

PERSPECTIVES OF AMERICA'S  
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS CONCERNING THE  
AVAILABILITY, PURPOSES, AND EFFECTIVENESS  
OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION OFF-SITE  
PROGRAMS FOR TROUBLED SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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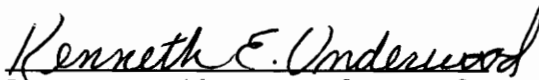
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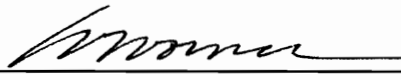
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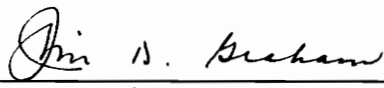
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(ABSTRACT)

The major purpose of this study was to determine the opinion of school board members regarding the availability, purposes and effectiveness of alternative education off-site programs for troubled school students. Data related to the frequency of alternative programs were gathered, and cross-tabulated with selected demographic variables which include region of country, size of district, and community type. In addition, board members offered their opinions regarding the target populations for off-site programs, and the purposes of such programs. The study sought to identify those specific alternative services which were in existence, as well as the primary purpose of alternative education. Lastly, board members were asked the extent to which the wide variety of alternative services was effective.

Descriptive research methodology was utilized in this study. A stratified, random sample of school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal was identified, and subsequently surveyed through use of a

mailed questionnaire. Twenty-two percent of the population of 27,141 were surveyed. The response rate was 13.6%. The study was sponsored by The American School Board Journal, which is published by the National School Boards Association, the national professional organization for school board members in the United States.

The study revealed that alternative programs for troubled students are prevalent throughout the United States, irrespective of community type, size of school district, or region of the country. The target populations for these alternative services are as diverse as the nation itself. Board members believe that collaboration between school divisions and other agencies should occur as these diverse and numerous populations of students are served. School board members also felt that most targeted populations were being served in an effective manner.

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife, Pam, and my children, Jonathan and Erin, for their love, support, and understanding throughout my professional career. Their encouragement of my work on this study was demonstrated in many ways, and was ultimately responsible for the completion of this endeavor.

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## Chapter I

# PERSPECTIVES OF AMERICA'S SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY, PURPOSES, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION OFF-SITE PROGRAMS FOR TROUBLED SCHOOL STUDENTS

### Introduction

America's public schools serve almost forty-five million children from diverse backgrounds in a variety of educational settings (NEA, 1993). Regardless of the location and setting in this vast country, public schools continue to operate within the philosophy that local school boards best understand the community's aspirations and children's needs.

Within the context of local governance comes an obligation to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all children. Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs suggests the fundamental belief that our most important obligation is to provide a safe haven in which all individuals will reach their full potential. "We may generalize and say that the average child in our society generally prefers a safe, orderly, predictable, organized world ... in which unexpected, unmanageable, or other dangerous things do not happen..." (Lowry, 1973, p. 159).

During the past decade, increasing attention has been

paid to issues which threaten the public schools, once considered to be a safe haven for all children. The societal changes which have resulted in an increase in violence on our streets and in our communities have also begun to manifest themselves in our public schools.

School board members are sometimes involved in a philosophical dilemma as to how to provide an appropriate education for all children within a structure which was created during different times and for different purposes. The public schools of yesterday are no longer adequate to meet today's societal needs. For regardless of whether it is violence, teenage pregnancy, severe depression or abandonment, or a myriad of other symptoms, today's schoolhouse looks less and less like its predecessor of four, three and even two decades ago. As communities change, so must the public schools.

One of the most interesting changes in public school philosophy during the recent past has been a shift from the comprehensive to the specialized schoolhouse. The nation's schools are as diverse as its population, with alternative education programs being developed by local school boards, state boards of education, and cooperative partnerships between localities and institutions of higher learning. What are the purposes of such schools, how prevalent are they, and how effective do they appear to be?

Although relatively little research exists relating to the development of these alternative programs, it is imperative that we understand the frequency of their use throughout the country, the primary purposes for establishing such programs, and the targeted populations for these services. It is also important to understand the role of evaluation in shaping the effectiveness of alternative services for troubled youth.

The Task Force on School Governance issued a challenge to all school boards in April, 1992, stating that "if schools are to prepare students adequately for the world of tomorrow, then school board members must recognize and understand the significance of their roles in school change" (Twentieth Century Fund, 1992). These findings solicit the involvement of board members to exercise their authority and to provide leadership to the change process as schools better reflect the communities which they serve.

#### Statement of Purpose

This study was designed to determine the perceptions of the nation's school board members concerning the availability, purposes and effectiveness of alternative education programs for troubled public school students. It was also hoped that this study would provide useful

information to school boards and administrators who are either revising current alternative programs, or considering the implementation of new services for troubled students.

This study provides a nexus between the role of school boards to govern and determine local system policies and programs (Barham, 1977), and their responsibility to meet the needs of at-risk students by "permitting alternative methods for meeting curriculum requirements" (Vandermolen, 1993, p. 41).

It also provides an overview of existing programs, their utility for certain target populations, and their perceived effectiveness. Such information may both stimulate dialogue on the local level as to when and how to provide alternatives, and enable board members to utilize more efficiently their scarce resources as programs and services evolve.

#### Need for the Study

As the nation continues its unprecedented focus on public education, local school boards are sometimes placed on the defensive by probing media who insist that public schooling is ill-prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing society. While it is not unusual for attention to be placed on public education, it is difficult



to remember a period in history in which so many aspiring actors are waiting for an opportunity to become involved in the play.

Much of this attention can prove to be beneficial in the long term, if local board members and administrators are well educated and prepared to provide policy and leadership to meet the needs of today's youth. The traditional mode of operation in public schools has come under fire from numerous directions, as reform initiatives of all types are generated on local, regional and national fronts (Twentieth Century Fund, 1992).

Even congressmen are capitalizing on the moment, as violence prevention programs are the subject of public hearings, talk shows, and widespread media attention. Violent juveniles are targeting their peers in record numbers ... "and, tragically, such victimization increases the risk that today's targets will turn around and become tomorrow's next violent offenders" (Kohl, 1991, p. 1).

As answers are both sought and suggested, public school personnel can again look to elected officials, whose attention to this issue included a 1985 Congressional Hearing on Alternative Programs for Troubled Youth. "Although disruptive and delinquent students often create serious problems and are a threat to other students and to their teachers in the regular school setting, they do have a

right to an adequate school education ... to provide this, alternative school schemes have been developed" (Hatch, 1985, p. 2).

While recognizing that public education's primary function has, and will continue to be, the education of the mainstream (Clawson, 1985), the polarization of groups to both extremes continues to threaten the ability of a healthy system of free and appropriate public education for all children. This study dealt only with that group which is labeled troubled youth, and did not attempt to examine the complex issues which also exist on the other end of the continuum, relating to magnet schools for specialized areas of study, technical schools, programs and schools for the arts, and others.

While state and local boards debate the options and alternatives which currently exist, and encourage creative solutions which are now in short supply, the words of United States Senator Howard Metzenbaum speak for themselves. "Ignoring the needs of young people is a far more expensive proposition than meeting them, both in terms of their cost to society and their untapped economic productivity" (Metzenbaum, 1980, p. 3).

## Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent do school board members believe that alternative education off-site programs are available for troubled youth - and to what extent are such alternatives developed in a collaborative manner? To what degree do availability and collaboration vary by selected demographic variables?
2. To what extent do school board members recognize the target populations and purposes of such programs? To what degree do these target populations and purposes vary by selected demographic variables?
3. To what extent do board members believe that evaluation procedures are in place for such off-site programs - and that these alternative services are effective? To what degree do evaluation procedures and effectiveness ratings vary by selected demographic variables?

## Definitions

Alternative Education - nontraditional programs and services which are designed and developed by school officials to meet the needs of identified, target populations.

Demographic Characteristics - the dynamics of the population of school board members, referring to variables such as region of the country and school system enrollment for respondents to the survey instrument.

Off-site Programs - are programs and services which are housed in facilities which are separate and apart from regular K-12 school buildings.

School Board Members - are those individuals who are either elected or appointed to serve their communities as members of a local board.

School Board - the group of individuals elected or appointed to manage and govern a public school division, district or entity.

Target Population - for purpose of the study, target population refers to the intended clientele (students) who are served by alternative education programs.

Troubled Youth - for purpose of the study, troubled youth speaks to the broad category of school-aged students who attend alternative education programs. Troubled youth include, but are not limited to, such specific target

populations as teenage pregnant students, substance abusing students, frequently suspended students, dropouts or potential dropouts, and students who were previously expelled or are in immediate danger of being expelled.

### Limitations of the Study

The following are limitations of this study:

1. The study sample was taken from the population of those who subscribe to The American School Board Journal, not from the larger population of school board members throughout the nation.
2. A follow-up study to improve the response rate was not taken, as The American School Board Journal requires anonymity.
3. All questionnaire responses were assumed to be accurate reflections of actual attitudes of respondents.
4. The researcher is not able to ascertain the number of school boards which were represented by one or more respondents.
5. Off-site alternative programs were limited to those nontraditional services which were designed to meet the needs of troubled youth, as opposed to programs designed for gifted/talented students,

students who excel in one or more content areas, and other similar services. This study did not include the wide variety of on-site alternative services which are prevalent throughout the country.

7. The focus of this study was on public school programs and services for troubled youth. Private school experiences and college/university non-traditional programs were included in the literature review only to the extent that they are connected to the research questions as previously stated.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature which relates to alternative education off-site options for public school students. This chapter is divided into sections which correspond to the following general areas: Availability and Support of Alternative Programs, Identification of Target Groups and Purposes of Programs, and the Evaluation and Effectiveness of Alternative Services.

