district respond with a program for excellence?
 3. If there was a response, do you think that response was largely an effort to satisfy various groups such as the board, staff, community, state department, MASB or do you think there was a sincere recognition that the district needed to improve its standards and provide for excellence?
- II. The following questions are designed to look more specifically at your district's response to the excellence movement. In this first set of questions, I am interested in discovering who initiated the district's response to the excellence movement. The word

initiate is used to identify who took the first action to respond with a program for excellence.

1. Would you describe any newspaper, radio, or T.V. editorials that may have influenced your school to make a response to the excellence movement?
2. Were there any community groups which requested either the superintendent or the Board to make a response to excellence?
3. Are you aware of any individual community members who suggested the need for the school to make a response to the excellence movement?
4. To your knowledge, did members of the teaching staff ever suggest that the school should develop an excellence response?
5. To your knowledge, did students ever suggest that the school should make a response to the excellence movement?
6. In your opinion, what factors influenced the administration or the Board to make their initial proposal of providing for excellence?

III. In this second set of questions, I am interested in identifying those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have been the motivation for the district to develop its response to excellence.

1. In your opinion, what motivational influence did the community have on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence?

2. In your opinion, what do you think motivated your school to make a decision to respond with a program for excellence?

IV. In this third set of questions, I am interested in determining what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence.

1. Did the Board establish a committee for dealing with the issue of providing for excellence?
2. If so, what segments of the community served on this committee?
3. Were there any other committees or subcommittees established and what segments of the community did they represent?
4. Was a committee given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?
5. Do you know who was given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence?

V. In this fourth set of questions, I am interested in determining who actually made the decision relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. I would assume that the decision maker could have been the Board, a Board committee, a Board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team.

1. Do you know if your school board has approved a district-wide program, proposal or resolution to provide for excellence?
2. Do you know what individual or group wrote this program, proposal or resolution?
3. Do you know if the writer of the proposal also the decision maker?
4. If not, who in your opinion was the decision maker?
5. Do you know who recommended the district's response to the Board for approval?

VI. In this fifth set of questions, I am interested in identifying all participants who were involved or included in the process of formulating the district's response to the call for excellence.

1. What role did the Board play?
2. What role did the superintendent play?
3. What role did the assistant superintendent play?
4. What role did committees play?
5. What role did the principal play?
6. What role did the teachers play?
7. What role did the students play?
8. What role did the community play?

VII. In this sixth set of questions, I am looking for the details or specifics for your school's program for excellence. In other words, what programs, proposals or resolutions were adopted?

1. What was added or deleted from the prior curriculum?
2. What resolutions, programs, proposals or plans were adopted?
3. In your words, would you describe your district's plan of action for addressing the call for excellence?
4. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after one of the major excellence reports?
5. To your knowledge, to what extent was your district's plan modeled after the State Department of Education "Blueprint for Action" plan?
6. To your knowledge, was your district's plan modeled after MASB's "School Board's Planning for Excellence" reports?
7. Can you identify any other plans used as a model for your district's plan?
8. Do you know if your plan contained an assessment model and if so would you describe it?

VIII. In this last set of questions, I am interested in what your district has achieved or what is expected to be achieved as a result of your district's response to the demand for excellence.

1. Can you identify any verified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence.

2. Do you know what instruments were used for verification?
3. Can you identify any unverified achievements as a result of your district's response to excellence?
4. Can you identify the achievements which your district anticipates as a result of their response to excellence?

This chapter contained a discussion of the methodology used for this research project and the interview questions asked each participant. The study was both qualitative and exploratory. The qualitative method of research was chosen because a school district's response to the excellence movement could not easily be extracted into numbers. The researcher's objective was to explore how six small school systems responded to the excellence movement of 1983. The six school districts selected for case studies were located in central Michigan and had enrollments between 1000 and 4000 students.

The methodology used for developing each case study was that of in-depth interviewing. Initial interviewing was done with a protocol of questions. These first questions were developed and substantiated with the assistance of three well-known professionals within the field of education. These professionals were a past dean of the College of Education at Michigan State University, a retired superintendent of schools for Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the current executive director for the Michigan Association of School Boards. The expertise of these gentlemen provided the greatest possible credence to the interviewing questions. Interview questions were developed for the superintendent, assistant superintendent, board members, principals, teachers, students and community members.

Chapter IV: CASE STUDIES

Introduction

Chapter IV consists of case studies of how six small town school districts responded to the 1983 excellence movement. Each exploratory case study represented a dozen or more in-depth interviews. The majority of the interviews lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. Superintendents, principals, board members, community leaders, teachers, students and individuals serving on excellence committees were interviewed. Superintendents were interviewed first as they were most helpful in suggesting other key individuals to interview. In many instances, individuals were interviewed more than once.

The names of the communities and rivers are fictional. All communities were located in mid-Michigan and ranged in size from 2,200 to 7,481 residents. Five of the communities were within a 20 mile commuting distance of a major city. None of the districts directly bordered a major city.

The school districts ranged in size from 1,441 to 3,318 students. Each district had only one high school. The superintendent and high school principal for each district were in those positions prior to the release of A Nation at Risk in the spring of 1983. Expenditures per child for each district ranged from a low of \$2,329 to a high of over \$3,400 per child.

PIONEER

Community

Pioneer is a quaint village within a few miles of Lansing, Michigan's capitol city. Giant maple trees stretch their limbs over this historic town settled in 1833 . . . three years before Lansing was founded. The early settlement became an important way-station on the Indian trail between the villages of Pontiac and Grand Rapids. Twenty years before the Civil War, Pioneer boasted mid-Michigan's largest hotel. It welcomed weary travelers, served as the county court house, housed the circuit judge and became the gathering place for many of the socially prominent people from the new state capitol. Today, the peacefulness of this old village contrasts sharply with the shopping malls of other modern suburban areas. A new expressway links Pioneer directly to Lansing which may mean the end of the sleepy village and the beginning of a new era of growth for Pioneer.

There are no major employers in Pioneer and only one full time farmer. Most of the land is divided into small acreage which is either sharecropped or lying fallow. Many interviewees described the area as a bedroom district. In other words, although they live in Pioneer, most of the 3,200 residents commute to nearby Lansing for work. These residents were characterized as being "upwardly mobile," "middle classed," and "achievement motivated." Many

commuters live in one of several new residential subdivisions. A principal estimated the home value in the newest subdivision at between \$70,000 and \$130,000.

The School District

The school system has had a declining enrollment and presently counts 1,669 students housed in a high school, middle school, and two elementary buildings. The two elementary schools are located in the older part of the village while a modern high school and a new middle school are located outside of the village in a predominantly rural area. The middle school is situated directly behind the high school. Both facilities occupy a large tract of land bordered by corn fields on one side and a middle income housing development on the other. The entire district comprises only 15 square miles--small indeed for most rurally located school districts.

The only school facility where the district fell short of projecting a consistent image of attractive, well-maintained buildings was the central administrative office. This building had a corrugated metal roof and looked as if it might have been something the army put up for temporary use during World War II. Inside, however, was a most pleasant and modern office facility. There was a comfortable waiting room, a well-equipped clerical office, an impressive board room, a computerized data control room, and a stately looking superintendent's office.

Initiation

Pioneer never developed specific proposals or programs in response to the excellence movement. The issue was addressed and Pioneer responded. However, its response was a rationale, with accompanying reasons, of why Pioneer was not responding with a specific excellence program. The response was orchestrated by the superintendent. This case study deals with the sequential segments of a decision not to respond with a specific program for excellence.

There was no evidence that any individual or group exerted persuasion to make the school respond with a program for excellence. The community was completely quiet on the issue. Teachers never publicly expressed an opinion. The local news media never addressed the issue. The board never asked the administration to examine the issue. Even though no one could be found exerting pressure to have the issues addressed, the superintendent recognized that the excellence movement was too large to simply ignore. He was a strong believer in "nipping potential problems in the bud" before they became too big to handle. He therefore initiated discussion of the excellence movement before it became an issue. He ultimately guided the district into the widely accepted belief that no action was necessary. Quite simply, Pioneer's only response to the excellence movement could be summarized with a quote from the superintendent, ". . . Pioneer was already meeting or exceeding the recommendations of many of the excellence programs."

Motivation

The superintendent had been on the job for six years and envisioned the superintendency as a "boxing match." He related how "some way or another I've managed to stay on my feet for six rounds," that is, for six years. He said he was almost K.O.'d in the first, second, third and fourth rounds. He told how he had never had a honeymoon period on the job. At the end of his first board meeting, one of the members advised him that she had not voted for him and that she only gave him six months to survive as superintendent. Considering the fact that he was the fourth superintendent in two years, he took her seriously. By the end of his third year, he had lost support from the majority of the board and decided that he had nothing to lose by actively seeking and supporting friendly board candidates. He said it was a risky decision, but it paid off. Hostile board members were defeated, including the lady who predicted his demise in six months. The current board has made life a lot easier for the superintendent. He related how he stood up fairly well the last couple of rounds--"must be my second wind."

Like a prisoner marking off the calendar, the superintendent said he had five more rounds to stand until retirement. He wanted very much to be able to last until the end, but wondered if that was going to be possible. He had hoped for a larger job to finish his career, but none were offered. He was very close to finishing his doctorate

but saw little point in completing it without the prospect of a larger job. He was not interested in going any further in education than the next "five rounds." He wanted to try something new after retirement . . . like sales. He was "burned out" from the superintendency and was doing his best to keep the waters calm until his retirement in five years.

The superintendent related how he had read a couple of the major excellence reports. He had personally met TedSizer and was given an autographed copy of his book. He reflected back to a quote he had read from Sizer about "how can we expect an educator to think about curriculum when the buildings are burning." That quote and the rationale the superintendent formed from it characterized his thoughts about the excellence movement. There were too many fires to put out to have time to think about developing new programs for the excellence movement. How could he think about an excellence movement when he was already doing the best he could just to survive until the end of the current "round" and somehow save enough energy for "five more rounds?" The superintendent said, "It is nice to say we ought to be doing this and that, but with no dollars attached, it's not going to go far." If programs and recommendations are not mandated and money is not furnished to implement recommendations, the superintendent felt that most of the recommendations for excellence would eventually fizzle.

The superintendent's motivation for initiating the "no response was needed" postulation was that he did not want to spend time and energy chasing new and possibly controversial programs for excellence. He felt there were already too many burning issues. Every effort was made "not to kick any sleeping dogs." He was highly motivated to make sure that all dogs remained sleeping.

There was no evidence that the community, the intermediate school district, the Department of Education or any other ancillary organization provided any significant motivation to cause the superintendent or the school district to respond to the excellence movement. Interviewees thought the media contributed indirectly as a motivational force. The majority of the interviewees felt that their district had not responded to an external stimuli. The district had not completed a needs analysis prior to 1983.

Process

The superintendent initiated discussion of the excellence movement with the building administrators. One of the principals said, "There was enough hullabaloo over the issue. . . we just couldn't sweep it under the rug. I mean it was on the news every night for awhile and in every educational publication that we received. We had to at least address the issue." The superintendent led the discussion among the district administrators. Various

recommendations and proposals from the State Department of Education, Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB), American Association of School Administrators and several excellence reports were reviewed.

It was decided among the administrators that the "district was already meeting or exceeding many of the excellence proposals." Individual principals left that meeting and assumed responsibility for communicating that position to teachers and parents. That responsibility was assumed without a specific directive. Principals carried the reasons why Pioneer would not have to respond to the excellence movement to staff meetings and to districtwide curriculum meetings. Each principal wrote and sent newsletters home which were designed to assure parents that Pioneer was more than meeting the new demands for excellence.

Years of experience taught the superintendent to "get on top of an issue before it gets on top of you." He said, "I believe in always providing the board with something to work on, otherwise, they begin to work on me." He planned a study night for the board to review the recommendations of various excellence proposals. With the superintendent once again leading the discussion, the board reviewed the Department of Education's "Blueprint for Action," MASB's proposals and an overview of recommendations being made by various excellence reports. After a limited discussion, the board decided that the "district was meeting or

exceeding various recommendations" and that no further action was needed. Board members assisted in communicating that position to the community. No further action nor discussion was ever held.

Decision Making

Pioneer developed no specific programs or proposals in response to the nationwide call for excellence. Instead, a decision was made to initiate the postulation that "no response was needed . . . Pioneer was already meeting or exceeding recommendations of many of the excellence reports." The primary objective for this decision making segment of the study was to determine who made decision.

Clearly, the superintendent made the initial decision that "no response was necessary" and then "set the machinery in motion" to have that position widely accepted throughout the district. No other participant or group of participants were involved in making that initial decision of "no response was needed." The following segment on involvement identifies the various groups of participants the superintendent used in selling and executing the "no response needed" postulation.

Involvement

Several different groups of participants were involved in the development of the "no response needed" decision

from its initiation in the mind of the superintendent to a widely accepted belief throughout the school and community. The concept was first presented by the superintendent to a meeting of building principals. They accepted the reasons and rationale that no response was needed and carried that message to their individual staffs and, along with the superintendent, carried the message to the district curriculum council. The curriculum council, with a predominance of teachers, helped reinforce the "no response" decision with fellow teachers. The principals influenced the parents and community via building newsletters. Finally, the superintendent carried the issue to the board. He summarized selected recommendations from various excellence reports, then presented the reasons and rationale why Pioneer would not need to respond. The board accepted the postulation that "Pioneer was already meeting or exceeding various recommendations for excellence" and that no response was needed. They assisted in reinforcing that belief in the community. No further action was ever taken.

Plans

Pioneer provided no new proposals to meet the demand for excellence. Therefore, no excellence plans or resolutions were adopted. Instead, the district accepted the postulation that "they were already meeting or exceeding various excellence recommendations" with present

programming. Therefore, this segment on plans describes what the district was already doing or the reasons and rationale used in not responding to the excellence movement.

The superintendent explained that Pioneer was pursuing excellence long before the release of A Nation At Risk. Several administrators reported the fact that Pioneer was rated first among all area schools in academic achievement two years ago. As many as 77% of graduating seniors go on to college each year. The superintendent further related that the school gained North Central Accreditation several years ago and that many of the requirements for this accreditation overlap with various suggestions from the excellence reports. For example, the high school principal said that one and one-half credits of social studies was recently added as a high school curriculum requirement. The district had a five-year program in math, including two classes in calculus. It also offered a two-year program in anatomy, a two-year program in biology and five years of French. The superintendent, principals, teachers and board members all spoke of Pioneer's computer program which gave every child access to a computer at the elementary, middle, and secondary school level. A computer committee was responsible for overseeing this program. A curriculum council made up of teachers, administrators, and board members monitored the districtwide curriculum. Parents, teachers, administrators and board members participated in

a new committee for the gifted and talented. Finally, as further evidence of commitment to excellence, several interviewees told about the school recently winning a statewide quiz bowl competition and taking first place two years in a row in a statewide graphic arts competition.

These descriptions of excellence were the only evidences given that the district was already "meeting or exceeding various excellence recommendations." In spite of the fact that the district offered a five year program in math, it only required two years of math for graduation . . . a full year short of the three years recommended in A Nation At Risk. A Nation At Risk recommended three years of science. Pioneer required only two years of science for graduation. A Nation At Risk recommended four years of English while Pioneer required only three. A Nation at Risk recommended half a year of computer education for graduation. Pioneer required no credits in computer education for graduation although they were available. Only in social studies, and only after the recent addition of one and one-half credits, did Pioneer meet A Nation At Risk recommendation of three years of social studies. Although Pioneer's accomplishments were impressive, there was little evidence to support the contention that Pioneer met or exceeded the recommendations from various excellence reports.

Results - Actual or Anticipated

There was no official coordinated districtwide response which could be called Pioneer's answer to the demand for excellence. Therefore, there were no reported results. Quite by coincidence, the district had increased required social studies credits from one and one-half to three for graduation. This curricular adjustment did not coincide with recommendations from A Nation At Risk. The high school principal said he anticipated the increased social studies requirement would result in higher test scores in social studies. There were no other reported results.