#### Availability and Support of Alternative Programs

Alternative services and programs for troubled public school students are a relatively recent phenomenon. Much of the debate concerning these specialized programs results from changing expectations for America's public schools. Today's students are three hundred years removed from a school system in which only wealthy, white males were enrolled in formal schooling. The primary purposes of such schooling were basic literacy in order for young men to be able to read and understand the Bible, and instruction in Latin and Greek, to prepare these young men for college

academics (Johansen, 1979).

While there was some diversity reflected in the work force and makeup of the nation, many distinct nationalities established their own independent private schools, while children of black slaves and white indentured servants received no formal schooling (Johansen, 1979).

The expectations for today's public schools are markedly different, with education now a right for all the children of all the people. In order to begin this review of literature which relates to the availability of alternative programs, a definition is provided for the purposes of this study: Alternative Education consists of nontraditional programs and services which are designed and developed by school officials to meet the needs of identified, target populations.

While such an explanation provides the foundation for the questionnaire and research project, it should not be assumed that a common definition exists for alternative programs located throughout the nation. In a national survey of alternative programs conducted by the Virginia Department of Education in 1994, "many states said they have established definitions for alternative education . . . , fourteen states indicated they have no definition" (Virginia General Assembly, 1994, p. 16)! Such a circumstance might encourage each locality (within the fifty states) to develop



and implement programs which meet student needs.

An interesting definition was offered at the Commission Meeting on Non-Traditional Study in 1973:

"It is an attitude that puts the students first and the institution second, concentrates more on the former's needs than the latter's conveniences, encourages diversity of individual opportunity, and de-emphasizes time and space or even course requirements in favor of competence, and where applicable, performance" (Gould, 1976, p. 6).

In reviewing such a definition, one could suggest that the nation should be concerned with the education of as many people who can benefit from an education as possible, as opposed to the exclusion of individuals who do not fit the mold of traditional public schooling. While the development of off-site alternative programs for troubled youth has a relatively brief history, the philosophy providing the impetus for these schools is deeply ingrained in the American consciousness (Gould, 1976).

The support for the development of appropriate alternatives for learning appears to be growing. A Congressional Hearing before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources was conducted in October, 1985, specifically addressing "Alternative Programs for Troubled Youth." This hearing provided opportunities for public testimony specific to the large number of young people who are not benefitting

from a traditional school setting (U.S. Senate Hearing, 1985).

Several senators spoke at this meeting, as did a juvenile court judge from Utah, and two educators who had developed and supervised alternative programs. "Most young people can learn, but they can't all learn in the traditional way; people have different learning styles. The young people who drop out are telling us that. Some successful programs outside the traditional system are telling us that" (U.S. Senate Hearing, 1985, p. 3).

The variety and location of programs for troubled youth suggest that many communities throughout this country either have developed or are in the process of implementing nontraditional programs. As policy makers struggle philosophically with this issue, it should be remembered that alternative off-site programs for certain populations have potential benefits for not only the targeted group, but also the balance of the school population who may suffer due to the amount of attention, time and resources which are afforded to seriously disruptive youngsters in a regular school setting.

A review of the literature provides a representative overview of the wide variety of alternatives which have been developed for troubled students. It should be noted that a common bond exists in most of the nation's nontraditional

programs "... alternatives ... represent innovation; small-scale informal ambiance; and departure from bureaucratic rules and procedures" (Raywid, 1994, p. 27).

One example of such a program is the School-Community Guidance Center in Austin, Texas. The program was developed in 1984 in an attempt to serve high-risk students who had been removed from local schools for serious disciplinary reasons, or by juvenile justice personnel as a result of criminal activity. This program for students in grades 6-12 was funded by a grant from the Texas Education Agency (Swanson, 1989).

An alternative program for low-income youth who had dropped out of school began in Philadelphia in 1972, and is known as the Career Intern Program. This initiative was the result of the collaborative effort of the city school system and the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, a non-profit organization which focused its resources on providing skills for under-achieving low-income families (Foat, 1981).

Another targeted population for alternative services is the group of students who have reached the pre-expulsion stage due to seriously inappropriate school behavior. Project Reach in the Socorro (Texas) Independent School District was implemented in 1989, to "save" students from a life on the streets without an education (Heger, 1992).

A number of alternative schools have been developed to reduce the number of dropouts from schools throughout the nation. The Woodland Job Center Alternative Program in Cleveland was born out of the community's desire to reduce both dropouts and the relatively high local unemployment rate. The facility housing this program was donated by the General Electric Company to the Cleveland Board of Education (Wertheim, 1974).

The Urban League Street Academy in New Orleans, Louisiana is a community-based non-traditional secondary school for citizens between the ages of 16-60, although 80% of the served population are between ages 18-21. This program is unique in that it is operated by the Urban League of New Orleans, while receiving extensive financial support from the New Orleans Public School Board (Foat, 1981).

The Kensington-Edison Youth Program in Philadelphia represents yet another approach to dealing with high dropout rates. This collaborative effort of two local public schools is unique in its design, but cites the same basic statement of purpose as many other alternative schools: "to help dropouts and potential dropouts earn high school diplomas, and to assist them in obtaining meaningful employment in career fields of their choice" (Foat, 1981, p.57).

"While conventional schooling may be effective and

successful for many youngsters, it remains problematic for those who are at risk. Those students who are deemed to be at-risk and in danger of dropping out require a type of school that encourages school membership and educational engagement" (Quinn, 1991, p.82).

Such an environment is alive and well at the Apollo School, an alternative program for 400 at-risk youngsters in Southern California. Unlike many alternative centers, this school is funded on the premise that the system, not the student, is the primary source of learning problems. In this environment, both the affective and cognitive needs of students are addressed by staff, all of whom have had extensive training in learning styles, communication techniques, problem solving skills and effective discipline methods (Uroff, 1991).

The Apollo Alternative is unique in yet another way, in that author William Glasser (Control Theory in the Classroom) meets regularly with the staff to share his ideas, and their application to troubled youngsters. Glasser's theory is based on the idea that all human behavior is focused around the desire to satisfy five basic needs - belonging, survival, fun, freedom and power (Uroff, 1991).

The Alternative Learning Center in Westover, West Virginia, provides individualized, small group instruction

for all students. This school's primary goal is to enable students to earn a GED, or to return to their home schools for a regular high school diploma. A significant component of this program is counseling, in which all students engage in individual, academic and family counseling sessions with trained professionals (Foat, 1987).

Fresno, California, is the site of the School-Age Parenting Program, an alternative service which purports to "take the romanticism out of having a baby," according to program director Janice Klemm. "The long range cost to taxpayers for welfare and aid to families with dependent children runs much higher," stated Klemm in defense of this program which serves more than three hundred students per year (Kenney, 1987, p. 738).

The Lawrence G. Paquin Jr.-Sr. High School (Baltimore, Maryland) for Expectant Teen Mothers was established in 1977 to provide support services to pregnant teenagers to both help them to continue their education, and to improve the likelihood of a successful, healthy childbirth. Students are admitted into the program during pregnancy, and are encouraged to continue in this unique setting for several months after the delivery. They return to their regular schools approximately three-five months after delivery (Amin, 1988).

Several of the models mentioned throughout the

literature involve public and private partnerships, in which the private sector is involved in supporting and often funding the alternative services which are provided for troubled youth.

"For many years, school districts have contracted out ancillary services (for example, transportation, maintenance, labor negotiations, and data processing) saving 20 to 30 percent in operating costs. Today, building from these successful partnerships, a growing number of school districts are expanding the concept to more fundamental education services. The key areas that offer state officials opportunities to realize cost savings through privatization and contracting out are: 1) infrastructure and 2) curriculum" (David, 1992, p. 1).

In Volusia County, Florida, the school district has accepted the premise that alternative solutions must result from collaboration. "There the school district has developed an alternative night school in conjunction with the local private industry council, the juvenile justice system, the local mental health agency, and juvenile court judges" (Harrington-Lueker, 1994, p.21).

Several of the nontraditional contracts issued to private firms/corporations are beginning to claim impressive results. Ombudsman Educational Services is a private, not-for-profit firm which works with more than seventy school

districts in Arizona, Illinois and Minnesota to educate dropouts (David, 1992).

Ombudsman's schools are usually located in shopping centers or business/industrial parks. Students work at their own pace three hours per day, five days a week. Schools are staffed by fully certified teachers, and the pupil-teacher ratio does not exceed 10:1. "Contracting for alternative education is more than twice as cost-effective as running a district-sponsored program", claims Ombudsman President James Boyle (David, 1992, p. 14).

While it appears that school districts and local boards are becoming more aware of the potential advantages and disadvantages of privatization, there have been few, if any, sustained efforts which directly link private services to improved student/learner outcomes.

"The AFT's Al Shanker sees privatization as a cowardly way out for school boards. Boards are likely to be willing to consider contracting instruction rather than make the changes that are unpleasant but necessary for improving public education" (Rist, 1991, p. 29).

"It would be naive to believe that a private school system without regulation or oversight, other than market forces ..., would provide superior educational services for at-risk youth. To be successful, a carefully crafted accrediting system would be necessary ..." (U.S. GAO, 1988



p.13).

School boards which initiate programs to better serve all student populations must be reminded that student achievement is the bottom line in determining program and/or school success. The privatization of alternative options for selected target populations is an interesting idea which should be carefully considered by local and state boards of education.

### Summary

How many off-site alternative schools exist today in the United States? While a precise count is unknown, it is clear that the support for these options has grown during the past several decades. "In a little more than a decade the concept of alternative schools has changed from a radical idea to a conservative response to local school problems" (Barr, 1981, p. 50).

Much of the confusion as to the number and availability of alternative schools is founded in the lack of an acceptable national definition of the term. From magnet schools for science and technology to pre-expulsion centers for violent young men and women, alternative schools are now located throughout the country, as evidenced by the findings of this literature review.

The 1991 NSSC Resource Guide to Successful Alternative Programs reported on services for troubled youth, and identified schools from Thompson Falls, Montana, to St. Petersburg, Florida, and from Hartford, Connecticut, to Kirkland, Washington. The common thread of the approximately twenty identified schools was that each focused on providing services to at-risk youngsters who had not performed well in a traditional setting (NSSC, 1991).

It is essential that these alternatives for today's youth are constructed on strong foundations with a clear, unmistakable purpose. For, as Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker proclaim in Thinking for a Living: Education and the Wealth of Nations, "a truly good school would be one that graduated students who are more successful than would be predicted by their social class" (Marshall & Tucker, 1993, p. 109). What a magnificent opportunity and challenge for all alternative educators!

#### Identification of Target Groups and Purposes of Alternative Programs

Nontraditional public school programs are increasing dramatically. "The problem of effective schooling for at-risk youngsters shows few signs of abating. Indeed, the numbers of students in the American public school system

from historically at-risk populations is on the upswing" (Quinn, 1991, p. 73).

How do local school boards define these special populations who will be served, and who is responsible for establishing purposes and evaluative procedures? This portion of the literature review addresses target populations and purposes. The final section will review evaluative methodologies.

Target populations for alternative services vary throughout the nation. The Austin, Texas, alternative program targets behavior problems at the home school, as well as criminal activities by students who have been referred by local courts through the juvenile justice system (Swanson, 1989).

Researcher James Buie insists that schools must become involved in the teen pregnancy problem, as United States teens under the age of 15 are 15 times more likely to bear a child than are teenagers in any other Western nation (Buie, 1987). As many as two thirds of school administrators might agree, based on a survey of principals which places teen pregnancy on the "top ten" problem list (Kenney, 1987).

In a controversial and dramatic program decision, Ontario, California, school officials agreed to participate in an Alternative Studies program for Chicano gang members. Approximately 40% of the gang members participated actively

in this program, which provided a fully accredited educational program at a site near the urban barrio in which they resided (Hunsaker, 1982).

A "Boot Camp" type of atmosphere was promoted by the Socorro, Texas, Independent School District, as it developed Project Reach, a program for students who presented serious discipline problems in their home schools. Gang members and substance abusers were targeted by school officials for support and growth in this program (Heger, 1992).

Many of the nontraditional programs are targeted specifically at dropout prevention, as is the Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, Alternative Studies Program. School officials there are aware of the risks of establishing an alternative program which may seem to be demonstrative of a failure to adequately educate students in the traditional comprehensive setting. "Alternative programs frequently arise out of a sense of failure - a sense that the regular program has failed an important student segment" (Robbins, 1981, p. 48).

The Shrewsbury program, therefore, carefully considers not only the target population, but the purposes and conditions within which the program can prosper. Staff development, community understanding and support, and appropriate funding are several key ingredients in creating a successful experience (Robbins, 1981).

Chronically truant youngsters are targeted for services in the Marmalade Alternative School in Salt Lake City, Utah. School officials report that approximately 70% of all students are successfully returned to their home schools following the Marmalade experience (Congressional Hearing, 1985).

Alternative schools have begun to house one of society's most recent ills - the gun-toting teenager. While no one knows exactly how frequently guns are brought into school by enrolled students, a 1990 national report suggests that more than 135,000 youngsters carry guns to school on a daily basis, and approximately 270,000 more bring a gun onto school grounds at least once each year (Smith, 1990).

"In February, 1992, the Baltimore City School system was sent reeling when a 14 year-old middle school student shot a school police officer on the campus of the Roland Park Middle School. In the wake of that shooting, Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke called for the establishment of an alternative middle school for violent and disruptive youth, and the school system responded ... the Woodbourne Academy" (Harrington-Lueker, 1994, p. 16).

Among the schools which serve expelled students, some of whom possessed a gun or weapon at school, is the Richard Milburn Alternative School in Virginia. This school's Tidewater branch serves expelled students from several

school divisions, and anticipates entering into contracts with other surrounding school divisions to provide similar services.

When designing alternative programs for specific populations, how well are the purposes articulated by administrators and local school boards? Are school officials actively engaged in designing appropriate learning environments, or are they looking for exclusionary facilities which satisfy the general public whose children may be adversely affected by deviant behaviors in traditional regular-education classrooms?

C. M. Nelson suggests that alternative schools have sometimes been created with little forethought, only to provide special alternatives for the convenience of a school system which fails to modify its practices to meet individual learner needs (Nelson, 1977).

"It does seem true that many alternative schools for the behaviorally disordered are opened as much in response to a community and educational system perceiving threat from their youngsters as from any coherent plan to provide comprehensive and intensive services to youngsters with a given set of needs" (Grosenich, 1984, p. 93).

The current rapid expansion of nontraditional services must be developed within the same context as other successful educational programs. Key variables to consider

should include: philosophy, program goals, population definition, program entry procedures, intervention methods, curriculum, program exit procedures, program evaluation design, and community awareness/acceptance (McCauley, 1977).

Local school boards should exercise caution when considering programs which do not address primary components as mentioned previously. It may be tempting to yield to community pressure to systematically remove groups of youngsters from regular education once a rule or policy has been broken ... but it is essential that clear expectations for new programs be established, and that regular evaluation of the impact of these services is built into the package of alternatives which is being considered. "Essential to the progress system of any educational program is the continuous assessment of progress" (Grosenich, 1989, p. 103).

As purposes of these nontraditional programs are developed it may be critical that a curriculum be developed which provides opportunities for troubled students to both improve basic skills as well as to expand and develop existing talents. "... courses which merely meet this (basic skills) need but do not take into account student strengths and growth potential are inadequate" (Whalen, 1985, p. 107).

One Wichita, Kansas, alternative school educator enthusiastically endorses a wide range of practical business

classes for students. "They have the characteristics of entrepreneurs ... they are natural born risk-takers," claims twenty year veteran Jack Hemphill (Second Chance Schools, 1995, p.28).

### Summary

There is a wide range of target populations for nontraditional services. This literature review has identified off-site programs for dropouts, potential dropouts, substance abusers, expelled students, students who have experienced numerous suspensions, violent students, students who possess weapons, truants, pregnant teens, and gang members. These populations of troubled youth are all being served in facilities/programs which are apart from the regular school campus.

Program purposes continue to be most difficult to define. Smith, Gregory and Pugh suggest that Alternative Schools are more aligned with student needs, as identified by Maslow's hierarchy, than are conventional schools. Alternative schools which focus on individual growth and progress, and whose purpose reflects the top four levels of Maslon's needs hierarchy, were studied by the authors to determine the level at which security, social, esteem and self-actualization needs were being met (Smith, 1981).



"In a time characterized by anxiety, the de-stabilization of family life, double-digit inflation combined with increasing unemployment, escalating rates of violence, etc., it should not be surprising that the number of children with emotional problems also seems to be rising steadily" (Apter, 1982, p. IX). The challenge for school boards and all personnel is to understand the options which are available, develop a needs analysis to identify target populations, and provide services which ensure quality programs for all students who attend our public schools.

Some proponents of alternative education insist that no less than the future of our nation may depend on our ability to provide quality alternative practices. "If we abandon the vision of providing a good education for all the children of all of our people, we must then face the frightening realization that we also have abandoned our belief in democracy. Alternative public education is neither easy nor elitist, but it can be excellent ... is worth the struggle" (Nathan, 1981, p. 734).

Evaluation/Effectiveness of  
Alternative Education Programs

"Unemployment lines, welfare offices, and prisons - these are some of the places at-risk students might end up

if your school district fails to help them ..."

(Vandermolen, 1993, p. 40).

But simply implementing new services for deserving populations will not be enough. All programs and services must include a comprehensive evaluation program.

"Evaluation of both students and staff members in at-risk programs often is haphazard" (Vandermolen, 1993, p. 40).

Are there examples of evaluation systems for alternative programs? And how effective do such programs prove to be?

Classie Foat's 1981 report for the National Institute of Education compared and contrasted six alternative school programs. One major component of this report was to develop an assessment of the effects of these programs on students (Foat, 1981).

While the previously mentioned study lacked the precision which is characteristic of many research projects, it used several criteria to determine the effectiveness of these nontraditional services: 1) increase in high school retention, 2) decrease in absenteeism, 3) increase in graduation rates, and 4) subsequent placement of students in jobs, college or skills-training programs. Data failed to substantiate clear progress in these outcome areas (Foat, 1981).

A January, 1995, briefing to the Virginia Board of Education indicated the following items as measures of

success for the state's alternative education programs: "reduced behavior problems, increased attendance, improvement in student achievement or grades, decreased dropout rate, growth in social development/less suspensions" (VA DOE Briefing, 1995, p.21).

The same Virginia report, the result of a year-long study of local and regional alternative programs, noted the recent growth of these programs in Virginia, with most local programs beginning within the last five years, and more than one third being only one or two years old. Of Virginia's one hundred and thirty-three school divisions, only twenty local school boards provided no regional or local alternatives at the time of the report (VA DOE Briefing, 1995).

Another research study in 1981 suggested that certain groups of alternative students tend to fare better than others in off-site experiences. A longitudinal study of three alternative schools indicated that "the more anxious and depressed students' behavior did not improve as much, despite reports of favorable relationships with their alternative school teachers and positive attitudes toward their alternative school" (Manon, 1981, p. 13).

A follow-up study by Manon and Gold produced information which, while not startling, provides significant data for policy makers and school administrators. "As

certain youngsters' assessments of their schools and of themselves as students become more positive, their scholastic performance and their behavior improved" (Manon, 1982, p. 313).

A third 1981 study by Smith, Gregory and Pugh compared seven alternative schools and six comprehensive schools in four states. "Alternative schools come closer to satisfying student needs than do conventional schools," say the authors ... "In fact the differences between the two types of schools were amazingly large" (Smith, 1981, p. 46). The basis for this study was Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of fundamental needs.