Summary

All the evidence pointed to the conclusion that participants were satisfied the school system was already providing for excellence and there was no real need to implement new and additional programs of excellence. No individuals demanded that the school provide for excellence. No community groups seized the excellence issue as an opportunity to sweep old board members out and themselves into new board seats. Students never suggested a response for more excellence. Teachers or principals never saw the need for additional commitments to excellence. Not a single board member came forward to request that the school examine its program in light of the excellence reports.

All agreed that the magnitude of the nationwide thrust to provide for excellence necessitated some kind of a response. Likewise, all agreed that it was the superintendent who first recognized that need and initiated the ultimate response. However, the response was simply that the district was "already meeting or exceeding the recommendations of many of the excellence programs." The superintendent first carried that message to the principals. The principals carried the message to the teachers and then to the parents. The superintendent carried the message to the board and the board reinforced it with the community.

The old adage "the wheel that squeaks the loudest gets the grease" seems somewhat of an appropriate description as to how Pioneer responded to the excellence movement. "If its not squeaking, don't grease it." All interviewees indicated they were satisfied with Pioneer's academic program. The superintendent produced an abundance of evidence to prove the contention that Pioneer already met or exceeded various excellence proposals. The school system had recently acquired North Central accreditation, a new computer program, the highest academic achievement award, several state first place awards, and saw nearly 77% of its graduating seniors attend college. The community, the board of education, and the entire school system seemed agreeable to the postulation that Pioneer was "already meeting or exceeding the excellence recommendations."

The superintendent felt he already had too many burning issues to spend time and energy chasing new and potentially controversial programs for excellence. He wanted to make it until the end of the year and save enough energy for five more years and retirement. Every effort was made "not to kick any sleeping dogs." There was clear evidence that the superintendent coordinated an effort to make sure that all dogs remained sleeping.

RIVERVILLE

Community

Many of Michigan's oldest cities settled on Indian trails and rivers, and among them was Riverville. In the year 1839, three brothers, all farmers from New York, built the first log cabin along the banks of the Rapid River in close proximity to an Indian trail traversing from Detroit to Grand Rapids. The early settlement prospered and became a village in 1871 and a city of 1,400 residents in 1945. The old Indian trail evolved into a wagon road, a planked road, a gravel road, a paved road and finally a four-lane interstate expressway which still parallels the original Indian trail.

With improved transportation, the distance in travel time between small towns and cities was shortened. This allowed city workers the opportunity for country and small town living. Accordingly, Riverville farmland gave way to residential suburbs. New residents from the city brought Riverville new ideas and expectations for community living. Riverville became a mixture of rural and suburban living.

Today, the community of 2,981 residents retains much of the flavor of a small Midwestern town. There are still country cemeteries, church bazaars, annual township meetings, and an occasional quilting bee. Farmers still help a sick or injured neighbor plow his field or plant his

corn. Riverville is home for a broad spectrum of residents: local farmers, merchants, shopkeepers, service and light industrial workers, and commuters from the city.

The School District

Riverville Community Schools include one elementary school, one middle school and one high school. The elementary building contains a community education center and spacious central administration offices. It is a fairly new facility, having been constructed within the last ten years. Located in an older residential area, it is within a few blocks from the main part of town. The middle school occupies a two-story building originally built as a high school in early 1900. It is located within two blocks of the center of town. The high school is located about a mile from town and was built in the mid-1960s. A half dozen portable classrooms add to the austere and conservative appearance of the building. Halls and classrooms are uncarpeted and the office area is rather bare and unpretentious.

The school system has had a declining enrollment since 1974 when 1,897 students were enrolled. Today the school enrolls only 1,441 and anticipates further decreases in enrollment in the near future. Over 98% of students are Caucasian. Some 80% of students are transported each day from within the 75 square miles comprising the school district. The school district is proud of the fact that

30% of its high school students enroll in area vocational training facilities and 70% of graduating seniors go on to post-secondary education. There were four National Merit Scholars in the 1985 graduating class. One of these scholars was named a Presidential Scholar . . . one of only three from the State of Michigan.

Initiation

During the summer of 1983, the school district engaged in heated negotiations with the teacher's union. Unresolved issues led to a bitter two-week strike in the fall of 1983. The strike was settled in November of 1983. Only a few days after the strike settlement, the superintendent proposed to the board at its regular meeting that it was time to set past differences behind and move ahead to new directions. He proposed a project called "Quest for Quality." All those present at the board meeting were a little shocked with the early timing of the proposal. Wounds were still being licked from the strike. The board president wondered and commented, "What the hell's with him? Doesn't he know we just went through a strike?" Other board members were a little stunned with the suddenness of the initial proposal which had not appeared on the board agenda.

After interviewing board members, principals, teachers, students and community leaders, it was clear that the superintendent alone initiated Riverville's response to the

excellence movement. There was no evidence of any news media influence on the district's decision to respond with a program for excellence. Teachers and board members were busily engaged in a strike. The community was preoccupied with what was happening with their schools. Clearly, it was only the superintendent who saw the need and initiated the original action leading to Riverville's response to the excellence movement.

Motivation

The superintendent recognized the need to move the district "away from the strike issue." Hostilities and hard feelings had severely impacted forward progress for education. At public meetings, community members voiced strong concerns about labor and management to quit the fighting and get back to the issue of educating the district's children. With staff morale at an all time low and post-strike volleys still being exchanged, the superintendent knew it was only a matter of time before all fingers pointed at him to resolve the post-strike difficulties. He needed to get people involved with a new issue. With that in mind, he discussed his need with the Institute of Development for Educational Activities (I/D/E/A), a consulting agency contracting with schools to provide a program for effective schools. They assured him that they had just the right program to meet his needs.

Clearly, the superintendent's motivation for initiating the "Quest for Quality" proposal was to provide a new issue for people to work on in order to resolve post-strike problems. If these problems were not resolved, he knew he would ultimately be held accountable. Upon further questioning, the superintendent acknowledged two other factors which contributed reinforcement to his decision to initiate an excellence proposal. The first was related to the fact that the board evaluated the superintendent by goals and objectives. The superintendent said he thought the proposal outlined by I/D/E/A would look good at evaluation time. The second reinforcing factor was that the superintendent thought the "Quest for Quality" proposal would look good on his resume. It is interesting to note that only the high school principal and one teacher expressed knowledge of the real reason for the superintendent's decision to respond with a proposal for excellence. The teacher acknowledged her awareness of the superintendent's major interest in providing a process to resolve post-strike problems only because the principal had told her. Not even the board president was aware of the superintendent's primary interest.

There was no evidence that the intermediate school district, the Department of Education, or any other ancillary organization provided significant motivation to cause the superintendent or school district to respond to the excellence movement. Many interviewees thought the

news media coverage contributed indirectly as a motivational force. The majority of the interviewees felt the district responded to an internal recognition of need rather than an external stimuli. The district had not completed a needs analysis prior to 1983.

Process

We have examined the fact that the superintendent initiated Riverville's response to the excellence movement and that the motivation for that response was to provide a process whereby lingering divisions and hostilities from the teacher strike could be healed. For the superintendent, the process was the main objective. He had no particular educational plan in mind. He merely wanted a process that involved people and would resolve some lingering problems. I/D/E/A proposed a plan to the superintendent which included a prescribed step-by-step process to involve community, staff, parents and students in improving schools. It was a systematic process for planning effective school change. Basic premises were "that those who are affected by a decision ought to be involved in making it" and that "change is more likely to occur in a school when all interested parties (staff, students, parents and community members) are involved in the decision-making." The I/D/E/A project seemed perfect to meet the superintendent's objectives and was subsequently recommended to the school board by the

superintendent. The school board approved the "Quest for Quality" proposal and provided the funding necessary to hire a facilitator from I/D/E/A to implement the program.

The plan called for each building to establish a 20 member excellence committee made up of students, parents, staff and community members. The three committees involved 60 committee members. Principals and two or three other individuals from each building were named as facilitators and given a special three-day training period to prepare them for conducting the initial series of meetings with their individual excellence committees. The primary purpose of each committee was to develop a consensus about a "Vision of Excellence" . . . "What do we want our school to be in 3 to 5 years?"

The emphasis on participation and involvement in the process was greatly expanded by the use of a pyramid approach which required each of the 60 committee members to identify a pyramid group of 4 to 6 people. This expanded the total involvement to over 300 people. Each pyramid group member was updated on prior committee meeting activities and asked for input relevant to the next committee meeting. The involvement and participation aspects of the program were further expanded by design and implementation teams established after the excellence committees of 20 completed their work of establishing a "Vision of Excellence." This increased participation and greatly expanded community involvement.

Decision Making

The superintendent initiated and chose the process for the district to establish a program for excellence, stating that "those affected by a program ought to be involved in making and influencing decisions about that program." In choosing that process, he also relegated decision making responsibilities to each individual school committee.

Each building committee of 20 was charged with the responsibility of formulating its own "Vision of Excellence" statement and establishing the goals and objectives necessary to reach that vision. Each building committee of 20 broke into smaller subcommittees who in turn worked on specific segments of the committee's "Vision of Excellence." The subcommittees furnished the larger committee with suggested statements which were recorded by the facilitator. The actual "Vision of Excellence" statements emerged from the work of subcommittees. Each building statement, along with accompanying goals and objectives, was given to the superintendent who presented them to the board for adoption.

Involvement

Riverville's response to excellence involved many people. The superintendent had the necessary motivation to initiate the district's excellence response. Various interviewees described his role as "the initiator," "the motivator," "the behind the scene leader," "the overseer."

His role was most influential in that his position allowed immediate access to the I/D/E/A facilitator and to building principals who were also committee facilitators. The school board received, approved, supported and provided necessary funds. The committees played the major role of planning, designing and writing an excellence proposal for each building. The principals performed the role of facilitators and leaders for each building excellence committee. Teachers, students and community leaders all served as members of the three building level committees for excellence. They also served as committee members on various subcommittees and the design and implementation teams.

Plans

The superintendent said, "Riverville's plan for excellence was modeled after a proven process by I/D/E/A. It's a process that I/D/E/A has used in hundreds of schools." He further described the district's plan as "process versus content." That process allowed each individual school to develop its own "vision of excellence . . . to design and implement a program geared toward achieving that excellence."

The school district had three plans for excellence, one from each 20-member building committee. They were never condensed into one district-wide proposal for excellence. Each plan contained a short one or two paragraph "vision of

excellence" statement. To accomplish that vision, each committee listed dozens of suggestions, recommendations, and goals for possible implementation. The goals, recommendations, and suggestions for improvement were divided into four categories: outcomes for parents, teachers, students, and community.

Recommendations benefitting parents called for more newsletters, better communication from school, more "parenting advice", and the establishment of a parent volunteer organization. Recommendations to benefit teachers included more inservice, increased teacher recognition, better communication between teachers and administrators, increased time for student/teacher communication, and an increased awareness for the need of adequate facilities. Recommendations benefiting students included increased intramural programs, the creation of homerooms at the middle school, thank you notes from teachers, and better communication with staff and administrators. Suggestions designed to benefit the community included four newsletters per year, an expanded child care program, increased community involvement in the school, and increased community utilization of the facilities.

Results - Actual or Anticipated

The original objective of the superintendent was to provide a new issue for people to work on in order to

resolve post-strike problems. Therefore, he chose a process calling for active participation from dozens of parents, students, staff and community members. Considering it was this full participation and involvement which the superintendent sought, the results of Riverville's excellence response were phenomenal.

All interviewees spoke about people being brought back together for a common cause. The high school principal said, "We got staff, parents and community all involved in the school. Things returned to normal." The superintendent said, "We healed the wounds from the strike and regained staff morale. We recently signed a new 3-year teacher contract in record time and without incident." It was this involvement, participation and sense of ownership which excited committee members into thinking their responses to excellence were successful.

When questioned further about what actually was achieved with the involvement process, many had difficulty remembering detailed results. Some expressed outright frustration. A student said, "I was a little disappointed with the results. I'm not sure what we accomplished. I mean, we spent a lot of time and I'm not sure we accomplished anything. I do think they'll probably increase credits needed for graduation. I believe it's 20 now and they'll probably increase it to 22." The high school principal said, "There weren't any results. Well, there were a lot of small things accomplished and we did

get people involved." Such were the sentiments of many of the interviewees, but they all seemed happy with the results.

Other than the process of involvement, the actual results of Riverville's response to excellence included more newsletters, better communication between parents and the school, more "parenting advice," and the establishment of a parent volunteer organization. Teachers were given more inservice time, a greater emphasis on teacher recognition, and better communication between staff and administration. Students gained an expanded intramural program and homerooms at the middle school. The community now has a new expanded child care program and increased utilization of school facilities.

Summary

Riverville suffered a teacher's strike during the fall of 1983. Hostilities and hard feelings severely impacted the educational process. When the strike ended, the superintendent recognized the district was in need of a new issue to draw people back together. With the help of a private educational consulting firm, he initiated a process calling for active participation and involvement of parents, staff and community members.

Clearly, it was the superintendent who initiated Riverville's response for excellence. His motivation for initiating the excellence proposal was twofold and directly

related to the performance of his job as chief executive officer. First, he had to find a way to resolve the conflict. He would be evaluated on his success or failure in bringing the school back together again. Second, if for no other reason he thought the "Quest for Quality" proposal would look good on his resume.

The "Quest for Quality" project required active participation from parents, students, staff, and community members. Basic premises were that "those who are affected by a decision ought to be involved in making it" and that "change is more likely to occur in a school when all interested parties are involved in the decision making." Each of the three buildings had an excellence committee of 20 who were given the responsibility for developing and writing that school's response for quality. Many interviewees said, "The committees were the work horses for the 'Quest for Quality' project." They were the center for involvement. They represented all segments of community and school. They produced each school's individual "Vision of Excellence."

Each building committee developed dozens of plans to improve their schools. The majority of plans involved better and expanded communication between school and home, between staff and administration, and increased recognition of efforts by all parties. The community received an expanded day care program and students gained an expanded intramural program. Most of the plans were small in scale

and easily implemented. None involved large outlays of money. The superintendent said this was because local taxpayers were on the committees and spoke out against "pie in the sky" proposals. Interviewees said facilitators coached committees that the board and superintendent would be hesitant about approving proposals requiring large allocations of money.

The original objective of the superintendent was clearly and fully accomplished. All participants were drawn together while working on a common goal. Morale and community/school relations reached higher levels than before the strike. It is interesting to note the only similarity between Riverville's response to excellence and the recommendations made by the major excellence reports came in the area of staff recognition and appreciation. Each of the interviewees made it very clear that they had not followed any of the major excellence reports nor any other prescribed program for excellence. Their response was wholly attributable to Riverville. Regardless, the parents, staff, community and students at Riverville all felt they had fully and adequately responded to a nationwide call for excellence.

COOPERVILLE

Community

Coopersville was founded on an Indian trail in 1836. Today it is located at the intersection of two major highways. It is within easy commuting distance of three large cities in Michigan. A mainline railroad passes through town but no longer makes a stop. The village has a post office, a library, a dozen different churches, numerous small businesses, and a large new IGA grocery store.

The village of Coopersville has a population of 2,200. There is no large industry in the area so most of the residents are employed in one of the three nearby cities. A majority of the residents are "working class" and live in lower- to middle-class housing throughout the district. "White collar" workers living in the district have mostly taken up residence in one of three upper middle income housing developments.

The School District

The school district serves an area of ten square miles. Three subdivisions, three trailer parks, large family farms, and some smaller farms contribute to the district's makeup. A combined high school/middle school, one large elementary building, and three small elementary schools house the district's 1,908 students.