A comprehensive evaluation of the Austin, Texas, Alternative Program (School-Community Guidance Center) was completed in 1989 by Swanson and Baenen. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were employed to provide information for school policy makers, who were considering making changes in their high-profile initiative. One of the major findings of the study revealed that approximately 75% of students were both more prepared and confident in their ability to finish school than they had been previously. Another interesting and significant finding related to professional staff - faculty turnover was high, perhaps due to the lack of specialized professional training for the faculty (Swanson, 1989).

A case study of an alternative school in Baltimore for pregnant teenagers was completed in 1988. "The results of this present analysis show that a large majority of adolescents who participated in this program had improved pregnancy outcomes observed in terms of reduced rates of infant mortality ... These improved outcomes are consistent with the comprehensive counseling, education and health care services offered at the school" (Amin, 1988, p. 23).

The Baltimore study, like the study of the Alternative School for Chicano gang members, is somewhat easier to evaluate than some programs due to the limited philosophy and purposes of these highly specialized centers. Researcher Alan Honsaker reported that the Chicano experiment had appeared to be successful with its one primary function, the return of gang members to a formal, albeit flexible, schooling experience (Honsaker, 1981).

A provocative report on the evaluation of secondary alternative students was completed in 1990 by Osbourne and Byrnes. This in-depth qualitative study of eight students in a Rocky Mountain Alternative program provides surprising data concerning the academic abilities of alternative school students. Several of those studied in this analysis were gifted and talented youngsters, who preferred their alternative placement over a traditional school for a variety of reasons: more caring teachers, smaller, livelier

classes, peers who were more tolerant of diversity, more flexible and reasonable rules (Osbourne, 1990).

An evaluative study of Project Reach near El Paso, Texas, provides "glowing analysis of a school whose objectives are clear and concise: 1) to prevent dropouts and/or expulsions, and 2) to facilitate the reintegration of students into mainstream programs." Dramatic improvements were noted in student retention, increased academic achievement and improved levels of behavior and self-respect (Heger, 1992).

While most evaluative studies support the continuation of alternative services, the debate on the merits of such programs continues. "Some (parents and professionals) argue that these schools are little more than youth prisons which encourage class distinction and alienation ... a relaxation of standards, short class periods, diversion of resources from regular classes (are offered) as reasons to question the continued support for alternative programs" (NSSC, 1991).

### Summary

While numerous studies of alternative programs are provided as an overview of the research, there continues to be a question of legitimacy related to this issue.

"It remains to be seen whether the state of the art reflected in today's alternative schools will be applied to meeting educational challenges. Alternative schools in the public sector are alive and well and are likely to remain so. Whether or not they gain the legitimacy their successes warrant remains a question" (Raywid, 1994).

## Chapter III

### Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology utilized in this study, explain the sampling technique, describe the data collection instrument and its administration, and provide an explanation of selected statistical procedures.

The methodology utilized in this study is the same as that employed by Yock (1989), Michener (1992) and Gaul (1993), in previous research studies which represent collaborative efforts of the Virginia Polytechnic and State University and the American School Board Journal.

### Research Methodology

Descriptive research methodology was employed in this study. "Descriptive research asks questions about the nature, incidence, or distribution of educational variables and/or the relationships among these variables" (Ary, 1990, p. 45).

Other explanations of descriptive research are commonplace in the literature. Descriptive studies attempt to describe, record and analyze conditions that currently



exist. It sometimes is employed to compare and contrast, and even to discover cause-effect relationships (Best, 1970).

The two primary types of survey research, an important and frequently used methodology, are descriptive and explanatory. As previously stated, descriptive survey research, focusing on the status quo without questioning why or how something occurred, will be employed in this study to gather information related to off-site alternative education experiences.

Earl Babbie notes, "surveys are frequently conducted for the purpose of making descriptive assertions about some population, that is, discovering the distribution of certain traits or attitudes" (Babbie, 1990, p. 51). C. J. Mouly suggests, "no category of educational research is more widely used than the type variously known as the survey, the narrative survey, or descriptive research" (Mouly, 1970, p. 234).

The results of survey research often permit and encourage generalizability, or an understanding of the larger population from which the survey sample was selected. "When research producers' results can be extended to other groups, these results are said to have generalizability" (Hittleman, 1992, p. 10).

The three objectives of survey research are defined by

Babbie (1973) as:

1. Description. The ability to make descriptive assertions about the distribution of traits among a carefully selected sample of respondents and to infer a comparable description of the larger population.
2. Explanation. The ability to make explanatory assertions about the population.
3. Exploration. The ability to search for additional possibilities.

Wiersma's analysis of surveys varies little from his contemporary peers. "Surveys are used to measure attitudes, opinions, or achievements - any number of variables in the national setting. Such studies may be local, regional, national or even international" (Wiersma, 1991, p. 51).

This study of the perspectives of the nation's school board members utilized a stratified random sampling through the use of a mailed questionnaire. The survey's utility, as defined by Fink and Kosecoff (1985), matches well with the purpose of this study. "A survey is a method of collecting information from people about their ideas, feelings, plans, beliefs, and social, educational and financial background (Fink, 1985, p. 13).

## Sample

A stratified random sampling of school board members from throughout the United States was surveyed through use of a questionnaire. This stratified sampling strategy was employed due to the large variance in number and characteristics of local school board members across the country. The researcher's sampling technique was intended to insure that the population within each state and region was equally represented.

A list of school board members was provided by The American School Board Journal, a publication of the National School Boards Association, a nationally recognized professional organization and resource for America's school board members. The subscriber list was examined, and all subscribers who were not school board members were deleted from the field.

Stratified random sampling decreases sampling error by providing a greater degree of representation. "In stratified random sampling one first identifies the strata of interest and then randomly draws a specified number of subjects from each stratum ... the major advantage of stratified sampling is that it guarantees representation of defined groups in the population" (Ary, 1990, p. 174).

The researcher selected a 22% random sample of the

population, which was similar in sample size to previous American School Board Journal/Virginia Tech collaborative survey projects.

### Instrumentation

There were two primary purposes of the survey form (Appendix A) which was utilized in this study. The first purpose was to collect selected demographic, personal and opinion data regarding school board members in this study. Another purpose was to gather data which were not utilized in the study but were requested by the American School Board Journal, in which a report will be made highlighting the annual survey results.

The survey instrument was divided into seven sections. Section One requested board member opinions as to the availability and support of off-site alternative programs for troubled youth. Section Two attempted to identify both who is being served and who should be served by alternative education programs. Section Three asked respondents to identify the primary purpose of alternative education. Section Four requested board member opinions related to the effectiveness of off-site services. Section Five requested personal information about board members, as well as demographic information about the school community and

school board itself. Section Six requested that board members identify the most pressing concerns in local school districts. Section Seven asked board members to identify the publications they subscribed to and regularly read.

The items selected for the survey were chosen as a result of the literature review, as well as discussions with members of the researcher's dissertation committee and editors of the American School Board Journal.

A careful analysis of the literature resulted in the identification of three significant studies dealing with alternative education off-site programs, their purposes, target groups, and evaluative methods. A matrix was developed to assist the researcher in determining those target populations which should be included in the survey questionnaire.

Study/ Literature Review	<u>Item Matrix I</u> Target Groups						
	Pregnant Students	Alcohol/ Drug Violators	Weapons Violators	Dropouts	Seriously Disruptive, Violent	Gang Members	Academic Failures
I. Foat - NTE		X		X	X		
II. NSSC		X	X	X	X	X	
III. Raywid	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

While most of the studies and reports dealing with alternative education off-site programs focus on dropouts

and seriously disruptive students, few if any deal specifically with services for gang members or weapons violators. The survey was developed as a result of a thorough review of a diverse body of studies which relate to alternative educational services.

The researcher shared copies of the survey with dissertation committee members, members of the editorial staff of the American School Board Journal, and selected school board members and administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This effort to validate the questionnaire asked the following questions of each of the previously mentioned individuals:

1. Are the directions of the questionnaire stated and explained clearly?
2. Are the questions of sufficient interest and appeal to encourage the respondent to complete the questionnaire?
3. Are the questions relevant to current educational concerns so as to elicit an accurate and realistic response?
4. Are the questions asked in such a way that is not embarrassing to the respondent?
5. Are the questions too restrictive, limited, or narrow in scope?
6. Are the questions designed in a manner which

would, when considered as a whole, be responsive to the basic research questions of the study?

More than thirty (30) responses were received by the researcher, providing invaluable assistance in the redesign of the survey. Responses of the reviewers were carefully analyzed to reveal possible misinterpretations of items. Revisions were made as necessary to respond to this validation activity. A follow-up was distributed to all first-time reviewers in order to further refine question clarity. No formal pilot test was conducted.

#### Collection of Data

A stratified random sampling of local school board members was selected to participate in this study. Questionnaires accompanied by a cover letter were mailed to potential respondents in January 1995. A self-addressed, postage-paid envelope was provided in the mailing.

There was no attempt to perform a follow-up survey of non-respondents, due to the requirement of The American School Board Journal that anonymity be maintained. The researcher collected more than eight hundred surveys over an eight week period. The final return rate of 13.6% was lower than anticipated, as the average return rate for the previous five years of this American School Board Journal

Survey was approximately 20%.

### Method of Analysis

The questionnaires which were returned were examined for correctness and completeness. Each questionnaire containing one or more parts which was considered to be substantially incomplete was discarded.

Data from the questionnaires which were returned were entered and analyzed, utilizing the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) package. All items on the questionnaire were analyzed utilizing frequency distributions and appropriate cross-tabulation procedures.

### Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methodology of this study, the design and development of the survey instrument, the data collection procedures, and the statistical methods used with the data which were collected.



## Chapter IV

### Results

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the data which have been collected through the returned surveys. The first section provides a description of the respondents. Section two presents the findings related to each research question, while the third section provides a chapter summary.

#### Description of the Sample

A description of the sample by geographic region is displayed in Table 1. A stratified, random sample of 5,971 school board members subscribers to the American School Board Journal was mailed a questionnaire during the week of February 20, 1995. Over the eight week period ending April 17, 1995, more than 810 surveys (13.6%) were returned.

Of the total surveys returned, 36.9% were from the Central region, while 19.6% were from the Northeast. The Southern return rate was 16.9%, the Pacific rate 14.3%, and 10.2% of those returned were from the Western region.

The distribution of returned surveys by community type is described in Table 2. The majority of the respondents

Table 1

Distribution of Returned Surveys by Region

Region	Total Number	Mailed	Returned	Percent Returned	Percent Total Returned
Northeast	6,018	1,324	159	12.0	19.6
Central	9,209	2,026	299	14.8	36.9
Southern	5,032	1,107	137	12.4	16.9
Western	3,523	775	83	10.7	10.3
Pacific	3,359	739	116	15.7	14.3
No Response	-	-	16	-	2.0
Total	27,141	5,971	810	13.6	100.0

Table 2

Distribution of Returned Surveys by Community Type

---

Category	Frequency	Percent
Rural	181	22.3
Small Town	257	31.7
Suburban	254	31.4
Urban	92	11.4
Other	18	2.2
No Response	8	1.0
Total	810	100.0

---

indicated that their community was best described as small town (31%), suburban (31%) or rural (22%). Table 3 provides data relating to distribution by student enrollment. The highest response was provided by board members from districts in the 1,000 - 4,999 range (49%), and the smallest response from those working in the largest (25,000 or more) school divisions.

#### Description of Respondents

The personal data reported by those who responded to the survey is provided in Table 4. The majority of respondents were male (54%), white (89%), between the ages of 41-50 (47%), held advanced college degrees (40%), earned incomes over \$40,000 (83%), were married (93%), and had children in public school (58%).

Table 5 provides data relating to the school boards which are represented by the more than 800 respondents. The majority of respondents served on boards which had between 5-7 members (80%), were elected (91%), had served on the board for three years or less (37%), and were serving either a three or four year term (88%).

Table 3

Distribution of Returned Surveys by District Enrollment

---

Enrollment Range	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1,000	97	12.0
1,000 - 4,999	401	49.5
5,000 - 9,999	145	17.9
10,000 - 24,999	118	14.6
25,000 or more	45	5.6
No Response	4	.5
Total	810	100.0

---

Table 4

Distribution of Personal Characteristics Identified by Respondents

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
1.	Gender		
	Male	433	53.5
	Female	350	43.2
	No Response	26	3.2
2.	Ethnic Designation		
	White	721	89.0
	Black	44	5.4
	Hispanic	15	1.9
	Asian	2	.2
	American Indian	2	.2
	Other	13	1.6
	No Response	13	1.6
3.	Age		
	25 or Under	1	.1
	26-35	35	4.3
	36-40	95	11.7
	41-50	380	46.9
	51-60	174	21.5
	over 60	115	14.2
	No Response	10	1.2
4.	Education Attainment		
	Less than High School	4	.5

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
High School Graduate	50	6.2
Post High School	162	20.0
Four Year College Degree	254	31.4
Advanced College Degree	323	39.9
No Response	17	2.1
5. Income		
Less than \$40,000	102	12.6
40,000 - 79,999	387	47.9
80,000 or more	288	35.5
No Response	33	4.1
6. Married		
Yes	754	93.1
No	46	5.7
No Response	10	1.2
7. Children in Public School		
Yes	466	57.5
No	337	41.6
No Response	7	.9

Table 5

Distribution of School Board Related Characteristics Identified by Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
1. Number of Board Members		
2-4	9	01.1
5-7	645	79.6
8-10	138	17.0
11 or more	13	1.6
No Response	5	0.6
2. Manner of Service		
Elected	740	91.4
Appointed	58	7.2
No Response	12	1.5
3. Years Served on Board		
0-3	297	36.6
4-7	262	32.4
8-10	108	13.3
11 or more	133	16.4
No Response	10	1.2
4. Number of Years in Term		
1-2	25	3.1
3-4	711	87.7
5 or More	66	8.1
No Response	8	1.0



## Findings

Research Question Number One: To what extent do school board members believe that alternative education off-site programs are available for troubled youth - and to what extent are such alternatives developed in a collaborative manner? To what degree do availability and collaboration vary by selected demographic variables?

### Availability and Support

The questionnaire asked board members to indicate whether or not off-site alternatives for troubled youth were provided by their districts.

As Table 6 indicates, 519 respondents (64.1%) stated that such programs were available in their respective school districts, while 285 respondents (35.2%) replied that no such options were available for students in their districts.

However, 724 respondents (89%) replied as to the appropriateness of such programs for troubled youth by stating that such services should be available in their districts. Only 69 (9%) respondents claimed that such services are not appropriate, as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 8 provides the opinions of board members as to whether or not parental and community support exists for the development of off-site alternative programs. The

Table 6

Distribution of Respondents of Availability of Off-site  
Alternative Programs for Troubled Youth

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Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes, In My System	519	64.1
No, Not in My System	285	35.2
No Response	6	.7
TOTAL	810	100.0

---

Table 7

Distribution of Respondents of Appropriateness of Off-site Alternative Programs for Troubled Youth

---

Category	Frequency	Percent
Should Provide	724	89.4
Should Not Provide	69	8.5
No Response	17	2.1
TOTAL	810	100.0

---

Table 8

Distribution of Respondents of Parental and Community Support for Development of Alternative Programs

---

Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	578	71.4
No	172	21.2
No Response	60	7.4
TOTAL	810	100.0

---

affirmative responses numbered 578 (71.4%), in comparison with 172 negative responses (21.2%) on this fundamental question dealing with support for such programs.

A different perspective of the questions relating to availability and support as presented in Tables 6, 7 and 8 is provided in Table 9, which displays the percentage of availability and support by community type.

Board members in urban districts indicated greater availability of alternative programs than their counterparts in other community types. Urban members were also more likely than their non-urban colleagues to indicate that alternatives should be provided.

An analysis of the data in Table 9 reveals that 94.5% of urban board members responded that alternatives should be provided, while 82.6% stated that alternatives were being provided. In contrast, while 85.1% of rural board members responded that alternatives should be provided, only 57.4% stated that such programs were being provided in their respective school divisions.

Table 10 provides the percentage of availability and support by size of school division. The larger school divisions' board member responses demonstrate greater availability and support of alternatives than do the smaller divisions. While more than 95% of the respondents in school divisions of more than 10,000 students state that

Table 9

Percentage of Availability and Support by Community Type

Category and Community Type	Yes Percent	No Percent	No Response Percent
<b>Are Alternatives Provided?</b>			
Rural	57.4	41.4	1.1
Small Town	61.1	38.5	0.3
Suburban	65.5	33.8	0.7
Urban	82.6	17.4	.0
<b>Should Alternatives be Provided?</b>			
Rural	85.1	11.7	3.3
Small Town	88.7	8.9	2.3
Suburban	91.3	7.8	.8
Urban	94.5	3.3	2.2
<b>Parental/Community Support?</b>			
Rural	65.2	27.1	7.7
Small Town	70.0	22.9	7.0
Suburban	69.7	21.6	8.6
Urban	88.0	9.7	2.2

Table 10

Percentage of Availability and Support by Size

Category and Community Type	Yes Percent	No Percent	No Response Percent
<b>Are Alternatives Provided?</b>			
Fewer than 1,000	30.0	69.0	1.0
1,000 - 4,999	63.5	35.5	1.1
5,000 - 9,999	67.3	32.4	0.3
10,000 - 24,999	82.2	17.8	.0
25,000 and more	86.7	13.3	.0
<b>Should Alternatives be Provided?</b>			
Fewer than 1,000	76.3	20.6	3.1
1,000 - 4,999	90.3	7.5	2.2
5,000 - 9,999	91.0	6.9	2.0
10,000 - 24,999	95.0	5.0	.1
25,000 and more	95.5	4.4	.0
<b>Parental/Community Support?</b>			
Fewer than 1,000	41.2	48.4	10.3
1,000 - 4,999	70.1	22.7	7.2
5,000 - 9,999	77.2	13.8	9.0
10,000 - 24,999	85.6	10.2	4.2
25,000 and more	93.3	4.4	2.2

alternatives should be provided, more than 82% in these same size divisions state that alternatives are in existence.

In contrast, while 76.3% of respondents from school divisions of fewer than 1,000 students suggest that alternatives are appropriate, only 30% of these respondents confirm the existence of such programs in their respective school divisions.

Table 11 provides the percentage of availability and support by regions of the country. The greatest evidence of program existence and support occurs in the Southern region, where 84.2% of respondents cite existence, and 88.5% claim that community support exists for alternative programs. In comparison, the Western region of the country does not have as many programs, and community support is not as powerful as reported in other regions. Of the Western board members who responded, 44.7% claim that off-site alternatives are not available, and 32.9% state that community/parental support does not exist for the development of alternative programs.

The majority of Board members in the Northeast, Pacific and Central regions report that alternatives do exist, they should be provided, and that there is community support for these services.



Table 11

Percentage of Availability and Support by Regions of the Country

Category and Region	Yes Percent	No Percent	No Response Percent
<b>Are Alternatives Provided?</b>			
Central	55.1	42.9	2.0
Northeast	60.2	37.3	2.5
Pacific	68.1	30.2	1.7
Southern	84.2	14.4	1.4
Western	52.9	44.7	2.3
<b>Should Alternatives be Provided?</b>			
Central	90.0	7.6	2.3
Northeast	87.0	8.7	4.3
Pacific	87.9	9.5	2.6
Southern	92.1	4.3	3.5
Western	77.7	16.5	5.9
<b>Parental/Community Support?</b>			
Central	67.6	23.4	8.9
Northeast	62.7	27.3	9.9
Pacific	75.9	14.6	9.5
Southern	88.5	6.5	5.0
Western	57.6	32.9	9.4

## Collaboration

The survey asked board members if their school systems worked in collaboration with others to provide alternatives for troubled youth in off-site settings.