The three small elementary buildings are all the result of past annexations and are located in the outlying areas of the school district. The residents of these annexed districts hold onto a portion of their prior identities by the continued operation of these elementary schools. The one large elementary school is twenty-five years old and is built on the original high school site, a short block off Main Street in Cooperville. The high school/middle school facility was built thirty-five years ago on the outermost perimeter of the village of Cooperville. The schools are neat and well maintained. There are no swimming pools, auditoriums, or carpeted classrooms. A half dozen portable classrooms are located around the secondary facility and several of the elementary buildings. Cooperville is a fiscally conservative school district, not a wealthy one.

Initiation

A Nation At Risk was released in the spring of 1983. Shortly thereafter, questions were raised about Cooperville's response to the excellence movement. The earliest questions came from a concerned local citizen who was the mother of three children and the wife of an assistant attorney general. She wanted the best for her children and had deep reservations as to whether Cooperville was providing the best. She attended board meetings regularly and participated on several committees. She was involved everywhere she thought she could make an

impact upon improving the quality of Cooperville's education. She was on a first-name basis with the superintendent, several board members, the principals, and many of the teachers. The superintendent recalled several conversations with Lisa and said, "There was definitely pressure in the back of my mind that we (the school) needed to do something about responding (to the excellence movement) . . ." The board president remembered having conversations with Lisa about what Cooperville should be doing to respond to the excellence movement. The principals all described Lisa as a regular visitor to their offices.

The school board president was the local Congregational Church minister and the father of three children. In addition, he was an educator with a degree in counseling and was keenly interested in improving education at Cooperville. Lisa's concerns with providing excellence for the children of Cooperville were equally shared with the board president.

Thus, it was Lisa who initiated the first action to move the district toward a response to the excellence movement. It was her prodding and possible needling that caused the district to respond. A sympathetic and equally concerned board president took the second step of suggesting to the board that the district needed to evaluate itself in relation to the various demands for excellence. The board and superintendent agreed that the

school district should evaluate itself in relation to what various reports were saying about excellence. A committee was established to study the matter and report back to the board. The work of this committee became the basis of the district's response to the excellence movement.

Motivation

Lisa was the wife of a state assistant attorney general. They lived in an upper middle class subdivision with their three children. Lisa was college educated but chose to stay home with her children rather than obtain outside employment. Her major motivation in urging Cooperville to respond to the excellence movement was an effort to provide the best educational opportunities for her three children.

The board president was a well known and respected member of the community. He was the local Congregational church minister. He was the father of three children and had a master's degree in public school counseling in addition to his pastoral training. Like Lisa, he was highly motivated toward providing educational opportunities for his children. He was a dedicated board president, and wanted his tenure as board president to show that the school district made giant leaps in excellence. However, providing educational opportunities for Cooperville's children was the primary motivational factor that caused both of these individuals to coordinate their efforts

toward getting Cooperville to make a response to excellence.

There was no evidence that the community, the intermediate school district, the Department of Education nor any other ancillary organization provided any significant motivation to cause the district to respond to the excellence movement. Many interviewees thought that the news media contributed indirectly as a motivational force. The news media planted the original seed which sparked Lisa's interest in gaining quality education for her children. The majority of interviewees felt that the district had responded to an external stimuli rather than an internal recognition of need. The district had not completed a needs analysis prior to 1983.

Process

The board president initiated a discussion about excellence at a regular meeting of the board. The school board agreed that there was a need to examine the issue in relation to Cooperville's standards. They established a committee called the "Task Force on School Assessment." Members included parents, teachers, board members and two principals. The committee was charged with the responsibility of reviewing the various excellence reports and assessing how Cooperville compared and if changes were needed. They were to "filter findings through the curriculum council and make recommendations to the school

board." The high school principal was elected as chairperson for the committee.

At its first meeting, the committee changed its name to "Task Force on School Improvement." The newly named committee met three times during the early fall of 1983 and finished its work with a report to the curriculum council and the board of education. The report, "Findings Concerning the Nation At Risk Report" made an analysis of what Cooperville offered and what the A Nation At Risk recommended. With the release of these findings, the work of the committee ended in October of 1983.

In the spring of 1984, a new committee was established to review recommendations being made by the State Department of Education's "Blueprint for Action." This committee was established as a subcommittee of the curriculum council and was designed as an ongoing committee. It was called the "Blueprint for Action Subcommittee" and assumed the role of the district's committee for excellence. Although the committee was ongoing, they presented what was called a "Final Report" to the curriculum council and the school board in June of 1985. That report listed recommendations from the State Board of Education's "Blueprint for Action" and then made specific recommendations that Cooperville should consider adopting. The committee has met a couple of times since June 1985 but no further action has been taken.

Decision Making

The primary decision making responsibility was assigned to the two committees given the responsibility of responding to the excellence movement. Since most of the recommendations from the various excellence reports were weighted toward the secondary level, the high school principal was elected as chairperson for the first committee reviewing A Nation At Risk. As both high school principal and chairperson for the excellence committee, interviewees related how he played a very powerful role in the shaping of the district's response to excellence. Although the committee as a whole was given the responsibility of providing a response to excellence, it was the chairperson who wrote the final report and the principal who controlled what was included and excluded from the report. A fellow administrator said "nothing was adopted that the high school principal didn't support." A parent lamented that since the chairperson held such tight control over the committee, the committee's work was worthless. The superintendent identified the high school principal as both the writer and the decision maker for the district's initial response to excellence.

The second committee was assigned to study the "Blueprint for Action" and was chaired by the school board president--the same man that was instrumental in initiating and motivating the district to make a response. Like the chairperson of the first committee, he was very powerful

and persuasive in presiding over the committee's work. He wrote the final report for this second committee and was influential in what it contained. Thus, the key decision making roles for Cooperville's response to excellence belonged to the chairpersons of the two separate committee's for excellence.

Involvement

Cooperville's response to excellence was initiated by a concerned parent and an equally sympathetic school board president. The school board's only role was that of establishing two committees and receiving and approving committee reports. The superintendent's involvement centered around her role as ex officio member of both excellence committees, the curriculum council and her advisory position with the school board. Her total involvement with the district's response to excellence was very limited. Teachers, students, principals and community members were all members of the two excellence committees and given the major involvement responsibility. More specifically, the chairpersons for the two committees were most significantly involved in shaping Cooperville's response to excellence.

Plans

Cooperville's only plan of action for addressing the excellence movement was the establishment of two excellence

committees. No resolutions were passed and no plan of action was adopted beyond the establishment of these two committees. The first committee reviewed A Nation at Risk. It ended its work with the presentation of a comparative study between what Cooperville offered and what A Nation at Risk recommended. The committee met only three times. No recommendations were given and no resolutions adopted as a result of the committee's final report.

The second committee reviewed the State Department of Education's "Blueprint for Action." It was established as a subcommittee to the district's curriculum council. It was directed to report any findings to "the curriculum council for acceptance and possible recommendation to the Board of Education." It presented a "Final Report" on June 13, 1985. The report included a number of recommendations, but none were adopted. The report was simply accepted. Since giving what was called its "Final Report," the committee evolved into the curriculum council's standing subcommittee for excellence. In that capacity, it represents Cooperville's current and ongoing response to excellence.

Results - Actual or Anticipated

Cooperville's only response to excellence was the establishment of two committees to review two separate excellence reports. The only documented result of Cooperville's response to excellence is the fact that these

two committees were established, did meet, and presented final reports. However, there was no evidence of any actions, resolutions, changes, additions or deletions that ever resulted as a direct response to the work of either of these committees.

Many interviewees were at a loss when questioned about the results of the two committees' work. The high school principal said there were no results other than ". . . we formed two committees to study excellence and report back to the curriculum council and school board. Nothing was ever added, deleted nor changed." The superintendent said that one credit of science was added to the graduation requirements. The high school principal disputed that claim and said the additional credit in science had nothing to do with the excellence report or the committees' work.

The superintendent wanted to put the best possible light on the district's response to excellence. She said the results of the district's response to excellence included a reduction in class size, the continuation of the "Blueprint" committee as the districts' standing committee on excellence and the addition of one credit in science for graduation. The school board president felt that significant results included a re-emphasis on a functioning curriculum council and a renewed commitment on the part of the superintendent to commit money to curriculum related items such as textbooks, supplies and inservice training. The teachers also saw the superintendent's renewed

willingness to commit additional resources to textbooks, supplies and inservice as a definite result of the district's response to excellence. Parents and students were generally unaware of anything happening as a result of the district's response to excellence.

Summary

Cooperville is a small rural school district of 1,908 students. Most residents from the district work in one of three large cities, all within commuting distance. The socioeconomic status of the community was mixed with some upper middle income residents, but a strong predominance of blue collar workers. The school district is a poor one, in the bottom percentile of per capita expenditures for all Michigan schools. A neighboring district described them as "poor second cousins."

This was troubling to some upper middle class residents who had chosen to live in the country, but wanted their children to have the same educational opportunities offered in richer suburban school districts. One such person was Lisa, a mother of three and the wife of an assistant attorney general. The excellence movement of 1983 offered her a platform from which she could campaign for higher educational goals for Cooperville. Her needling of the superintendent, board members, principals and teachers resulted in the district's only response to excellence. She was motivated by her desire to provide the best

possible school for her children. Her efforts were greatly enhanced by a school board president who shared equally in her sentiment for a better school district.

The issue came to the forefront enough for the superintendent and high school principal to recognize that they were going to have to do something to get the issue quieted down. The immediate solution was to appoint a committee to study the matter. As chairperson of that committee, the high school principal was reported to have held tight control over the committee's work. A board member and parent held that the chairperson was "defensive" and "unmoving" in his position. Several felt that the administrative attitude was not responsive to wanting better educational opportunities but rather to provide a defense against accusation of a deficiency in excellence.

The high school principal said, "Our only response to the excellence movement was to appoint a committee to study it and report back to the board." The superintendent and a few of the respondents tried to paint a little better picture of the district's response to excellence, but the former description seemed to be accurate of what really occurred. The district's only response to excellence was the establishment of two committees. These committees gave reports and made recommendations, but there was no evidence of any direct action taken as a result of the committee's work. The concerned mother who initiated the establishment of the first committee held some resentment that the opportunity to pursue excellence had been lost.

The superintendent played a very limited role in the districts response to excellence. She identified the high school principal as the person most involved and influential in shaping the response . . . the establishment of two committees. The first committee, chaired by the high school principal, merely produced a favorable comparative study of the A Nation At Risk and what Cooperville offered. The second committee, chaired by the board president, made recommendations, but they never went further than the curriculum council. The superintendent and high school principal along with other administrators were all members of the curriculum council.

Evidence points to the conclusion that Cooperville's response to excellence was mainly window dressing. Committees were established and key members from the community, the board, teaching staff and students were appointed. These committee members busied themselves in a perception that something worthwhile was about to happen. However, the record shows that nothing officially happened as a result of committee work. The issue was successfully "sidetracked," "pigeonholed," or "derailed."

It is interesting to note that there was one result from the excellence movement upon which all respondents seemed to agree, that being the recognition of a public consciousness about the excellence movement in Cooperville as well as the nation. Respondents, including the superintendent, all agreed that such awareness led to

increased expenditures in curriculum, more inservice training and possibly even the addition of the one extra credit in science . . . even though the principal denied its relationship to the excellence movement. Even though some of the participants were disappointed with Cooperville's overall results, all were happy to see the increased emphasis on curriculum and the continuation of the curriculum council and its standing subcommittee on excellence.

PINE LAKE

Community

Like many central Michigan villages, Pine Lake was first settled in the mid-1830's. Early settlers were farmers and lumber jacks harvesting the huge white pine trees growing in the area. In the early part of the twentieth century, Pine Lake was a favorite vacation and entertainment haven for the rich and affluent from Lansing, Michigan's capitol city. Today, Pine Lake and Pine Lake Township park are still popular spots for picnicking, boating, and swimming.

The community has a population of 7,481. The business section of the community is small and largely overlooked as a viable shopping center by area residents. The convenience of a large suburban shopping mall is just minutes away. Pine Lake, known mostly for its recreational facilities, is a suburban residential community. Beautiful new apartments and condominiums can be found with increasing frequency. New subdivisions provide a suburban residence for many urban professionals. As old suburban areas reach capacity, new suburban areas move further from the city. So it is with Pine Lake. It is divided between longtime residents of the working class living in older, somewhat inexpensive housing and the new suburbanites living in expensive apartments, condominiums or subdivisions.

The School District

Pine Lake Public Schools have an enrollment of 1,834. Students are housed in three elementary buildings, a middle school, and a high school. The elementary buildings were built between 1950 and 1967. The high school, built in 1971, is on the main road leading to Pine Lake and is about a mile from the business district. The original high school, built in 1957, was remodeled and converted to a middle school in 1968. A new administration building, bus garage, and tennis courts were built in 1972. Like many of the wealthier suburban school districts, Pine Lake Public Schools offer its residents a swimming pool, auditorium and carpeted school buildings.

A per pupil cost of over \$3,400 puts Pine Lake in the top 19% of the state's schools in expenditure per pupil. A heavy predominance of middle- and upper-middle class residents expect nothing less than the best educational opportunities for their children. Over 70% of graduating seniors go on to college. Pine Lake was one of the first school districts in the state to implement a competency testing program. Students must pass these competency tests of minimum requirements before they can graduate from Pine Lake High School. The district provides remedial and tutorial services to all children needing help in reading and math. A full range of programs are offered in athletics, music, arts, science, foreign language, computer science, counseling and special education.

Initiation

The Pine Lake school superintendent was keenly interested in curriculum. Teachers, principals and parents all confirmed the fact that curriculum was the superintendent's first love. Prior to becoming Pine Lake's superintendent, he was an assistant superintendent for curriculum at a large suburban school district. One of the reasons Pine Lake was interested in hiring him as superintendent was because of his interest and expertise in curriculum. Parents and the school board at Pine Lake were very much interested in providing their children with quality educational opportunities. They prided their school system as a "frontrunner" and an "innovator" for educational programming.

It was the superintendent's interest in curriculum which led him to attend the National Commission on Excellence's initial presentation of A Nation at Risk in the spring of 1983. The superintendent felt that A Nation at Risk was "right on target." He indicated he wanted to go back to his district and "implement their recommendations." That interest led to the initiation of Pine Lake's response to excellence. The superintendent was solely responsible for initiating that response. He was first to take the issue to the board, the staff, the students and the community. There was no evidence that any other group or individual influenced Pine Lake to make a response to the excellence movement.

Motivation

The superintendent initiated Pine Lake's response to excellence. It was his keen interest in curriculum that led him to attend the initial presentation of A Nation at Risk and to subsequently read several of the major excellence reports. The superintendent said, "I agreed with them." He explained how he took the recommendations of the major excellence reports to the school board, the Council for Curriculum Improvement (CCI) and the community, basically saying, "Look at us, we're already doing what they're recommending." Pine Lake was pictured by all the interviewees as being ahead of most schools, an "initiator" and a "frontrunner." The superintendent saw the reports as a "steamroller helping to confirm what we were already doing."

The motivational forces which led the superintendent to initiate Pine Lake's response to excellence were as follows. First, he believed in what the reports were saying. He sincerely felt that Pine Lake needed to strengthen its standards. Second, the superintendent saw them as confirming what he was already doing and trying to do. Third, he used the reports to provide for his own vote of confidence from the board, staff and community.

There was no evidence that the community, the intermediate school district, the Department of Education nor any other ancillary organization provided any significant motivation to cause the superintendent or the

school district to respond to the excellence movement. Most of the interviewees thought that the vast amount of media coverage and possible influence from the above listed areas may have contributed indirectly as a motivational force. All the interviewees felt that the overwhelming reason for the district's response to excellence was the district's internal recognition of need and only to a minor extent the result of external stimuli. The district had not completed a needs analysis prior to 1983. All those individuals interviewed identified the superintendent as the initiator and then correctly identified his motivation as being a sincere desire to raise standards and to use the reports to further support his recommendations for programming. No one, other than the superintendent, verbalized the third motivational force of seizing the opportunity to provide a "vote of confidence." In all fairness to the superintendent, that appeared to be an unplanned but welcome benefit. The first two were the prime motivators.