Table 12 provides data relating to the extent to which collaboration occurs from the perspective of the 519 board members who stated that off-site alternatives were provided for troubled youth. Most of these respondents (82.1%) reported that collaboration did exist, while only 16.6% suggested that it was not in existence in their respective school divisions.

Another form of collaboration is explored in Table 13. The vast majority (73.6%) of those who had noted that off-site alternatives were available stated that their school divisions did collaborate with other school systems and/or state agencies to provide services. Twenty-three percent said that such collaboration did not exist.

When board members were asked if collaborative efforts should occur as alternative education programs for troubled youth are developed, an overwhelming majority (91%) stated that collaboration with both community agencies and other school systems is appropriate as alternatives for students are developed. Table 14 provides this data, which indicates the approval of responding board members for such

Table 12

Cross Tabulation of Respondents Who Reported Existence of Alternative Programs as to Whether or Not Their School Divisions Collaborate with Community Agencies

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Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	426	82.1
No	86	16.6
No Response	7	1.3
TOTAL	519	100.0

---

Table 13

Cross Tabulation of Respondents Who Reported Existence of Alternative Programs as to Whether or Not Their School Divisions Collaborate with Other School Systems and/or State Education Agencies

---

Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	382	73.6
No	123	23.7
No Response	14	2.7
TOTAL	519	100.0

---

Table 14

Distribution of Respondents of Appropriateness of  
Collaboration in Development of Alternative Programs

Category	Frequency	Percent
Should Collaboration Occur with Community Agencies?		
Yes	744	91.9
No	52	6.4
No Response	14	1.7
TOTAL	810	100.0
Should Collaboration Occur with Other School Systems?		
Yes	738	91.1
No	52	6.4
No Response	20	2.5
TOTAL	810	100.0

collaborative efforts.

An examination of the opinions of only those board members who had indicated that alternatives were in existence provided similar results. Table 15 provides data suggesting that more than ninety percent indicated their support for collaboration with both community agencies and other school systems. Fewer than four percent felt that such collaboration was not appropriate.

The percentage of collaborative efforts by other variables is included in Tables 16, 17 and 18. Table 16 indicates that a majority of respondents from all four community types report the existence of collaboration with other community agencies, as well as with other school systems. Urban respondents report a greater degree of program participation, with 78.3% of respondents stating that multi-agency partnerships/collaboration exist in their systems.

Table 17 provides data which indicate a contrast between large and small division respondents. While 48.4% of members whose student body enrollment is lower than 1,000 state that collaboration with other community agencies does not exist in their systems, only 17.7% of board members from large school districts make the same claim. In regards to collaboration with other school systems, the contrasts in data are less apparent, with a majority of all board members

Table 15

Cross Tabulation of Respondents Who Reported Existence of Alternative Programs as to the Appropriateness of Collaboration

Category	Frequency	Percent
Should Collaboration Occur with Community Agencies?		
Yes	501	96.5
No	12	2.3
No Response	6	1.2
TOTAL	519	100.0
Should Collaboration Occur with Other School Systems?		
Yes	491	94.6
No	18	3.5
No Response	10	1.9
TOTAL	519	100.0

Table 16

Percentage of Collaborative Efforts by Community Type

Category and Community Type	Number	Yes Percent	No Percent	No Response Percent
<b>Collaborate with other Community Agencies</b>				
Rural	181	60.2	37.0	2.7
Small Town	257	62.6	34.6	2.7
Suburban	254	65.3	33.0	1.6
Urban	92	78.3	20.6	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>64.7</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Collaborate with other School Systems</b>				
Rural	181	58.6	37.0	4.4
Small Town	257	60.7	35.4	3.8
Suburban	254	63.4	33.8	2.7
Urban	92	63.0	35.9	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>



Table 17

Percentage of Collaborative Efforts by Size

Category and Size	Number	Yes Percent	No Percent	No Response Percent
<b>Collaborate with other Community Agencies</b>				
Less than 1,000	97	46.4	48.4	5.1
1,000 - 4,999	401	64.3	33.4	2.2
5,000 - 9,999	145	68.3	31.0	.6
10,000 - 24,999	118	75.4	24.6	.0
25,000 and more	45	77.7	17.7	4.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>65.2</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Collaborate with other School Systems</b>				
Less than 1,000	97	54.6	37.1	8.2
1,000 - 4,999	401	65.6	31.7	2.7
5,000 - 9,999	145	58.0	40.7	1.3
10,000 - 24,999	118	54.2	42.4	3.4
25,000 and more	45	68.9	28.9	2.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>3.2</b>

citing the existence of multi-school system efforts.

Table 18 addresses a regional view of the same data. The five regions of the country show little meaningful variation as the majority of board members claim the existence of collaboration with both community agencies and other school systems.

Table 18

Percentage of Collaborative Efforts by Region of Country

Category and Region	Number	Yes Percent	No Percent	No Response Percent
<b>Collaborate with other Community Agencies</b>				
Central	299	58.7	38.9	2.3
Northeast	159	64.0	31.7	4.3
Pacific	116	75.0	21.6	3.4
Southern	137	69.0	27.3	3.6
Western	83	62.3	34.1	3.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Collaborate with other School Systems</b>				
Central	299	61.8	35.3	2.9
Northeast	159	64.0	32.3	3.7
Pacific	116	59.5	35.3	5.2
Southern	137	59.7	34.5	5.7
Western	83	55.3	37.6	7.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>

Research Question Number Two: To what extent do school board members recognize the target populations and purposes of such programs? To what degree do these target populations and purposes vary by selected demographic variables?

### Target Populations

The questionnaire includes a section which identifies board members' opinions as to who is currently being served by alternative education programs, as well as who should be served by such services.

Table 19 provides an overview of these data, and reveals some interesting trends in the opinions of the board member respondents. More than half (61.2%) of the respondents indicate that dropouts are being served by alternatives provided by their systems, while 27.0% state that services for dropouts are not available. A clear majority (70.5%) of respondents cite the appropriateness of providing alternative services for dropouts, while 10.9% say that such services should not be provided for this specific target population.

Slightly more than half (54.2%) of board member respondents cite the existence of programs targeted for "students who are not making appropriate progress" (one or

Table 19

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Target Populations Which Are Served and Should Be Served

Are being served			TARGET POPULATIONS	Should be served		
Yes %	No %	No R %		Yes %	No %	No R %
48.5	36.7	14.8	Pregnant Students	57.7	21.5	20.9
58.4	21.4	20.2	Alcohol/Drug Violators	49.4	38.4	12.2
30.1	58.0	11.9	Weapons Violators	38.6	40.0	21.4
61.2	27.0	11.7	Dropouts	70.5	10.9	18.6
27.2	56.8	16.0	Gang Members	44.3	30.1	25.6
51.7	33.3	14.9	Truant Students	59.6	18.4	22.0
54.0	33.2	12.8	Multiple Suspended Students	59.4	20.2	20.4
35.8	51.9	12.3	Expelled Students	47.4	32.5	20.1
42.7	45.3	12.0	Violent Students	46.4	32.1	21.5
30.6	57.5	11.9	Staff Assaulters	38.1	49.1	12.7
38.1	49.1	12.7	Student Assaulters	43.2	34.8	22.0
54.2	31.9	14.0	Failing Students	63.1	16.9	20.0

more class failures), while 31.9% suggest that no such programs exist for this specific group of students in their respective school divisions. However, 63.1% of all respondents state that such off-site alternatives should be provided for this failing group of students, with only 16.9% stating that such services would be inappropriate.

With the literature review suggesting that programs for weapons policy violators are increasing in number in the public schools, board members were asked if such a target population were being provided for, and the appropriateness of such a service. Almost one-third (30.1%) stated that programs for weapons policy violators were in existence, while 58.9% said they were not. Board member opinions concerning the appropriateness of services were almost evenly divided, with 38.6% stating that services were appropriate, and 40.0% stating that such programs were not.

Table 20 provides data from the 519 board members who cited existence of alternative services in their school divisions. A comparison of responses from all board members (Table 19) indicates little difference in results. The greatest variation exists with the "student assaulter" target population, wherein programs appear to be in greater existence with more support from the perspective of the smaller group of board members who indicated the existence of alternative services for troubled youth.

Table 20

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Existence of Alternative Programs as to Target Populations Which Are Served and Should Be Served

Are being served			TARGET POPULATIONS	Should be served		
Yes %	No %	No R %		Yes %	No %	No R %
57.6	28.5	13.9	Pregnant Students	63.0	17.3	19.7
62.0	18.5	19.5	Alcohol/Drug Violators	60.7	28.3	11.0
37.8	51.4	10.8	Weapons Violators	38.9	40.1	21.0
76.3	12.5	11.2	Dropouts	75.0	7.3	17.7
34.3	49.7	16.0	Gang Members	46.2	22.0	13.9
64.2	22.0	13.9	Truant Students	64.2	14.5	21.4
69.4	18.5	12.1	Multiple Suspended Students	64.4	15.6	20.0
44.5	43.4	12.1	Expelled Students	48.0	32.0	20.0
53.2	35.1	11.8	Violent Students	48.6	29.9	21.6
37.8	50.7	11.6	Staff Assaulters	36.4	41.0	22.5
45.1	32.9	22.0	Student Assaulters	48.2	39.5	12.3
65.3	22.5	12.1	Failing Students	68.0	13.7	18.3

Table 21 consolidates the responses of all board members into two ranked listings relating to members' affirmative responses concerning the existence and appropriateness of programs for selected populations of students. Board members generally agree that appropriately targeted populations are being identified for service in their schools.