Process

The superintendent attended the opening presentation for A Nation at Risk. He also read several of the major excellence reports. He kept the school board knowledgeable about various aspects of the excellence movement by giving periodic reports to the board. The board never assigned the responsibility of developing an excellence response to

the superintendent or any other group. The superintendent assumed the responsibility for coordinating a response on his own initiative.

In early fall of 1983, the superintendent reprinted A Nation at Risk and mailed a copy to every employee of the school district several weeks in advance of a special district workshop for the afternoon of October 10, 1983. At that workshop, all school district employees were assigned to small groups to discuss the contents of A Nation at Risk and develop recommendations as to how Pine Lake should respond. Small group leaders collected and tabulated group responses which were then combined to show results from all of the groups participating in the workshop. These recommendations were given to the CCI which was given the task and responsibility of developing final recommendations for the superintendent and school board. The CCI spent a year and a half in that study and presented its final recommendations to the superintendent and board in May of 1985. The board accepted those recommendations in August of 1985.

In addition to coordinating a response from staff employees and the CCI, the superintendent coordinated an exercise in community goal setting. On eight consecutive Wednesday nights, the superintendent arranged meetings for the community to hear various speakers discussing aspects of the excellence movement. At the conclusion of each meeting, guests were asked if they would be willing to

serve on a 40 member long range planning committee. The committee of 40 met on a weekend and developed a list of 32 prioritized goals which were then given to the school board. The board drew a line under the twelfth goal and asked the superintendent to develop action plans for all goals above that line.

Decision Making

The superintendent initiated the decision to respond to the excellence movement. He chose a process whereby many people were involved in the district's response to excellence. Goal setting responsibilities were given to two groups . . . the orientation workshop attended by all school employees and a committee of 40 community members. Both groups developed recommendations which were then taken by the superintendent to the CCI.

The CCI had representation from the teachers, principals, students, board members, community members and the superintendent. The superintendent said, "the CCI was given the authority for deciding the district's response to excellence." A chairperson for the CCI referred to the CCI as "our committee for excellence."

Many interviewees mentioned the fact that the district was administered with heavy use of committees and participative management. The superintendent confirmed that fact and added that "in order to eliminate any possible misunderstanding, I always clarify the extent of a committee's power and to whom they report."

After reading several of the major excellence reports, the superintendent held the belief that Pine Lake needed to upgrade its graduation requirements. That belief was further supported by the recommendations of the two goal setting groups. With his personal conviction and the recommendation of two goal setting groups, the superintendent approached the CCI with the suggestion that either "they work on a proposal to revise graduation requirements or I will present the board with a revised graduation requirement proposal." The CCI accepted the task for revising graduation requirements and spent one and a half years finalizing what ultimately became recognized as the district's response to excellence.

All interviewees, including the superintendent, identified the CCI as the decision maker. The CCI developed a proposal for revised graduation requirements. The chairperson of the CCI wrote that proposal. A representative from the CCI recommended that proposal to the school board for adoption. The school board adopted the CCI's recommendations.

On the surface, it appeared the CCI was the major decision maker. However, it was the superintendent who envisioned and molded Pine Lake's response to excellence. He had the personal conviction that Pine Lake needed to raise its graduation standards. He orchestrated the involvement of the two large groups which recommended the raising of the graduation requirement. He selected the CCI

as the committee to work on the excellence response and then gave them a specific assignment. As a member of the CCI, the interviewees all referred to the superintendent as a powerful and influential voice on the committee. Members of the CCI were divided in opinion between increasing the graduation requirements to the superintendent's recommendation of 22 credits or the high school principal's recommendation of 21 credits. The CCI supported the position of the superintendent.

It should be noted that not one interviewee thought of the CCI as a mere rubber stamp for the superintendent. All were confident that there were no preconceived ideas forced upon the committee. When questioned about such a possibility, one teacher said, "When the camps divided over 21 or 22 credits, the superintendent's argument for 22 credits were simply more persuasive." Even though the superintendent was not recognized as the decision maker by interviewees, he certainly played the most influential role in the shaping of the district's response to excellence from beginning to end.

Involvement

Several interviewees spoke about Pine Lake's extensive use of participative management. Pine Lake's response to the excellence movement characterized an involvement style of management. In responding to the excellence movement, the superintendent chose a process that involved many

different participants. The entire school staff of teachers, administrators, board members, custodians, aides, bus drivers and secretaries were involved in a goal setting exercise. The community was invited to attend eight consecutive Wednesday night workshops on excellence. A committee of 40 citizens was formed from these evening workshops. That committee was given a task of setting long range goals. Teachers, administrators, board members, citizens and students were all involved in the work of the CCI.

The superintendent held the most significant involvement in the district's response to excellence. He orchestrated the response from beginning to end. The school board merely accepted and approved reports. The principals were involved in the CCI and the two large group participation exercises. They carried reports back to their staffs. Teachers, students and the community were all represented at the CCI level. Pine Lake's response to excellence was most distinctively marked by its expansive involvement of many people.

Plans

The CCI was given the responsibility of developing Pine Lake's plan for excellence. The council spent a year and a half studying the issue of raising the graduation requirements from 20 to 22. In harmony with the participative management style of Pine Lake, they invited

input from many individuals. They personally interviewed faculty members as well as department heads at the high school. Comments of parents were invited through meetings of school building Parent Advisory Councils. Information about the proposed graduation requirement changes were presented in school district newsletters with an invitation for interested community persons to contact the school district with suggestions and opinions. The council widely disseminated a one-page information sheet describing proposed changes among staff, students and the community and again invited reaction.

The council's recommendation to the school board was that graduation requirements be raised from 20 credits to 22 credits. Required subject credits were raised from 10.5 credits to 14 credits within a total of 22 credits. Elective credits were dropped from 9.5 credits to 8 credits. Required credits in English were raised from 3 to 3.5. Credits in math were raised from 1 to 2 credits. Science was raised from 1.5 credits to 2 full credits. Social studies was raised from 2.5 credits to 3 credits. Foreign language/fine arts was raised from 1 to 2 credits. The raising of the total number of credits needed for graduation was Pine Lake's plan for addressing the excellence movement. It was Pine Lake's response to excellence.

Results - Actual or Anticipated

Pine Lake responded to the excellence movement by increasing graduation requirements. Subjects required for graduation were increased from 10.5 to 14 credits. Electives were decreased from 9.5 to 8 credits. The combination of these changes meant that the overall credits for graduation were increased from 20 to 22 credits.

When questioned about what had been achieved or what was expected to be achieved, most interviewees were not able to name any verified results. They simply made an unverified statement that students would be better educated as a result of the credits being added for graduation. The high school principal said, "There aren't any results . . . I mean, how do I measure achievement results before and after an increase in graduation requirements. We simply assume students will be better educated after graduating with 22 credits instead of the old 20 credit requirement."

The superintendent identified one verified result after the increase in required courses. There was a substantial drop in the number of students enrolling in study halls. With the increase in required credits, students had less time to enroll in study halls. The superintendent assumed that this would result in a better educated student.

Summary

It was the superintendent's interest in curriculum which led him to attend the news conference where A Nation

at Risk was first released. He believed in what the report was saying. He felt that Pine Lake needed to strengthen its standards and thought that the report's recommendations supported the very things he was trying to accomplish at Pine Lake. This was the motivation that led him to initiate Pine Lake's response to excellence.

He chose a process of responding to the excellence movement that involved many different people. Two large groups participated in goal setting . . . a community committee of 40 and an all school employee workshop. Eight evening sessions on excellence were scheduled for the community. Principals discussed the excellence movement at their staff meetings. The superintendent kept the board informed as to the district's response to the excellence movement. The CCI, which accepted the responsibility of revising graduation requirements, interviewed staff members and queried students, parents, faculty and community members before finalizing its recommendation for increasing graduation requirements. Every employee and citizen was given the opportunity for input.

The superintendent never identified himself as being the decision maker nor was he recognized by the interviewees as the decision maker. However, the evidence showed that he was very influential in shaping the district's response to excellence. He had the personal conviction that Pine Lake needed to improve its standards. He had a vision of what needed to be done. He orchestrated

the involvement of two large groups which recommended the exact changes he felt were needed. He was very good at pulling the right strings to get the right committees to recommend the right decisions.

Pine Lake's process of involving many people was a major element of their response. That response was increased graduation requirements. Subjects required for graduation were increased from 10.5 to 14 credits. Electives were decreased from 9.5 to 8 credits. Overall, credits for graduation were increased from 20 to 22 credits.

The only verified result of the changed graduation requirement was a substantial drop in the number of students enrolling in study halls and an increase in the number of students enrolling in academic courses. Interviewees made the assumption that more credits and a tougher academic schedule would produce a better educated student.

MINERAL SPRINGS

Community

Mineral Springs is a small rural community in central Michigan. Located at the exact geographic center of Michigan, it was founded as a sawmill community in 1853. The Rapid River, which flows through the community, provided the perfect power source for a sawmill. Mineral water was discovered in 1869. This water, claimed to have great healing power, brought wealth and notoriety to the community in the late 1800's. By 1880, the town expanded from a small sawmill community to a town with eight industries, two railroads, and four hotels.

Today, old mansions, built by wealthy residents from the mineral springs era, look strangely out of place in this farming community of 4,101 residents. Like most farm towns, only a handful of area residents actually farm. There are a few shopkeepers and local merchants, but the vast majority of working residents commute thirty, forty, fifty and even sixty miles to work each day. There are no major employers in Mineral Springs. When the last major industrial employer went out of business in the late 1970's, the loss of over 400 jobs brought severe hardships upon families, the town and the school. The town is recovering from that loss and the schools have become the predominate unit tying the community together.

The School District

The Mineral Springs School District encompasses 86 square miles, enrolls 1,500 students, and employs 77 teachers. There are three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Each elementary school is located on a 10 acre site and situated in different sections of the community in order to provide easy access for walking children. The buildings were constructed in 1954, 1957, and 1968. They vary in size with 10, 6, and 12 teaching stations. All have carpeted libraries. The newest building has carpeted classrooms and is air conditioned.

The middle school, constructed in 1968, is air conditioned and carpeted in the library. It is situated on a 15 acre site, houses grades 5 through 8 and contains 23 teaching stations. The original high school was constructed in 1932 with additions in 1950, 1957, 1961 and 1968. High School I and High School II are two separate buildings which are not connected by a passageway. Both are two story buildings. Furthermore, the annex building and the metals building are on the same 15 acre site and are also separated from the two main buildings. The high school contains a total of 32 teaching stations. Some are carpeted and some still have wooden floors.

Initiation

School enrollment at Mineral Springs declined 27% over the past 10 years. The decline was attributed to a gradual

erosion of employment opportunities within the community. Projections call for the current enrollment of 1,443 to drop to 1,318 by school year 1990-91. These membership drops resulted in significant reductions in state aid payments for the district. To maintain its status quo level of programming, the school raised the level of operational millage. Voters approved a one mill increase in operational millage in 1985 and .3 of a mill increase in 1986. The most recent total expenditure was \$2,721 per child, slightly below the state average of \$2,921 per child. There was a feeling expressed by many interviewees that the schools were the community's most valuable asset. They were a focal point for community pride. Interviewees thought it extremely important to provide for a very good school system.

A high school student discipline problem erupted into front page news coverage during the 1982-83 school year. The high school principal was a long time resident of Mineral Springs and had numerous friends and relatives in the community. Failing health had produced a pattern of late arrivals to work, early departures from work, and long lunch hours. His predecessor described him as having a preference for "banker's hours" and "conferences away from the office." He was described as a man "without the foggiest idea about how to control kids." The situation degenerated to the point where students spoke obscene vulgarities to teachers, and teachers locked their doors

during class time. For three months, the local newspaper depicted the high school discipline problem as something expected in an inner city ghetto.

It was during this period of time that A Nation at Risk called upon schools to produce excellence. In the fall of 1983, the superintendent recommended that the school board establish a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) to study the district's K through 12 program. He further recommended that they hire a retired professor from the University of Michigan to serve as a resource consultant and that the committee be charged with the responsibility of providing a five year long range plan to meet both the current and future needs of the district and children. Although established for more than one purpose, this committee grew to represent the district's response to the nationwide call for excellence. All interviewees agreed it was the superintendent who initiated the idea and recognized the need for this committee. He took the first action that resulted in the district's response to excellence. All other participants were preoccupied with other mounting problems.

Motivation

Mineral Springs' first response to the excellence movement was the establishment of the CAC in the fall of 1983. A Nation at Risk had been released in the spring of 1983. The superintendent initiated the establishment of

the CAC. His motivation for initiating the committee was multifaceted.

The establishment of the committee was a visible response to the nationwide demand that schools should strive to produce excellence. Initially, the superintendent denied that the committee was a response to the excellence movement. However, in later interviews, he acknowledged that the CAC did in fact serve that purpose. He described his motivation for establishing the CAC this way, "The community has lost practically all of its industry, the town's dying and the only thing they have is the school system." His most important mission was to keep the school system strong and healthy in order to provide a sense of pride and unity for holding the town together. He said that the town could not attract new industry without good schools and that his motivation for establishing the CAC was to give the community a voice in shaping those schools.

There were other motivating factors for establishing the CAC. The board president said it was established to "deal with the politically sensitive high school principal problem and to win community support for additional millage." He said the superintendent informed the school board that they would chance a recall if they tried to fire the high school principal. The logic was that by hiring a consultant and appointing a committee to "muddy the waters," the board and superintendent could "stay clear of

the stink." The current high school principal, the assistant superintendent and other board members all confirmed this as a suspected motivation for establishing the CAC. The strategy worked in that the high school principal resigned.

All interviewees recognized the need to win community support as a motivational factor for establishing the CAC. There were sharp cutbacks in educational programming as a result of drops in state and local financial support. One board member said, "We can tell them (voters) that we need more money, but they never believe us. It's better if they (CAC) decide for themselves that we need more millage." The superintendent acknowledged that there was a need for the committee to prioritize earlier cuts in the order they should be reinstated into the curriculum. This was assuming that a successful millage campaign would provide the additional money to reinstate cut programs. Again, the strategy worked since the community passed an additional one mill in 1985 and an additional .3 mill in 1986.

There was no evidence that the intermediate school district, the Department of Education, or any other ancillary organization provided any significant motivation to cause the superintendent or the school district to respond to the excellence movement. Many interviewees thought that the news media coverage contributed indirectly as a motivational force. The majority of interviewees felt the district's response was more of a response to an

external stimuli rather than an internal recognition of need. The district had not completed a needs analysis prior to 1983.

Process

The superintendent initiated the district's response to excellence. His motivation for doing so was to solve an administrative problem with the high school principal, win community support for additional millage and to provide a response to the call for excellence. He elected to use a process that involved an outside consultant and a citizen's committee of 35 members.

The superintendent used a consultant on a prior occasion and was pleased with the experience. Therefore, he recommended the hiring of a consultant for the stated purpose of "studying the school district's K through 12 program." He further recommended the board appoint a 35 member citizen committee to work with the consultant. The school board accepted that recommendation and carefully selected each of the 35 members. All segments of the community, including three teachers, were represented on the committee. The CAC was divided into three subcommittees: high school education, middle school education and elementary education. The committee and its subcommittees were charged with the responsibility of "studying the K through 12 program and producing a five year long range plan to meet both the current and future needs" of the children. The committee along with the

consultant were given the responsibility for developing the district's response for excellence.

The committee met every other week during the first four months of 1984. A final report was presented to the school board in May of 1984, at a dinner meeting held for that purpose. The school board accepted the committee's recommendations.

Decision Making

The school board hired a consultant and appointed a 35 member citizen's committee to "study the K through 12 program and produce a five year long range plan." The committee and its consultant were given power to make recommendations to the school board. No other person or group was given the authority to shape the district's response to excellence. All other participants became resource persons.