In Table 22, respondents indicate the grade levels at which service is provided, and also respond to the appropriateness of providing alternative off-site services at various grade levels. A clear majority (73.3%) of responding board members state that alternatives exist for students in grades 9-12, while 7.7% indicate that no such services are provided by their respective school divisions. Approximately one-third (34.4%) of respondents indicate the existence of such services for grades 1-6, while 39.8% say that traditional elementary-aged youngsters are not provided off-site alternative programming. Almost half of the respondents state that alternatives should be provided for students in grades 1-6, while 18.9% said that such services would not be appropriate.

A listing of selected target populations by community type, size of district and region of country is provided in Tables 23, 24 and 25. The data in Table 23 provided



Table 21

Ranking of Respondents' Affirmative Responses to the Existence and Appropriateness of Programs for Selected Target Populations

Target Populations	In Existence - Yes
1. Dropouts	61.2
2. Substance Violators	58.4
3. Failing Students	54.2
4. Multiply Suspended Students	54.0
5. Truant Students	51.7
6. Pregnant Students	48.5
7. Violent Students	42.7
8. Student Assaulters	38.1
9. Expelled Students	35.8
10. Staff Assaulters	30.6
11. Weapons Violators	30.1
12. Gang Members	27.2
	Appropriate - Yes
1. Dropouts	70.5
2. Failing Students	63.1
3. Truant Students	59.6
4. Multiply Suspended Students	59.4
5. Pregnant Students	57.7
6. Substance Violators	49.4
7. Expelled Students	47.4
8. Violent Students	46.4
9. Gang Members	44.3
10. Student Assaulters	43.2
11. Weapons Violators	38.6
12. Staff Assaulters	38.1

Table 22

Cross Tabulation of Opinions of Respondents Who Reported Existence of Programs Relating to Grade Level of Service

Are being served			GRADE LEVELS	Should be served		
Yes %	No %	No R %		Yes %	No %	No R %
34.4	39.8	25.8	Grades 1-6	43.2	18.9	37.9
59.4	20.7	19.9	Grades 7-8	63.8	4.7	31.5
73.3	7.7	19.0	Grades 9-12	69.5	2.8	27.7

N=519

Table 23

Percentage of Selected Target Populations Served by  
Community Type

Category and Community Type	Yes Percent*	No Percent*
<b>Are Pregnant Students Served?</b>		
Rural	53.9	46.1
Small Town	57.5	42.5
Suburban	52.9	47.1
Urban	72.2	27.8
<b>Are Dropouts Served?</b>		
Rural		
Small Town	64.4	35.6
Suburban	72.2	27.8
Urban	66.8	33.2
	79.2	20.8
<b>Are Substance Abusers Served?</b>		
Rural	66.7	33.3
Small Town	70.2	24.8
Suburban	77.3	22.7
Urban	78.3	21.7

\* of total respondents answering these questions

N=810

Table 24

Percentage of Selected Target Populations Served by Size

Category and Community Type	Yes Percent*	No Percent*
<b>Are Pregnant Students Served?</b>		
Fewer than 1,000	43.8	56.3
1,000-4,999	54.1	45.9
5,000-9,999	57.8	42.2
10,000-24,999	67.3	32.7
25,000 or more	78.4	21.6
<b>Are Dropouts Served?</b>		
Fewer than 1,000	52.3	47.7
1,000-4,999	68.4	31.6
5,000-9,999	69.9	30.1
10,000-24,999	81.4	18.6
25,000 or more	81.1	18.9
<b>Are Substance Abusers Served?</b>		
Fewer than 1,000	70.4	29.6
1,000-4,999	71.1	28.9
5,000-9,999	75.4	24.6
10,000-24,999	77.1	22.9
25,000 or more	82.4	17.6

\* of total respondents answering these questions

N=810

Table 25

Percentage of Selected Target Populations Served by Region

Category and Community Type	Yes Percent*	No Percent*
<b>Are Pregnant Students Served?</b>		
Central	53.4	46.6
Northeast	52.6	47.4
Pacific	66.7	33.3
Southern	59.5	40.5
Western	61.1	38.9
<b>Are Dropouts Served?</b>		
Central	65.0	35.0
Northeast	72.4	27.6
Pacific	71.0	29.0
Southern	76.5	23.5
Western	66.7	33.3
<b>Are Substance Abusers Served?</b>		
Central	71.5	28.5
Northeast	74.4	25.6
Pacific	76.1	23.9
Southern	76.1	23.9
Western	67.6	32.4

\* of total respondents answering these questions

N=810

expected results based on national data as reported previously. Urban board members were more likely, and rural board members less likely, to report the existence of alternatives in their respective school districts.

A more significant contrast is provided by the data in Table 24, relating selected target populations to size of district. While the majority of the board members from districts of fewer than 1,000 students stated that alternatives did not exist for pregnant students, more than three-fourths (78.4%) of respondents from large districts said that they were providing such alternatives. A similar range of divergent opinions was indicated with the "dropout" target population. Of large district members who responded, 81.1% reported the existence of programs, while only one-half (52.3%) of members from districts of fewer than 1,000 students made the same claim.

The relationship of target populations to region of the country (Table 25) provided few contrasts in responses by members from across the country.

## Purposes

The survey asked board members to provide opinions as to the purposes of alternative education off-site programs. Seven suggested purposes were provided, as well as space for an independent (creative) response. Board members were asked to select one response only.

In Table 26, board members' responses to citing "the primary purpose of alternative programs for troubled youth" are provided.

Less than half (40.6%) of the respondents claimed that "providing appropriate services to enable students to graduate" was the most important purpose. Almost one-fourth (24.1%) of the board members said that "assisting students in returning to their home schools" was the most significant purpose. Only 1.7% of members selected "encouraging community support" as the primary purpose, and 2.0% said that "decreasing the number of expulsions" was the most significant purpose.

Relatively few board members (64), representing 7.9% of the total respondents, selected "other," and provided an individualized response to the question of purpose. For the purpose of this study, no discernible trend was established as a result of the review or analysis of these responses. Many appeared to simply re-state or explain one of the seven

Table 26

Distribution of Respondents' Opinions Relating to Primary Purpose of Alternative Education

Primary Purpose	Frequency	Percent
To remove bad influences	98	12.1
To provide appropriate services	329	40.6
To encourage community support	14	1.7
To decrease frequency of expulsions	16	2.0
To assist students to return to home schools	195	24.1
To decrease frequency of O.S.S.	21	2.6
To demonstrate a "hard line" philosophy	45	5.6
Other	64	7.9
No Response	28	3.5
TOTAL	810	100.0



responses provided by the researcher.

In Table 27, the responses of only those 519 board members who cited the existence of alternative programs was tabulated. A quick review of each table confirms the similarity of opinions of these two populations.

Data comparing selected purposes by community type (Table 28), size of district (Table 29), and region of country (Table 30) provided few contrasts as board members determined the single most appropriate purpose of alternative education programs. Western board members, however, again appeared to have little in common with their peers throughout the other regions. While this group previously noted fewer programs and less support, approximately one-fifth (19.5%) of western respondents selected "to remove bad influences" as their primary purpose. This variation from the national average of 12.1%, however, did not signal other meaningful philosophical differences, as westerners generally agreed with the three most frequently supported (Table 26) national purposes for alternative off-site services.

Table 27

Distribution of Respondents Who Reported Existence of Alternative Programs as to Opinions Relating to Primary Purpose of Alternative Education

Primary Purpose	Frequency	Percent
To remove bad influences	57	11.0
To provide appropriate services	222	42.8
To encourage community support	8	1.5
To decrease frequency of expulsions	9	1.7
To assist students to return to home schools	125	24.1
To decrease frequency of O.S.S.	12	2.3
To demonstrate a "hard line" philosophy	27	5.2
Other	41	7.9
No Response	18	3.5
TOTAL	519	100.0

Table 28

Percentage of Selected Purposes of Alternative Education by Community Type

Purpose and Type	Percentage*
To provide appropriate services	
Rural	42.9
Small Town	40.1
Suburban	43.6
Urban	40.0
To assists students' return to school	
Rural	17.5
Small Town	28.3
Suburban	25.1
Urban	25.0
To remove bad influences	
Rural	16.9
Small Town	10.9
Suburban	12.8
Urban	10.0
To demonstrate hard line philosophy	
Rural	5.6
Small Town	6.1
Suburban	4.1
Urban	11.1

\*percentage of respondents in each community type who selected this one purpose

Table 29

Percentage of Selected Purposes of Alternative Education by Size

Purpose and Size	Percentage*
To provide appropriate services	
Fewer than 1,000	35.1
1,000-4,999	46.5
5,000-9,999	37.0
10,000-24,999	39.8
25,000 or more	34.1
To assists students' return to school	
Fewer than 1,000	21.3
1,000-4,999	24.5
5,000-9,999	27.7
10,000-24,999	23.0
25,000 or more	31.8
To remove bad influences	
Fewer than 1,000	12.8
1,000-4,999	12.1
5,000-9,999	13.5
10,000-24,999	13.3
25,000 or more	11.4
To demonstrate hard line philosophy	
Fewer than 1,000	10.6
1,000-4,999	5.2
5,000-9,999	4.3
10,000-24,999	4.4
25,000 or more	9.1

\*percentage of respondents in each size district who selected this one purpose

Table 30

Percentage of Selected Purposes of Alternative Education by Region of Country

Purpose and Region	Percentage*
To provide appropriate Services	
Central	49.1
Northeast	35.9
Pacific	44.1
Southern	32.6
Western	41.5
To assists students' return to school	
Central	23.5
Northeast	30.7
Pacific	19.8
Southern	26.7
Western	23.2
To remove bad influences	
Central	8.1
Northeast	16.3
Pacific	10.8
Southern	14.1
Western	19.5
To demonstrate hard line philosophy	
Central	6.3
Northeast	3.3
Pacific	3.6
Southern	11.9
Western	2.4

\*percentage of respondents in each region of country who selected this one purpose

Research Question Number Three: To what extent do board members believe that evaluation procedures are in place for off-site programs - and that these programs are effective? To what degree do evaluation procedures and effectiveness ratings vary by selected demographic variables?