There was no evidence that the superintendent, another administrator, or even the consultant colored the committee's recommendation. To the contrary, all interviewees made specific mention that the committee's work belonged solely to the committee. The CAC chairperson, subcommittee chairpersons and the consultant all denied having any dominance over the committee's final recommendations. The high school principal, who attended all of the committee meetings, was the only interviewee to question the contention that the committee was unswayed by

the consultant. He said, "I think the consultant significantly colored what the committee proposed . . . I mean, here you have an expert working with people that really don't know that much (about education). I mean, it's pretty easy to gently move them this way or that way." It was impossible to ascertain the exact degree of influence the consultant had on the committee's final report, but obviously there was some. What is certain is that there were no predisposed programs being sold to the committee by any participant . . . inside or outside of the committee.

The chairperson of the CAC combined the recommendations of each of the three subcommittees into the final report of the CAC. The report of recommendations, while similar in some areas, was separate and different from a report and recommendation given by the consultant during the same May 1984 meeting with the school board. The CAC report was presented to the board by the CAC chairperson. The consultant's report was presented to the board by the consultant. All evidence points to the conclusion that the CAC actually made the decision about what recommendations to make to the board relative to the district's response to the demand for excellence. The school board reserved the right to make the final decision relative to implementing those recommendations.

Involvement

The superintendent initiated Mineral Springs' response to excellence by recommending the school board hire a consultant and appoint a 35 member citizen's committee. By accepting that recommendation, the board and superintendent removed themselves from the center of controversy and delegated decision making responsibility to the committee. The superintendent knew tensions were high at the time and that the situation could get a little messy. By advising the board to hire a consultant and appoint a committee, he essentially advised the board to stay above the fight. The superintendent assumed the role of a resource person from which the committee and consultant could gather information. The board appointed the committee members and reserved the right to accept or reject any or all recommendations. In describing the involvement of the committee, one board member said, "We manipulated the committee by using them and their sphere of influence. The board could have done it, but who would have believed us?"

As perceived by the superintendent and the board, the committee meetings became battlegrounds where people let off steam about the high school discipline problem, the high school principal, and various curriculum cuts. By the time the smoke from the battle had cleared, the high school principal resigned and the 35 citizens were convinced that the school needed additional millage. It was this "sphere of influence" that the superintendent and school board used

to persuade the rest of the community to pass two subsequent additional millage issues.

The committee played a major role in Mineral Springs' response to excellence. Students were not included on the committee. The teaching staff was represented only by the three teachers on the committee. Principals attended committee meetings and served as resource people. One board member, who also served on the committee, said, "They were hovering in the wings." The assistant superintendent served only a minor role in gathering needed financial information. The committee provided the district with a response to excellence, resolved the problem with the high school principal and prepared the community for the subsequent passage of two additional millage issues.

Plans

The school board accepted the CAC's report and recommendations in May of 1984. The establishment of that committee and the subsequent implementation of many of their recommendations formed the essence of Mineral Springs' response to the excellence movement. The response was not modeled after any other excellence plan or recommendation and was unique to Mineral Springs.

Requirements for high school graduation were increased from 18 to 20 credits. Required credits were increased from 7.5 to 10. New requirements now include 2 credits in math, 2 credits in science and 1 credit in government. The

old requirements called for 1 credit of math and science and .5 credits in government. Calculus and advanced chemistry were added to the high school course offerings.

The high school was accredited by the North Central Association. The committee recommended that the middle school seek accreditation from North Central Association. That accreditation was achieved. A reading program and consultant were added to the middle school. Physical education was reinstated in all four grades of the middle school. A fine arts/unified arts program was reinstated at the middle school. Finally, recommendations from both the high school and the middle school subcommittees contained opening statements emphasizing the committee's desire for a well disciplined student body.

At the elementary level, vocal music and physical education were reinstated. The elementary subcommittee recommended the hiring of an elementary librarian and a resource room aide. Neither of these recommendations were implemented. The elementary subcommittee also recommended a language skills workshop for all teachers. This recommendation was not implemented.

The educational consultant made his own final report to the school board. That report included enrollment projections, suggestions for grade organization, suggestions for school facility renovation and many other recommendations. These recommendations included the hiring of twelve new staff positions. All of the recommendations

made by the CAC were encompassed within the consultant's list of recommendations. The recommendations implemented by the board appeared on both the CAC's and the consultant's list of recommendations. The twelve new staff positions recommended by only the consultant were not instituted.

Results - Actual or Anticipated

There were no verified achievements as a result of Mineral Springs' response to excellence. The response was the establishment of a committee and the implementation of many of that committee's recommendations. The superintendent said that achievement came as a result of the committee's involvement. "It reinforced the community's good feeling toward our school . . . people are once again proud of their schools." The high school principal said that "students are more serious about their studies. We can see a change in attitude." The assistant superintendent said, "The changes we made should make for a better educated student."

The middle school principal spoke about the fact that his school now had an art, physical education and reading program. He talked about those additions significantly improving the education available for children. An elementary principal thought the district's response to excellence had been a good way for the district to regain lost programs.

A board member said, "We gained community support for our schools . . . we passed a millage." Another board member said, "We improved our level of excellence by offering a more balanced program." Other interviewees, including teachers, committee members and community members thought that the district's response to excellence would mean better education for the children.

Many changes were made as a result of the district's response to excellence. Enrichment courses were reinstated and advanced academic courses were added to the high school curriculum. A remedial reading program was added. Graduation requirements were increased. Accreditation was gained at the middle school. There was a renewed districtwide emphasis on good discipline. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, community pride and support for the school was reestablished. An additional millage was passed.

Summary

In the fall of 1983, the superintendent recommended that the school board establish a Citizen's Advisory Committee to study the district's K through 12 educational program. Although it was established for more than one purpose, that committee grew to represent the district's response to excellence. In addition to recommending the establishment of the CAC, the superintendent recommended the hiring of an outside educational consultant. The

consultant coordinated the work of the committee and made an independent report to the school board.

The superintendent's motivation for initiating the CAC and hiring the consultant was to deal with a politically sensitive high school principal problem, win community support for additional millage and to provide a response to the excellence movement. That committee and its consultant were given power to make recommendations to the school board. No other person or group was given the authority to shape the district's response to excellence. All other participants became resource persons. The school board appointed all 35 committee members. They represented a diverse section of the school and community.

Many changes were made as a result of the district's response to excellence. Enrichment courses were reinstated and advanced academic courses were added to the high school curriculum. A remedial reading program was added. Graduation requirements were increased. Most significantly, the high school principal problem was resolved, community pride was regained and support for the school was reestablished. The community supported two subsequent additional millage requests.

MILLCREEK

Community

In the early 1800's, much of Michigan was covered with dense forests of hardwood and pine. Millcreek, located in south central Michigan, was founded in an area of huge hardwoods and along the banks of the Clearwater River in 1836. The river provided power to the sawmills and the lumbering industry thrived until the late 1880's. Because of its central location within the county, Millcreek became the county seat in 1846 and was incorporated as a city in 1875.

The lumber era is over. The huge tracts of timber are gone. Today, the area's fertile soil has made agriculture and its related services an important part of the community. Even though the area is predominantly agricultural, the majority of the city's 6,000 residents work in areas unrelated to agriculture. Most commute to work in one of two nearby cities and live in what might be described as middle income housing. The city has two large mobile home parks, four apartment buildings and an abundance of moderately priced homes in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 price range. Higher priced homes are found along country roads and also in the area's newest subdivision. The superintendent of schools, who has been in the community for over 17 years, described the area as a combination of "old timers from the farming community and

commuters from the city. Both are solid middle class. The farming community still holds the political muscle to turn any election."

The School District

Millcreek Public Schools encompasses 110 square miles, enrolls 3,300 students, and employs 167 teachers. There are four elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Two elementary schools, located in the city, contain 15 and 16 classrooms and were built in 1951 and 1955. Two other elementary schools, located in the country, contain 13 and 14 classrooms and were built on 10 acre sites in 1961. The buildings are attractive and well maintained. They are modest in appearance. None are carpeted. All have a library and a multipurpose room that doubles as a gym and cafeteria.

The middle school is the district's newest building. It is located on a 20 acre site at the edge of town and was built in 1969. It houses grades 6 through 8 and contains 43 classrooms (all carpeted), a gym, cafeteria, library, and a full range of special facilities for science, shop, homemaking, special education, and arts and crafts.

The high school, also located on the edge of town, was built in 1958. Current enrollment in grades 9 through 12 is 1,125 students. There are 58 teachers, a principal and two assistant principals. It is accredited by North Central Association.

Millcreek Public Schools reflects the socioeconomic standard of their community. The school district's most recent expenditure of \$2,830 per pupil represents the 48th percentile of expenditure per child for all Michigan school districts.

Initiation

Millcreek's superintendent of schools was in his sixth year as chief executive. Prior to that, he had been an assistant superintendent for eight years, and an elementary principal for three years, all within the Millcreek school district. One teacher described him as a "people person, a committee man, an opinion surveyor." A past board member said "his philosophy is to respond to the wishes and desires of the majority." He was committed to building strong public relations between segments of the school and community and between the staff and administration. Better public relations was defined as more "open communication." The prospect of better communication was one of the reasons he had been hired as superintendent. Upon assuming that position, he perceived the high school principal's leadership style as being "too closed, too authoritarian and too dictatorial." Teachers complained about not having meaningful input, parents were described as not being involved and uninformed. The board and superintendent were concerned about low staff morale at the high school.

Each year the superintendent established his own list of performance objectives. In light of A Nation at Risk, the superintendent set a goal of reviewing "all aspects of the high school program including the administration." Toward the accomplishment of that purpose, he recommended that the school board approve the establishment of a "High School Study Committee." That committee, made up of students, teachers, administrators and a cross-sectional representation of the community, was charged with the responsibility of reviewing A Nation at Risk, a North Central Accreditation visit report, course offerings, career opportunities, graduation requirements and megatrends affecting the nation and the world. The high school principal related he was somewhat uncomfortable with that much meaningful committee participation. He reflected back to his initial thoughts, "Oh boy, here we go! You ask everyone what they think of you and they might tell ya!" The committee met for thirteen sessions from September 1983 to January 1984.

The superintendent of schools initiated Millcreek's response to the demand for excellence. He did so by first addressing the issue in his own performance objectives and then by recommending the establishment of a "High School Study Committee." No other group or individual from the board, staff, administration or community was responsible for Millcreek's initial response to excellence. All interviewees agreed that it was the superintendent who

initiated the school district's response to the demand for excellence.

Motivation

The superintendent initiated Millcreek's response to excellence. The motivation for initiating that response was multifaceted. First, even though he denied being "jerked around by what was happening in the news media," he acknowledged the massive amount of publication given the excellence movement may have influenced him to make a response. The timing of his initial response, just two months after the release of A Nation at Risk, suggests that the media blitz on excellence was a motivating cause for the superintendent to respond.

There were a number of other motivating reasons for the superintendent to respond. July was the month that he needed to write his own performance objectives. Choosing the goal of reviewing the high school program at a time when that subject was at the top of current events seemed only appropriate. The high school had just completed a North Central Accreditation visit and a review of that visit needed to be made. The intermediate school district involved Millcreek in a program for school improvement. The district recently completed a public building needs survey. The high school principal said the committee was established by the superintendent to address all the above needs.

One motivating factor, not identified by the principal, was the superintendent's desire to "open up" the high school administration. The superintendent was concerned about the principal's authoritative style of leadership. The superintendent preferred a more participative style of management. The establishment of the "High School Study Committee" was a means to introduce the principal to a more participative style of management.

There was no evidence that the community, the Department of Education, or any other ancillary organization provided any significant motivation to cause the superintendent or the school district to respond to the excellence movement. The majority of the interviewees felt that the district had not responded to an external stimuli. The district had not completed a needs analysis prior to 1983.

Process

Millcreek's response to excellence was initiated when the superintendent recommended the school board establish a "High School Study Committee." After the board approved that recommendation, the superintendent and high school principal assumed the task of soliciting committee representatives. Students, teachers, administrators and a cross-sectional representation of the community were asked to serve on the committee. Forty-two people were named as committee members. Many were husband and wife

combinations. The committee met for thirteen sessions from September 1983 to January 1984. Each session was proceeded by a dinner.

The format for committee work consisted of a series of six informational sessions followed by a corresponding series of six discussion sessions. The informational and follow-up discussion sessions were devoted to six topics: course offerings and graduation requirements, A Nation at Risk, the accreditation report, megatrends, career opportunities and the diploma.

The 42 member committee divided into small groups for discussion. Discussion group leaders were designated to report back to the committee as a whole. The superintendent served as both secretary and chairperson for the full committee.

The committee was charged with the responsibility of examining the high school program and making whatever recommendations were necessary to improve it. No other committee or individual was given responsibility for developing the district's response to excellence.

Decision Making

The superintendent recommended and the board established a committee for reviewing the high school program. That committee was given total responsibility for developing recommendations for the high school program and was charged with that responsibility by the

superintendent. The charge given the committee did not make mention of the nationwide thrust for excellence. The superintendent initially denied that the committee was established to provide an answer to the demand for excellence. However, he later acknowledged that the work of the committee became the district's only response to excellence. Whether or not it was acknowledged as such, the committee had all the appearances of a committee for excellence.

As chairperson, the superintendent gave the welcoming address before each meeting. He chose the six topics for the committee to discuss. He wrote the minutes for each meeting and summarized the committee's work after each meeting. He also wrote the committee's final report to the school board. The superintendent was the real leader behind the committee's work. Interviewees identified him as the "chief spokesman," "the leader" and the "ram rod" of the committee.

Even though they recognized his strength in organizing the format and direction of the committee, all insisted that he did not color the committee's decisions. He wrote the minutes for each meeting, but these minutes had to be approved by the committee. Several interviewees related how the wording of the minutes were changed to reflect a more accurate position of the committee. Both the superintendent and the committee members insisted that the committee was the decision maker for the district's

response to excellence. The evidence suggested that the committee was the decision maker, but only within the parameters set by the superintendent.

Involvement

Millcreek's response to excellence was inclusive to the high school. The superintendent initiated the response by recommending that the board approve a "High School Study Committee." The board's only involvement was to accept that recommendation, receive the committee's final report and approve recommendations made by the committee. An assistant superintendent had no involvement with the excellence response. The high school principal was the only school administrator, other than the superintendent, actually involved with the committee. He assisted the superintendent in preparing the agendas for each committee session and served as the chief resource person for the committee.

The committee included students, teachers, the two administrators already mentioned, and a cross-sectional representation of the community. Six students were named to the committee. Only one attended a majority of the meetings. Several of the committee members expressed disappointment that the students did not actively participate. Teachers from a variety of high school disciplines were represented on the committee. They served as resource persons in their field of specialty. The

largest portion of the committee was comprised of community members. They included farmers, doctors, dentists, laborers, professionals, bankers, secretaries and housewives. This committee and the superintendent played the major roles in providing Millcreek with an excellence response. The superintendent initiated, guided and directed while the unified efforts of the committee produced the response.

Plans

Millcreek's plan for addressing the demand for excellence was not modeled after any other excellence plan or excellence report. In February of 1984, the "High School Study Committee" presented its final report to the school board. The committee generally concluded that the high school was providing "a sound and well balanced educational program." While offering its general endorsement of the existing program, the committee made recommendations that it felt would give "assistance in making a good school even better." In Part I: The Learning Environment, the recommendation was made that the student behavior policy should clearly be explained to both students and parents. Under the subheading of Academic Attitude, "teachers were encouraged to be well prepared for each instructional period and to provide a course syllabus. Both teachers and parents must demonstrate a commitment to quality." Under the subheading of Homework,

Social Activities, Extracurricular Activities and Part-Time Employment, it was recommended the staff "advise students and parents regarding the degree to which a student should participate in activities which may interfere with completing homework assignments." Under the subheading of Communication, it was recommended "teachers and parents should initiate communication at an early stage when they suspect problems are developing." In addition, "greater effort needs to be exerted in establishing positive contacts both from school to home and from home to school."

Under Part II: Competency and the Basics, seven recommendations were made:

1. Standards for competency should be established in a uniform manner.
2. It is equally critical that teachers differentiate between lack of ability and lack of motivation.
3. Students who are deficient in basic skill competence should be dually enrolled in the required courses and a remedial course.
4. Students who have not demonstrated acceptable levels of competency (i.e., a passing grade) in the basics should remain enrolled in the particular basic discipline until acceptable competence is demonstrated.
5. Remedial courses should be developed to operate in parallel with regular courses.
6. Consideration should be given to instituting a policy providing for in-school suspension.
7. An interdisciplinary effort should be exerted to integrate basic skill instruction throughout all areas of the curriculum.

Under Part III: Course Offerings and the subheading of Elective Courses, it was recommended that "consideration should be given to establishing explanatory courses similar to those offered at the middle school." It was also recommended that "staff members should reevaluate the content of the current electives curriculum." Under the subheading Application and Problem Solving, it was recommended that "greater stress needs to be placed on problem solving." Finally, under a subheading of Counseling, it was recommended that "counseling service should be increased at the high school through the addition of counseling staff and by introducing computer assisted counseling services."

Under Part IV: The Diploma, it was recommended that the high school "provide its graduates with a regular diploma and a honor's diploma." It was also recommended that the National Honor Society be reestablished.

Under Part V: Curriculum, it was recommended that "the high school should add journalism to the curriculum." Under a subheading called Foreign Language, it was recommended that "the district should consider the feasibility of introducing foreign language at the lower grade levels." Under the subheading Computer Literacy, it was recommended that "integration and development of computer literacy skills should be emphasized throughout the high school curriculum." Finally, under a subheading of Science, it was recommended that a "coordination of

science offerings in grades 6-12 should be a district priority."

Results - Actual or Anticipated

Before concluding the last committee meeting, it was decided that the committee reconvene in one year to review the degree to which its recommendations were achieved. At a meeting one year later, it was determined that a majority of its recommendations were addressed. Some recommendations were satisfied after a reevaluation, recommitment, or reemphasis. Others had been satisfied with the promise of future reevaluation or consideration. Some had been fully implemented. Finally, a few had been classified in a section labeled "no progress."

The following changes were implemented as a result of recommendations made by the committee. Two phone lines were added in the high school in order to improve communication between teachers and parents. Objective reference tests were developed for English, math, science and social studies. Additional clerical staff and a computer were added to the counseling department. The National Honor Society was reestablished. Computers were purchased for the science, math, agriculture, English and social studies departments. Twelve new computers were purchased for the business room. The number of students enrolling in computer education significantly increased. A

larger number of students enrolled in remedial courses. Finally, journalism was added to the high school curriculum.

Recommendations made by the committee resulting in no action included the following: No progress was made with the suggestion of advising students about priorities of homework versus extracurricular activities. There was no action taken on the concept of a dual diploma. Several recommendations that had not been rejected or implemented were listed in a section called Under Study. There was a commitment that teachers were and would continue to be reminded that they should be well prepared for instructing their classes. The use of a course syllabus was under advisement by the faculty. The recommendation for teaching foreign language at the elementary school was being studied by elementary administrators. The industrial arts program was being reviewed by a newly appointed committee.

Interviewees attributed other changes to the excellence movement. The assistant superintendent said that department chairpersons were added to the high school as a result of the excellence movement. Calculus was added as an elective course. Physical education was changed from "fun and games" to "education for healthy living." A high school science teacher said that new guidelines now require each high school department to develop both long and short term goals. The chairperson of the English department told how a media class was added to the curriculum. He further

said that teachers must now furnish goals and objectives for each course. Another teacher said, "we got people face to face . . . talking about problems. We improved interpersonal relations . . . teacher morale was lifted."

The superintendent saw the results of his district's response to excellence in terms of meeting and satisfying the needs of the staff and community. The school board president thought the results confirmed the fact that "we were already at or above what most excellence recommendations were saying. I don't think any changes were needed." When questioned about the results of his district's response to excellence, the high school principal gave a most perplexing answer, "What stands out in my mind is that we really didn't do anything." The statement appears a little baffling in light of results identified by others. In further questioning, he thought the process was laborious, tedious, wordy and, whatever the results, much would have probably been done with or without the committee. Somewhat reluctantly, he acknowledged that the process seemed to be important. It appeared that everyone benefited a little from the process. All the interviewees thought that children would benefit from their efforts.

Summary

The superintendent of schools initiated Millcreek's response to excellence. He had been chief executive for

six years and was hired for that position partly because of his commitment to public relations between school and community and between the staff and administration. His primary motivation for initiating a response was to solve a "communication problem" at the high school and to show evidence that a current issue was being addressed. Another motivational factor was the fact that both the intermediate school district and North Central Accreditation had been pressing the school district to provide programming for effective schools. With so much attention being given the excellence issue, the superintendent decided that one of his personal goals and objectives for school year 1983-1984 would be a complete review of the high school program.

A 42 member committee of parents, teachers, administrators, board members and students was set up to study the high school. The format of committee work consisted of a series of six information sessions followed by a corresponding series of six discussion sessions. Both of these sessions were devoted to six topics: course offerings and graduation requirements, A Nation at Risk, the accreditation report, megatrends, career opportunities and the diploma.

The committee was given total responsibility for developing recommendations for the high school program. The superintendent acted as the committee's chairperson and secretary. He developed the format for each meeting and chose the six topics for discussion. He wrote the minutes

for each meeting and summarized the committee work after each meeting. All interviewees recognized him as the committee leader. However, both the superintendent and committee members insisted that the committee was the decision maker for the response to excellence. They insisted that the committee had drawn its own conclusions without being influenced by the superintendent. The evidence suggested that the committee was the decision maker, but only within the parameters set by the superintendent.

The school board accepted a number of the committee's recommendations. Two phone lines were added in the high school. Journalism was added as a course offering. The National Honor Society was reinstituted. Objective reference tests were developed for English, math, science and social studies. More students were enrolled in computer education and in remedial courses for the academic subjects. All interviewees, including the high school principal, were pleased with the result of Millcreek's response to excellence.

Chapter V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is a Review of the Purpose, Conceptual Framework and Methodology. The second section is a Summary of the Findings. The findings from the case studies are compiled and commonalities described. The third section is called Synopsis and Conclusions. Major findings are reviewed and conclusions are drawn. The fourth section contains Recommendations for Future Research. Personal Reflections are given in the final section.

Review of the Purpose, Conceptual Framework and Methodology.

The purpose of this project was to describe and explain how six Michigan school districts in small towns responded or failed to respond to a nationwide thrust to produce excellence. The real test for significance of the excellence movement was to examine what happened or possibly did not happen in the local schools. This was a case study of how six small town school districts responded to the excellence movement in 1983.

A small town was defined as an identifiable political entity of fewer than 15,000 people, one which was not directly adjacent to a metropolitan area, and had a single secondary school. The six school districts selected for

case studies were chosen on the basis of pre-selected criteria. School size as measured by enrollment varied between 1,000 and 4,000 students. Selected districts were located in central Michigan. Each district had a single senior high school. The superintendent had served in that assignment for a minimum of three years.

The conceptual framework used to explore individual school district responses consisted of seven concepts: initiation, motivation, process, decision making, plans, and results-actual or anticipated. These concepts were the "vehicle" for understanding and describing how the six school districts responded to the excellence movement. The conceptual framework did not grow out of empirical research but rather was logically developed. The concepts encompassed sequential segments of a rationally developed continuum for the process of change. For the researcher, they represented a reasonable, sensible and sequential way to describe how six Michigan school districts responded to the excellence movement.

This research was an exploratory study. Each case study represented over a dozen in-depth interviews with superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, board members, community leaders, teachers, students, and individuals serving on excellence committees. Findings from the case studies enabled the researcher to draw some inferences and conclusions about how six school districts responded to the excellence movement of 1983. The ability

to generalize and draw conclusions about what was observed in six districts may have relevance for the general population of school districts.

Summary of the Findings

Communities. The six communities chosen for case studies were all located in central Michigan. They were within a 60-mile radius of Michigan's capitol city of Lansing. Each could be described as a small town having its own mayor and village council. Populations ranged from 2,200 to 7,481 residents. All were within commuting distance of Lansing. Some were within commuting distance of other major mid-Michigan cities like Jackson, Flint, Saginaw and Midland. Each community was an independent unit classified as a small town.

None of the communities had major industrial or business employers. The school district was the largest single employer within each community. Two communities in close proximity to Lansing could best be described as "bedroom" communities where residents lived in the community but worked elsewhere. The remaining four communities were described as farming communities.

The majority of the working residents in the two "bedroom" communities resided in the community and worked in nearby Lansing. Other than the school district, employment opportunities within these two communities were limited as a result of close proximity to the large city.

Residents did their shopping in the nearby city or shopping malls.

The remaining four communities were described as farming communities. This does not infer that the majority of residents worked within the farm industry. It does mean that the predominant industry within the community was farming. Grain elevators, feed stores, and implement dealers could be found within each of these communities. Business districts were larger to meet the needs of the residents. Greater numbers of local residents worked within the farm communities than the bedroom community. However, as was true within the bedroom communities, the majority of working residents living in the farm communities commuted to a nearby city for employment.

The School District

The six school districts chosen for case studies had student enrollments of 1,441, 1,443, 1,669, 1,834, 1,908 and 3,300. Schools with enrollments between 1,000 and 4,000 students were chosen since they represent the largest number of districts in Michigan. Each of the case study districts experienced declining enrollment; one by as much as 27 percent over the past ten years.

As required by the criteria, each school system had only one senior high school. Five of the districts had middle schools in separate facilities. Although both units were separate identities, one district had a combined high

school/middle school facility. Each of the case study districts had one or more elementary schools.

As required by the criteria, the superintendent for each district had been employed for at least three years. This provided assurance the superintendent was chief executive at the time A Nation at Risk was released in the spring of 1983. Although not required as a criterion for this study, five of the high school principals held their positions longer than three years. The sixth had been an assistant high school principal in 1983 and knew the specifics of how his school had responded to the excellence movement of 1983.

Two case study districts, Millcreek and Mineral Springs, had assistant superintendents in 1983. Because of declining enrollment and tight finances, Millcreek left the position vacant when its assistant superintendent retired in 1985. Therefore, at the time of the interviews for this case study, only Millcreek had an assistant superintendent.

Financially, as measured by expenditures per child, there were broad differences among the case study schools. Three of the districts were within the statewide median range of expenditures per child. Two of the districts were in the top quartile of expenditures per child and one district was in the bottom quartile of expenditures per child.

Initiation

In five out of the six case study school districts, the superintendent of schools was responsible for initiating the district's response to the excellence movement. A concerned citizen was responsible for initiating the response in one remaining district. The summary that follows examines the responses for each question used by the interviewer in determining who initiated each district's response to excellence.

The first question explored by the researcher was whether any local newspaper, radio or television editorials influenced the school to make a response to the excellence movement. The nationwide thrust for excellence received an initial push into the media spotlight with the release of A Nation at Risk in the spring of 1983. The researcher wanted to determine if there was any evidence the larger nationwide and statewide media coverage transferred down to the local media and whether that same local media exerted pressure for the school district to respond to excellence. There was no evidence within the six case studies this occurred. One school district experienced critical news stories and editorials condemning and demanding a solution to a high school discipline problem; however, there was no suggestion the school should make an excellence response.

None of the six school districts were subjected to direct pressure from the local news media to provide a response to excellence. No local editorials suggested that

the local school system respond to excellence. No letters to the editor were written urging the local school system to respond. The local news media was not involved with encouraging or persuading the school system to respond. They were completely silent about the need for excellence in all six case study communities. The finding that the local media had no direct role in the initiation of excellence responses does not apply to the influence of the state and nationwide media blitz. This larger coverage was found to have been a motivational influence leading to the initiation of excellence responses. These motivational factors will be covered in the following section on motivation.

The second area explored by the researcher was whether or not any community groups requested either the superintendent or school board to make a response for excellence. Two districts had parent groups attending school board meetings both before and after the release of the Nation at Risk report. One district had parent groups demanding a solution to a high school discipline problem. A second district had parent groups demanding that the school board resolve a teacher contract dispute. No one from either group ever suggested that the school make a response to excellence. There were no instances of groups of parents, citizens or students coming forward to pressure the school to respond to the excellence movement. However, the pressure that parent groups exerted for solutions to

other problems did provide a motivational influence ultimately leading to the initiation of excellence responses.

The researcher questioned interviewees as to whether individuals ever came to the school board, superintendent, or other administrators urging the school to respond to excellence. In five of the case study districts, no individuals came forward to encourage the school to respond to excellence. One concerned citizen in one district spoke out about the need for her district to respond to excellence. She carried her case to the superintendent, the principal, individual teachers, the board president, and to other school board trustees. She attended school board meetings and spoke out about the school's need to provide for excellence. This mother's persistence and a sympathetic and equally concerned board president ultimately led to this district's response to excellence.

The researcher questioned interviewees about whether anyone from the teaching staff had impacted the district's decision to respond to excellence. Although teachers discussed the excellence movement among themselves and occasionally with a principal, there was no evidence one or more teachers ever went to a principal, the superintendent, or the school board requesting that the district make a response to excellence. Teaching staffs were quiet in all six of the case study districts.

In the next series of questions, the researcher was interested in whether the school board was first to request the administration make a response to excellence or whether the superintendent presented the board with an unsolicited response to excellence. In five out of the six school districts, the superintendent was first to present a response proposal to the board. In each of these instances, that initial proposal was completely unsolicited by the board, staff and community. In only one district did the board request the administration to make a response. This was the same school where the concerned citizen requested the board to make a response. The board in turn requested the administration to follow through with a response.

Five of the six superintendents from case study districts were quick to perceive a need and take appropriate action. They responded before a ground swell of local citizens could organize and make demands. They proposed responses before staff members suggested the same. They were ahead of the news media. Each of these five superintendents were perceived by their boards, teaching staffs, and their communities as being on top of the excellence movement. They were each perceived as leading the way. The most surprising revelation for this researcher was the degree to which each of these superintendents was recognized as the initiator by every interviewee. In five districts, all interviewees (100%)

identified the superintendent as the initiator of the district's response to excellence. Only in the district where the concerned citizen initiated the response was there any variation in who interviewees identified as the initiator. In this instance, interviewees were not sure whether the board president or the identified concerned parent was the initiator. Close questioning of both the board president and the concerned mother showed it was the parent who first approached the board president with her concerns about the school needing to provide for excellence.

The final question explored by the interviewer in the category of initiation was whether there were community pressures or external stimuli which directly resulted in the initiation of the districts' response to excellence. None of the districts experienced a ground swell of community pressure or external stimuli to produce a response to the excellence movement. One district experienced the pressure of an external stimuli from one citizen. There were, however, pressures present within four of the six districts contributing to motivational reasons for providing ultimate responses. These will be discussed in the following section on motivation.

Motivation

Questions on motivation were designed to identify those forces, pressures, drives, needs or tensions which may have

been the motivation for the initiator and/or the district to develop its response to excellence. Interviewees thoroughly explained those motivating factors which they visualized as having brought about responses to excellence. In many cases, the researcher held second interviews to further question participants about motivational forces.

Communities did not have direct roles in pressuring case study school districts to respond to excellence. None of the case study communities had groups of citizens demanding that their school systems provide for excellence. Except for one woman in one district, the communities were completely silent on the issue of providing excellence. However, they were not found to have been quiet about other pressing situations within their districts at the time. Their involvement in these situations provided a motivation for districts to initiate excellence responses.

Four of the six districts experienced public relations problems in the spring of 1983 when A Nation at Risk was released. Two districts had large groups of angry parents attending school board meetings in the spring, summer and fall of 1983. Parents demanded the school board and superintendent resolve a teacher strike in one district. In the second district, parents wanted the release of a high school principal and the resolution of a high school discipline problem. The superintendents from both of these

districts recognized their jobs were on the line if they did not get their communities quieted down. A third district had public relations problems with its high school principal. Board members and the superintendent were receiving many critical phone calls, but the situation never escalated to the point where angry parents were attending school board meetings. Nevertheless, the superintendent recognized it as a problem that needed to be resolved. Public relation problems were brewing in a fourth district with one mother demanding that the school respond to excellence. A convenient and large portion of the solution for each of these problems was the establishment of an excellence committee. The communities never demanded responses for excellence, but responses to excellence certainly helped resolve community problems.

The remaining two districts not experiencing public relations problems at the time had superintendents who were very much aware of perceived public reactions. The superintendent from one of these districts spoke about "getting on top of an issue before it gets on top of you." The other superintendent had quickly called for a series of public informational meetings on the issue of providing for excellence. Both of these superintendents appeared to sense an urgency about keeping their communities informed and satisfied with their reaction to the excellence movement.

There was no evidence that the intermediate schools, the Department of Education, nor any of the ancillary organizations provided any significant motivation to cause school districts to respond to the excellence movement. Two districts acknowledged that their intermediate school districts had discussed the excellence movement and were trying to coordinate some kind of an effort. However, these efforts were found to be insufficient to cause a response to excellence. Likewise, interviewees from each district mentioned the efforts of the State Department of Education and various ancillary organizations. However, as with the intermediate, none of these efforts were found to have been sufficient motivation for a response to excellence. The emphasis placed on the excellence issue by intermediate school districts, the Department of Education, and the ancillary organizations gave superintendents an overall feeling of need to address the issue.

Very few interviewees read any of the excellence reports. Where reading had been done, A Nation at Risk was the report most often read. The majority of interviewees had seen capsulized versions of various excellence reports. Many heard presentations of what the excellence reports were saying while sitting on excellence committees. In general, the excellence reports were found to have little direct influence in providing the motivation needed to get the district to respond to excellence. Instead, they contributed to the overall sense of need to address the excellence issue.

The news media brought the excellence issue to the forefront. One principal said, "There was enough hullabaloo over the issue . . . we just couldn't sweep it under the rug. I mean, it was on the news every night for awhile and in every educational publication that we received. We had to at least address the issue." None of the interviewees described the news media as a contributing a motivational force. Rather, the media contribution was indirect.

None of the interviewees knew of any needs analysis completed by their districts prior to 1983. One surprising result of the study was that the majority of interviewees felt their districts' responses to excellence was the result of an internal recognition of need and not an external stimuli. This was rather surprising in that all the responses came shortly after the release of A Nation at Risk. Most interviewees wanted to envision their district having an altruistic desire to do what was good for children. The researcher evidenced a strong feeling of pride among many interviewees that their district was not merely involved in a "knee-jerk" response. Interviewees felt proud when they cited examples of how their district was a "frontrunner" or how they were already "meeting or exceeding" various excellence demands. There was no pride in acknowledging that their district simply provided a "knee-jerk" response to the demand for excellence.

The intermediate school district, the Department of Education, the ancillary organizations, the excellence reports, and the news media all contributed to a feeling that the issue of excellence needed to be addressed. However, none of the above were identified by interviewees as direct motivating factors which actually caused the district to respond. Five of the six superintendents were responsible for initiating their district's response to excellence. In each case, their motivation for doing so was different, although there were similarities. Three of the five initiating superintendents used their excellence response to solve immediate problems and concerns. One needed to "move his district away from a strike." One wanted to resolve a high school discipline problem, a principal problem and win community support for additional millage. A third superintendent also needed to find a solution to a high school principal problem. Even the superintendent not responsible for initiating her district's response used that response--specifically, to quiet the board president and the lady who did initiate the response. All four superintendents used the response to solve specific problems.

The two superintendents not using a response to solve specific problems were both quick to respond to the excellence movement. They provided responses before problems appeared. One superintendent spoke about "getting on top of a situation before it gets on top of you." The

other superintendent was quick to involve dozens of parents and citizens in committees for excellence. They sensed an urgency and need to address the issue.

One motivating factor in all five instances where superintendents initiated responses was the fact that all five had somehow used the excellence response to improve their own performance rating. Two used the excellence response for their personal goals and objectives. They felt some kind of a response needed to be made, so why not include it as a personal goal and objective? One superintendent said he thought it would look good on his resume. Three superintendents used the excellence movement as an opportunity to proclaim to staff, school board and the community that their schools were already meeting or exceeding many of the demands for excellence. This provided the opportunity for many to take pride in their schools.

Only one of the five initiating superintendents was found to have been motivated by his own keen interest in improving the high school curriculum. Likewise, the concerned citizen who initiated the response in one district was motivated by her desire to provide the best educational environment possible for her children.

All six superintendents found a way to use the excellence movement to their best advantage. All used it to win some degree of public support. Some used it to win support for additional millage, while others used it to

resolve tough and sensitive problems. Some used it as a podium from which to proclaim what a good job they were already doing. Some used it to look good at evaluation time. Some used it to look good on their resumes. Some responded because they sensed they were expected to respond. Some responded because they thought it would be good for the students.

When questioned about motivation for an excellence response, one superintendent said, "It's my job." That was true for any one of the five initiating superintendents. They were motivated to do their jobs in order to keep their jobs. Responding to the excellence movement was simply doing the job. It may have been putting out "brush fires" or keeping "brush fires" from starting. Either way, the nationwide call for excellence had produced a "how do you measure up" challenge at the local level. Superintendents felt the need to answer that challenge and to give an "all is well" assurance to staff, board and community. When you are the king, it is important for your subjects to know that the king is still the king and worthy of being the king.

Process

The section on process was designed to determine what method or procedure was used to establish the district's response to excellence. Were committees established and who served on them? Did the board assume responsibility or

was an administrator given responsibility? The actual process developed by each district was uniquely different, but there were similarities. In the paragraphs that follow, the researcher will provide answers to the interview questions and an analysis of the processes used by the districts.

Five of the six school districts had committees which were given responsibility for responding to excellence. One district made no response and obviously had no committee for excellence. It will be referred to as the no-response district. Four districts set up new committees and one district used an existing curriculum council to deal with the issue of providing for excellence. Superintendents recommended the use of committees in four out of five cases. The school board took the initiative of establishing an excellence committee in one district.

The committees used by five school districts were composed of similar segments of the community. Each committee was represented by teachers, principals, board members, parents, and community members. Four of the committees were represented by students. None of the interviewees from these districts expressed a consensus of favorable comment about the use of students on their committees. Most expressed disappointment with poor attendance and a low level of participation.

Each of the districts using committees had either subcommittees or more than one committee working on the

excellence issue. Two districts had committees organized according to grade levels: secondary, middle school and elementary. When subcommittees were used, they always reported to a primary committee.

In each of the five schools where committees were used, they were charged with a responsibility which ultimately became a response to excellence. Each charge for each committee was uniquely different. One school asked for a "Vision of Excellence." Another requested a review of the excellence reports. A third was asked to review graduation standards. The fourth was asked to "study the K-12 program." The fifth was asked to "examine the high school curriculum and make whatever recommendations were necessary to improve it."

School boards did not assume responsibility for responding to excellence. Neither did they assign that responsibility to superintendents nor any other administrator. Where responses were made, the responsibility was given solely to committees. It was given by the school board, but only after being recommended by the superintendent. This was the procedure in four out of five schools responding to excellence.

Five out of six superintendents were instrumental in overseeing the process by which their schools responded to excellence. This included the superintendent from the "no response" district. He coordinated the entire process which resulted in the "no response needed" postulation.

Only one superintendent was seen as not being instrumental in overseeing the process by which her school responded to the excellence movement. She consented with the process chosen, but had allowed the board president and the school board to take the lead in selecting a process to respond to excellence.

Decision Making

The section on decision making was designed to identify who made the decision relative to the district's response to excellence. Who decided the content and scope of that decision? If the district responded to excellence, the decision maker could have been the board, a board committee, a board appointed committee, the superintendent, another administrator or possibly an administrative team. First, the researcher needed to determine whether or not there had been a district wide response: a program, proposal, or resolution adopted to provide for excellence. Second, the researcher sought to identify the chief architect of that response. Interviewees were asked questions about who wrote the response, who recommended it to the school board for adoption, and who they thought had been the decision maker behind the response. One of the more surprising results of this section was the high degree of unity among respondents in naming the decision maker. Almost without exception, respondents named the same person or persons as the decision maker.

The school board, in five out of the six case study districts, accepted and approved reports, recommendations and/or proposals on excellence. In some instances, reports were merely accepted. In other cases, the board approved and implemented recommendations. The superintendent from the "no response" district led the board in a discussion on excellence, but no written report was generated. The result of that discussion was that no response was needed.

Two interview questions were designed to identify the writer of reports or recommendations and to determine whether the writer was also the decision maker. Final reports were written by the committee chairperson in each of the five responding school districts. The chairperson in one district was identified by interviewees as not only the writer but also the decision maker. Interviewees expressed frustration over the tight control held by this chairman, who was also the high school principal. The final report written by the chairman was said to have included only what he wanted. Interviewees spoke about his being "unmoving" and "defensive" and lamented the committee's work was worthless. The other four chairpersons served in the role of recorder. Subcommittees and individual committee members furnished the committee with suggested statements for the final documents. The committee as a whole ruled on the inclusion or exclusion of the statements. Final documents could best be described as the joint effort of the entire committee.

Committees were named as decision makers in four out of five of the responding schools. In each instance, committee members insisted that their final reports were wholly the work of the committees and not the result of preconceived ideas. Nevertheless, superintendents played very influential roles in the decision making processes. In one district, the superintendent acted as the committee chairperson and recorder. He chose committee members, developed the topics for the committee to discuss, wrote the minutes, and summarized the committee's work. He was further identified as a "ram rod," "leader," and "chief spokesman." Yet, interviewees said that the decision maker was the committee as a whole.

Another superintendent selected the committee to work on excellence, gave them a precise assignment and then successfully persuaded this committee to approve his recommendations. Again, committee members and other interviewees insisted that the committee was the decision maker and that the superintendent had not used them as a rubber stamp. In each of the five responding schools, it was the committee chairperson who presented the final report or recommendations to the school board.

Five of the six case study districts had programs, proposals, or recommendations for excellence submitted to the school board for approval. Committees were named as the decision maker in four districts. A high school principal, who also served as a committee chairperson, was

named as the decision maker in one district. In the "no response" district, the superintendent was named as the decision maker--he orchestrated the no response decision. In each instance the committee chairperson wrote the response and assumed responsibility for recommending it to the school board for approval.

Involvement

The purpose of the section on involvement was to identify all participants involved or included in the process of formulating the districts' response to excellence. Interviewees were asked to describe the role of various participants. The following paragraphs summarize that involvement.

School boards within the six case study districts played a very limited role in responding to excellence. They did not initiate any of the responses or lobby for any particular response. Interviewees said the boards' primary involvement was receiving reports and approving recommendations. They approved committees when superintendents recommended the establishment of the same. They received final committee reports and approved committee recommendations.

Superintendents were actively involved in excellence responses. They initiated the response in five out of six case study districts. Five of the six superintendents were instrumental in controlling the process of responding to

excellence. Interviewees referred to the involvement of superintendents in terms of the "overseerer," the "behind the scene leader," the "motivator," the "initiator." Where committees were formed, superintendents were involved with the committee. One superintendent served as both the chairperson and recorder for his district's excellence committee. Another assumed the role of a resource person for the committee. In only one district did interviewees describe their superintendent's role in terms of less than major involvement. In that instance, the superintendent had allowed her board president and high school principal to play major involvement roles.

Two of the case study districts' had assistant superintendents in the spring of 1983 when A Nation at Risk was released. Neither was characterized by interviewees as having significant involvement with their district's response to excellence. Interviewees referred to one as a resource person who gathered some financial information for the excellence committee. The other assistant had no involvement with his district's excellence response.

Interviewees saw committees as having significant involvement in excellence responses. They were called "work horses," used to plan, design and write the excellence responses. The "no response" district was the only school without a committee.

High school principals were significantly involved with their district's response to excellence. This is

understandable since the excellence movement focused mainly on the secondary school level. One high school principal was a committee chairperson and the identified decision maker. Another worked in close coordination with the superintendent who was the committee chairperson. Where committees were formed, all high school principals served on the committees as key resource people. Elementary and middle school principals served on four of the five excellence committees. One school with a committee had only the superintendent and high school principal as its administrators. Two of the districts organized separate committees for elementary, middle school, and high school. In both instances, the elementary and middle school principals played important roles within their respective committees. In two instances where elementary and middle school principals served on district wide excellence committees, they functioned much like any other committee member.

As a group, teachers from the case study districts did not participate actively in the pursuit of excellence. They neither supported nor opposed any of the responses to excellence. Their involvement included teacher representatives on each of the excellence committees and informal discussions at principal/staff meetings.

Students served on committees in four out of five case study districts responding to excellence. Interviewees generally expressed disappointment with student committee

involvement. Interest, participation, and attendance were frequently mentioned as being low. The researcher found students had a limited understanding of the committee's work and had difficulty answering interview questions.

All five school districts with excellence committees had a cross-section of representatives from the community. The number of community representatives varied from school to school, depending largely upon the type of committee. When standing curriculum committees were used to produce an excellence response, community representation was small. When committees were formed to set goals, resolve problems, or sell millage issues, the majority of committee members were community representatives. One interviewee said these community members were "used" by the board to sell a millage campaign. In other cases, the researcher received the distinct impression that the community representatives' presence on the committee was largely an assurance to the community-at-large that their interests were being well-represented. In all cases, these community representatives felt their services were valuable and meaningful to the outcome of the committee's work.

Plans

The section on plans was designed to identify the details or specifics of each schools' program for excellence. Interviewees were asked what was added or deleted from prior curriculum. What resolutions, programs,

proposals, or plans were adopted? They were also asked to identify any excellence plans used as models for their district's excellence plan. Five out of the six case study districts presented final reports, programs, or proposals to the school board. In each case, the school board accepted these reports as recommendations to be considered for implementation. Many of the recommendations were never implemented.

Curriculum changes occurred in all six case study districts after the release of A Nation at Risk in the spring of 1983. In two districts there were differences of opinion among interviewees as to whether these changes occurred as a result of the excellence movement. One of these districts, the "no response" district, added 1 1/2 credits of social studies to the high school graduation requirements. Even though it occurred after the release of A Nation at Risk, the majority of interviewees denied it was a response to the excellence movement. Another district added 1 credit of science to the high school graduation requirement after the release of A Nation at Risk. The superintendent claimed it was a response to the excellence movement, but the high school principal said that the change was in no way related to the excellence movement.

Graduation requirements were raised in four of the six case study districts. This included both the total number of credits for graduation and the number of required

subject credits within the graduation requirement. Two districts raised the total number of credits needed for graduation and the other two raised credits for subject requirement in science and social studies. Graduation requirements were raised from 20 to 22 credits in one district and from 18 credits to 20 credits in the second district. Both of these districts changed the alignment of elective and required credits. Two districts increased their credit requirements in social studies. One district raised required credits from one credit to two credits in English and foreign language. Another district raised its math requirement from one to two credits.

Two districts added courses or subjects to their curriculum. One district added calculus and advanced chemistry to the high school curriculum. Vocal music and physical education were reinstated in the elementary schools. Physical education was reinstated in the middle school. A reading program and a consultant were added to the middle school. The second district added journalism to its high school curriculum.

Two of the five school districts making responses to excellence concentrated their responses within the area of increased graduation requirements. Three districts implemented recommendations which formed no particular pattern, but rather seemed to meet the individual needs of the school district.

Riverville, the district committed to developing a process involving people, implemented recommendations that were people-oriented. Their response included more newsletters, better communication between parents and the school, more "parenting advice," and the establishment of a parent-volunteer-organization. Teachers were given more inservice time, a greater emphasis on teacher recognition, and better communication between staff and administration. Students gained an expanded intramural program and homerooms at the middle school. The community now has a new expanded child care program and the availability of increased utilization of school facilities. Their plan addressed their biggest need . . . involvement, cooperation and communication between people.

Cooperville's only documented response to excellence was the establishment of two committees to review two separate excellence reports. The committees made recommendations but nothing ever happened with them. There was no evidence of any action, resolutions, changes, additions, or deletions that ever resulted as direct responses to the work of either committee. Yet, interviewees attributed a vast array of changes, real or perceived, to the excellence movement. They included the already discussed one credit of science added to the high school graduation requirements. These changes, which interviewees perceived as a result of the excellence movement, will be discussed in the following section under Results.

Millcreek's committee for excellence made numerous recommendations in the form of objectives to the school board. Many were never adopted. These recommendations included: Teachers should be better prepared and should provide students with a class syllabus. Guidelines for student behavior should be explained to parents and students. The staff should advise students regarding the extent of their extracurricular activities. Teachers and parents should communicate when problems are suspected. There should be a standard of basic competence and students should remain in basics until they can demonstrate competency. Teachers should be able to differentiate between lack of ability and lack of motivation. Basic skills should be integrated throughout the curriculum. There should be more remedial classes. Journalism should be added to the high school curriculum and foreign language should be offered at the elementary level. Computers should be added to the counseling department. Computer skills should be emphasized throughout the high school. The National Honor Society should be reestablished. Finally, there should be two high school diplomas: a regular diploma and an honor's diploma.

The following recommendations were implemented by the school board. Two phone lines were added to improve communication between teachers and parents. Objective reference tests were developed for English, math, science and social studies. Additional clerical staff and a

computer were added to the counseling department. The National Honor Society was reestablished. Computers were purchased for the science, math, agricultural, English and social studies department. Twelve new computers were purchased for the business room. The number of students enrolling in computer education significantly increased.

Mineral Springs concentrated the majority of its response to changes in graduation requirements. However, there were other changes as well. A remedial reading program and consultant were added to the middle school. Physical education was reinstated at the middle school and at the elementary school. Vocal music was reinstated in the elementary. North Central Accreditation was recommended and acquired by the middle school.

Interviewees from all case study schools were knowledgeable about one or more of the excellence reports. Few personally read any of the reports, but rather heard reports about them. Interviewees were also aware of ancillary reports such as the "Blueprint for Action" and "School Boards Planning for Excellence." Again, these reports were discussed at excellence committees, but not necessarily read. Interviewees were most familiar with A Nation at Risk. All interviewees clearly testified that their districts' plan for action was not modeled after any of the above mentioned reports nor any other report. Indeed, there was no evidence to suggest that any of the case study districts had modeled their response after any

particular report. None of the plans contained an assessment model. For the interviewees, the various excellence reports reinforced the need or urgency for their district to respond. The responses were individually tailored to meet each district's needs. Those needs may have included getting people involved, winning a millage election, raising graduation requirements, solving a discipline problem, resolving an administration problem, or improving communication. Whatever the need, plans were developed to meet it. Each district's problems and needs were different. Therefore, each district's plan was uniquely different.

Results - Actual or Anticipated

The section on results was designed to determine what was achieved or what was expected to be achieved as a result of the districts' response to excellence. Interviewees were asked to identify verified achievements and the instruments used for verification. They were also asked to identify any unverified achievement or achievements they anticipated as a result of their district's response to excellence. The following paragraphs summarize the verified, unverified and anticipated achievements as reported by interviewees.

Only one interviewee reported what he called a verified achievement as a result of his district's response to excellence and that was sort of a "by golly" after

thought. The superintendent from Pine Lake said that there had been a substantial drop in the number of students enrolling in study halls after an increase in required graduation credits. Students had less time to enroll in study halls. There was no data to show that this drop in study hall enrollments had raised academic excellence, but the superintendent made the assumption that it would result in a better educated student. There were no tests nor any other instruments reported to have measured achievement before and after an excellence response. No other verified achievements were reported.

Interviewees, without exception, had a difficult time defining achievements as a result of their districts' responses to excellence. With only one exception, they were unable to define any verified achievements. When asked to define unverified achievements, they resorted to broad generalities such as better public relations or better communications. They attributed a long list of accomplishments to what they viewed as achievements. These accomplishments were seen as achievements for the good of the kids, the school, the staff or the community. For discussion purposes, they were divided into four classifications: community relations; staff relations; new additions; and, redefined or reinstated.

Without exception, the case study districts desired to improve community relations. The nationwide thrust for excellence had reached every home. Schools sensed a need,

if not an urgency, to assure their communities that they were "meeting or exceeding" the demands from the excellence movement and that "all was well." When that was accomplished, interviewees saw the results of their efforts as achievements. They spoke about improved communications with parents. They gave examples of more newsletters, parent volunteer organizations or expanded child care programs. They talked about gaining community pride and support. The positive results they achieved in the area of public relations would translate into harmonious relations between school and community and, hopefully, positive financial support. One interviewee said, "We gained community support . . . we passed an additional millage."

One achievement of the excellence committee was to get "people face to face." They were able to talk about their problems and discuss possible solutions. Interviewees from each of the case study districts spoke about getting people working together and improving communication between the staff and administration. Many spoke about teacher morale being lifted. One district talked about a greater emphasis on teacher recognition. Interviewees from every district saw improvement in staff relations as achievement resulting from the excellence movement.

Interviewees said the addition of courses such as calculus, journalism, media and remedial reading were all achievements of the excellence response. Increases in graduation requirements were also deemed an achievement.

Many interviewees said there was a renewed interest in spending money on textbooks, teaching supplies and computers. All these changes were attributed to the excellence movement. One school developed objective reference tests, added department chairmen in the high school, and required teachers to develop short and long term goals. Each of these changes was seen by interviewees as unverified achievements of the excellence movement. It was assumed that each of these changes was an achievement which contributed to a better educated child.

Interviewees identified redefined or reinstated programs as an achievement of the excellence movement. The reinstatement of the National Honor Society was an achievement in one district. Physical education was redefined from "fun and games" to healthful living in the same district. Enrichment and remedial courses were added in several districts. One district placed a renewed emphasis on good discipline. Enrichment classes in music and physical education were reinstated in one district. Interviewees saw each of these changes as an achievement resulting from the excellence movement.

The only statement interviewees repeatedly made relative to anticipated achievements was the assumption that students would receive a better education as a result of each excellence response. They anticipated that increases in graduation requirements, course offerings, enrichment classes along with improved community/staff

relations and happier teachers would each in its own way make for a better education for each child.

Finally, it was interesting to note that four out of five high school principals described the results of their responses in very similar terms. "There weren't any results . Well, there were a lot of small things accomplished and we did get people involved," said one principal. Another said, "What stands out in my mind is that we really didn't do anything." A third said, "There aren't any results. I mean, how do I measure achieved results before and after an increase in graduation requirements?" A fourth said there weren't any results other than "we formed two committees to study excellence." Without exception, principals were a little threatened by excellence committees examining their programs in great detail. The researcher perceived their comments to be first, an offhanded swipe at the excellence committees and, secondly, a self proclaimed statement that there really was no need for major changes since their schools were already being well managed and administered. Each of these principals found some way to assure the researcher that many, if not all, the changes would have been initiated with or without the excellence committee. What they did agree upon was that the involvement process was one of the more significant achievements in their district's response to excellence.

Synopsis and Conclusions

The nationwide thrust for excellence had received an initial push into the media spotlight with the release of A Nation at Risk in the spring of 1983. State and national media coverage had brought the excellence issue into every home in every district. Entire communities were aware of the excellence movement. Every educational organization and publication was "selling" excellence.

Superintendents were keenly aware that all eyes would eventually be on them for a response. They sensed a need to assure their public and staffs that "all was well." Thus, superintendents were the primary initiators of district responses to excellence. They knew they would be expected to respond. It was their job. They responded before a ground swell of local citizens could organize and demand changes. They proposed responses before staff members suggested the same. They were ahead of the news media. They brought the issue to the school board. Thus, they were perceived by their boards, teaching staffs, and communities as being on top of the excellence movement. They were seen leading the way.

The intermediate school districts, Department of Education, ancillary organizations, excellence reports and the news media all contributed to the superintendent's perception that the issue of excellence needed to be addressed. However, the motivation to initiate responses came from needs to solve immediate problems and concerns.

All superintendents used the excellence response to win some degree of public support. Some used it to win support for additional millage, while others used it to resolve tough and sensitive problems. Some used it as a podium from which to proclaim what a good job they were already doing. Some used it to look good at evaluation time. Some used it to look good on resumes. Some responded because they sensed they would be expected to respond. Some responded because they thought it would be good for students. It was concluded that superintendents were very opportunistic.

"It's my job," said one superintendent. They were motivated to do their jobs in order to keep their jobs and responding to the excellence movement was simply doing the job. It may have been putting out "brush fires" or keeping "brush fires" from starting. Either way, the nationwide call for excellence had produced a "how do you measure up" challenge at the local level. Superintendents felt the need to answer that challenge with an "all is well" assurance to staff, board and community. It was concluded that this assurance, the perception that "all was well," was very important to superintendents.

The use of committees was the preferred process for addressing the excellence issue. The committees were composed of teachers, administrators, board members, parents, students, and community members. They were generally recommended into existence by the superintendent

and established by the school board. They reported their findings to the school board and the school board implemented those proposals recommended by the superintendent. Superintendents were very active in recommending and overseeing the processes by which their schools responded to excellence. They devised and then monitored processes which projected democratic and participative images . . . images of processes that portrayed a feeling of "by the people, for the people." The existence of the process always was in harmony with the managerial preferences of the superintendent.

It was concluded that process was as important to the participants as perception of "all is well" was to the superintendent. In this instance, participants would be those individuals serving on excellence committees. Rarely did the researcher find an interviewee who was less than thrilled with the work of the committee. High school principals and one student were the only participants to question the value of the committee's work. This led to a further conclusion that the process of involvement was more important to participants than actual outcome. This became even more apparent when all interviewees had difficulty recalling any of the actual outcomes of the committee's work. It was concluded that the process gave participants the illusion that meaningful things were happening when the reality was that very few meaningful changes were ever made as a result of excellence responses.

School boards accepted and approved various reports, recommendations and/or proposals on excellence. These final reports were generally written by committee chairpersons who also assumed the responsibility of recommending it to the school board for approval. Where committees were formed, participants named the committee as the decision maker. No one wanted to consider the possibility of a behind-the-scenes decision maker. Committee members saw their role as being untainted by the chairperson or superintendent.

Superintendents saw the excellence movement as a potential problem that needed to be carefully managed. They were neither uncomfortable nor threatened by the excellence movement. To the contrary, they were in agreement with the central thrust of the excellence movement. To manage it, they were instrumental in choosing processes which projected democratic and participative decision making images. They skillfully avoided being labeled arbitrary decision makers with preconceived ideas. Yet, they significantly colored the outcome of their districts' response to excellence. They recommended committees into existence, appointed individual committee members, selected topics of discussion and controlled which recommendations were adopted by the school board. It was concluded that committees existed as decision makers only because that was the preference of the superintendents.

School boards played limited roles in receiving reports and approving recommendations. They were not found impelling the administration into action. Instead, they waited for superintendents to take the lead in responding to excellence. They had not read the major excellence reports. Their knowledge of various recommendations on excellence was limited to the information offered by the superintendent, news media, and personal reading. Generally, that provided only a superficial understanding and prevented them from being assertive in the excellence response. They assumed that their superintendents were knowledgeable about all aspects of the excellence movement and, therefore, let them lead. It was concluded that school boards played insignificant roles not because they were uninterested in excellence, but because they were uninformed.

A conclusion was drawn that principals, specifically high school principals, felt threatened by the excellence movement. They were very uncomfortable with large committees examining every aspect of their program. Proposed changes or even the discussion of proposed changes were seen as negative reflections. The researcher found it rather amusing to listen to principals strike back at the committees which had been nipping at their heels. They labeled the committee's work as worthless and said it all would have been done with or without the committee.

The participative processes chosen to produce excellence responses necessitated the involvement of many

participants. Other participants included teachers, students, and community members. As a group, teachers were completely quiet about the excellence movement. They were involved only to the extent of having representatives on the excellence committees. The use of students on committees was a disappointment because of low interest, participation, and attendance. Community representatives served on committees and helped set goals, resolve problems, and sell millage issues.

Excellence responses were not modeled after excellence reports or ancillary reports. Instead, individual school responses were tailored to meet the needs of each district. Those needs may have been getting people involved, winning a millage election, raising graduation requirements, reinstating or adding new classes, resolving an administrative problem, or improving communication. Whatever the need, plans were developed to resolve that particular need. Each district's problems and needs were different. Therefore, each district's plan for excellence was uniquely different. It was concluded that excellence responses had superficial resemblance to recommendations of excellence reports.

With one exception of lowered study hall enrollment, there were no verified achievements as a result of excellence responses. However, long lists of accomplishments were attributed to the excellence movement as unverified achievements. There were broad

generalizations about better public relations and better communication. Gaining community support and improved community relations were achievements that could lead to harmonious relations between school and community and, hopefully, positive financial support. These accomplishments were seen as achievements for the good of children, school, staff, and community. Increases in graduation requirements, course offerings, enrichment classes along with improved community/staff relations and happier teachers would each in its own way make for a better educated child.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this research was to describe how six school districts responded or failed to respond to the excellence movement of 1983. Only one of the six districts failed to make a response. However, the superintendent took the initiative to give assurances and the perception that the district was "meeting or exceeding" the various demands for excellence.

Future exploratory research could examine school districts which failed to make responses to the 1983 excellence movement. Were assurances given that these districts were already "meeting or exceeding" the various demands for excellence. If these assurances were given, was it the superintendent who took the initiative to give those perceptions? In districts where these assurances and

perceptions were not given, did the school board, community or perhaps some other group ever come forward to question why their district was not responding?

As a further extension of the above study, an exploratory study could be done exclusively with those school districts where the school board or community did come forward and demand a response to excellence. Had the superintendent lost credibility for leadership? At what point does a school board or community take matters into their own hands and demand change?

Future research could be done with a quantitative study using a larger sample of school districts. How many school districts made a response to excellence? Who initiated their responses? What processes were used to make the response?

Finally, future exploratory research could examine how large suburban or even inner-city school districts responded to the excellence movement of 1983. Did large central office staffs change the outcome of responses? Was the superintendent still the initiator? What processes were used for responding?

Personal Reflections

Having been a superintendent for thirteen years, the researcher was not surprised with the motivation that caused superintendents to initiate responses. From personal reflection, the life of a superintendent is

somewhat like sitting on a keg of dynamite with lit fuses coming in from all directions. The most meaningful objective can become stamping out fuses before they get to you. All six superintendents saw the excellence movement as a potential problem that needed to be defused. The way to defuse it was to appoint a committee and proclaim that your school was meeting or exceeding various demands. Generally, that was enough to give staff, board, and community the assurance that "all was well."

Superintendents felt the need for that assurance in the same way that coaches feel the need to win games. Winning coaches keep their jobs. Claiming that your school was meeting or exceeding demands for excellence was a way to say "I'm a winner." Those assumptions were accepted since no one was knowledgeable enough to challenge them.

Numerous changes were instituted as a result of the 1983 excellence movement. Rarely did these changes follow any prescribed recommendations. Too many recommendations came from too many task forces to be easily read, understood and implemented. The demand for new math (1963) was widely accepted because the demand was singular and clear--teach new math.

In the opinion of the researcher, if future nationwide demands for change are to be successful, they need to be narrow in scope, easily read, and comprehended. Let's keep it simple.

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