### Existence and Effectiveness

The survey asked board members to consider the primary purpose which they had cited in a previous section, and to respond to the effectiveness of alternative programs in fulfilling the intended purpose for each target population.

Table 31 provides the results of this effectiveness questionnaire. Board members varied significantly in their responses to each target population. While 59.7% of respondents rated dropout alternatives as either partially effective or effective, only 21.2% provided the same level of approval for alternative programs targeted for gang members.

Slightly more than half (51.3%) of respondents stated that alternatives for failing students were either effective or partially effective, while only 27.8% felt that the same level of effectiveness was accurate for programs designed for students who had assaulted staff members.

Table 31

Distribution of Respondents Regarding Effectiveness of Off-site Alternative Programs for Troubled Youth with Specified Target Populations

Category	Percent Effective	Percent Partially Effective	Percent Ineffective	Percent Not in My System
Pregnant Students	24.6	21.0	4.4	35.2
Substance Abusers	8.9	36.2	8.0	30.4
Weapons Violators	11.4	20.0	4.8	46.5
Dropouts	20.9	38.8	6.4	20.5
Gang Members	4.2	17.0	7.5	52.5
Truants	13.6	36.0	7.4	27.3
Multiply Suspended Students	12.8	35.1	9.9	25.7
Expelled	10.7	27.5	7.5	37.8
Violent	8.5	26.5	10.2	38.3
Assaulters of Staff	7.3	20.5	7.9	47.4
Assaulters of Students	8.1	27.5	7.5	39.5
Failing Students	20.9	30.4	6.5	25.8

The greatest dissatisfaction as to effectiveness was voiced by board members with the target population of "violent students." The "ineffective" rating was reported by 10.2% of respondents, while 9.9% made the same claim in referring to programs for multiply suspended students.

It should be noted that board members were encouraged to avoid rating the effectiveness of programs which were not provided by their respective school divisions. The researcher designed the questionnaire in such a manner as to provide the opportunity for "not in my system" responses for each of the targeted populations.

In Table 32, the effectiveness of services at selected grade levels is solicited from respondents. The greatest percentage of ratings at each end of the scale occurred with the 8-12 grade level designation. More than one in five (21.0%) of members cited the services as effective, and 5.3% felt that they were ineffective. Almost one-half or 46.3% felt that services were partially effective for grades 9-12. "Effectiveness" and "Ineffectiveness" ratings for grades 7-8 and grades 1-6 were similar. Again with this question, respondents did not rank effectiveness if services were not provided by their respective school divisions.

Table 33 provides similar data from the perspectives of only those board members who stated that alternative education services were provided by their respective school



Table 32

Distribution of Respondents Regarding Effectiveness of Off-site Alternative Programs for Troubled Youth at Specified Grade Levels

Category	Percent Effective	Percent Part. Effect.	Percent Ineff.	Percent Not in My System	Percent No Response
Grades 1-6	13.1	13.5	1.7	45.4	19.8
Grades 7-8	12.8	37.8	2.5	27.2	15.3
Grades 9-12	21.0	46.3	5.3	12.1	18.1

Table 33

Cross Tabulation of Respondents Who Reported Existence of Alternative Programs (at any level) Relating to Effectiveness of Off-site Alternatives for Troubled Youth at Specified Grade Levels

Category	Percent Effective	Percent Part. Effect.	Percent Ineff.	Percent Not in My System	Percent No Response
Grades 1-6	15.6	14.3	1.7	44.1	24.3
Grades 7-8	16.8	44.1	1.7	20.4	17.0
Grades 9-12	28.7	54.7	4.8	1.5	10.2

districts. Data from both Tables 32 and 33 support similar conclusions, as mentioned previously.

Table 34 provides data which relate to the perceived existence of program evaluation systems for alternative education services. Almost one-half (43.8%) of board members felt that an evaluation system was in existence in their respective school systems. More than one-third (38.1%) of respondents said that their school districts did utilize an evaluation system.

Data in Tables 35, 36, and 37 provide information as to the existence of evaluation systems, when analyzed by community type, size of district and region of the country.

Table 36 appears to demonstrate a trend relating size of district to existence of evaluation systems. The larger the school system, the more likely it is to include a formal evaluation process for alternative education. While more than half (51.9%) of respondents from the largest districts claimed that evaluation systems exist, only 17.5% of those representing small districts had the same opinion. Tables 35 and 37 did not provide unexpected results based on national data.

Table 34

Distribution of Respondents Regarding the Existence of Program Evaluation Systems for Alternative Education Services

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Category	Percent Yes	Percent No	Percent No Response
Does formal system exist?	38.1	43.7	18.1
If so, has it been utilized to modify?	31.6	14.9	53.5

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Table 35

Percentage of Existence of Evaluation Systems by Community Type

Category and Community Type	Percent Yes	Percent No	Percent No Response
Does formal system exist?			
Rural	31.5	49.7	18.7
Small Town	36.5	43.2	20.2
Suburban	37.4	43.7	18.9
Urban	53.3	39.1	7.6

Table 36

Percentage of Existence of Evaluation Systems by Size of District

Category and Size	Percent Yes	Percent No	Percent No Response
Does formal system exist?			
Fewer than 1,000	17.5	60.8	21.6
1,000-4,999	36.4	42.6	20.9
5,000-9,999	44.8	42.1	13.1
10,000-24,999	48.3	38.9	12.7
25,000 and more	51.1	35.5	13.3

Table 37

Percentage of Existence of Evaluation Systems by Region of Country

Category and Region	Percent Yes	Percent No	Percent No Response
Does formal system exist?			
Central	34.3	43.2	22.4
Northeast	37.3	47.8	16.8
Pacific	35.3	44.8	19.8
Southern	48.2	37.4	14.4
Western	34.1	42.3	23.5

### Summary

This chapter presented a description of the demographic, personal and board characteristics of the respondents. The findings of this study with respect to each of the three research questions were presented, describing availability, target populations and effectiveness of alternative education off-site programs.



## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the study that was conducted. Included is a review of the purpose of this study, a restatement of the research questions, a summary of related literature, a review of the research methodology, and a summary of the findings and conclusions derived from an analysis of the data. Recommendations for further study are also made.

#### Summary

##### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze information from a sample of the nation's school board members who subscribe to The American School Board Journal in order to describe the perceptions of board members concerning the availability, purposes, and effectiveness of alternative education program. For purposes of this study, alternative education programs were defined as those services which are provided off-site for troubled youth.

## Summary of Related Literature

The literature review was designed to provide an overview of current and otherwise significant literature relating to the development of alternative education programs.

The literature provided a brief historical perspective of the foundations upon which such alternative or non-traditional services have been developed. Vandermolten (1993) and Johansen (1979) were cited as describing the early origins of today's diverse educational alternatives.

A number of sources were utilized in defining the nature of the wide variety of alternatives which now exist throughout the country. The problem of the lack of a common definition was explored by Gould (1976), and was more recently examined in a Virginia Department of Education survey of alternative programs (Virginia General Assembly, 1994).

Many documents were called upon to support the widely held conviction that a free society is dependent upon an educational system which meets the needs of the largest number of people possible. Gould (1976), Metzenbaum (1985), Raywid (1994), Kenney (1987), and Barr (1981) provide enlightening and sometimes inspirational rationale for the establishment of a wide variety of publicly supported

alternatives.

A sampling of America's alternative education schools was intended to provide an overview of the diverse options which now exist for our nation's students. This section of the literature review included citations by Swanson (1989), Heger (1992), Foat (1981), Wertheim (1974), Uroff (1991), and Amin (1988).

The desire and commitment to establish alternative programming was clearly articulated through a number of sources, including Harrington-Lueker (1994), Manon (1981) and Buie (1987). However, a caution flag was raised by Vandermolen (1993), McCauley (1977), Grosenich (1989) and Nelson (1977), suggesting that alternative education without sound planning, community support, and a formal system of evaluation would be doomed to failure. Nelson suggested that some alternative practices may be developed to serve inefficient school divisions, who have not properly educated creative and non-traditional learners.

In summary, the literature review provided an appropriate foundation for a clearer understanding of the nature of alternative education within the definitions as provided by the researcher. And in a society which places a premium on the development of the individual, it should not be surprising that a broad spectrum of alternatives has been documented and described.

Nathan's (1981) rationale for alternatives provides a widely accepted view: "If we abandon the vision of providing a good education for all the children of all of our people, we must face the frightening realization that we have also abandoned our belief in democracy. Alternative education ... is worth the struggle" (p. 747).

### Research Questions Restated

The following research questions were examined:

1. To what extent do school board members believe that alternative education off-site programs are available for troubled youth - and to what extent are such alternatives developed in a collaborative manner? To what degree do availability and collaboration vary by selected demographic variables?
2. To what extent do school board members recognize the target populations and purposes of such programs? To what degree do these target populations and purposes vary by selected demographic variables?
3. To what extent do board members believe that evaluation procedures are in place for such off-

site programs - and that these alternative services are effective? To what degree do evaluation procedures and effectiveness ratings vary by selected demographic variables?

### Research Methodology

This study employed descriptive research methodology and survey technique in order to obtain data from school board members concerning their opinions about off-site alternative education programs and services for troubled youth.

A 22% stratified, random sample of school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal was surveyed by utilizing a mailed questionnaire.

The questionnaire asked for board member opinions related to the availability, target populations, purposes and effectiveness of alternative education programs. The questionnaire also requested information relating to each board member's district, personal information about each board member, and information related to the boards on which members were serving. This information was generated and tabulated for NSBA purposes.

Data from responses were analyzed utilizing frequency and cross tabulation procedures. All questions from the

survey instrument were analyzed.

### Findings

The school board members who responded to the survey were described by age, race, gender, educational attainment, marital status, income, whether or not they have children in public school, length of board service, size of school boards, and method of selection of board members. Data relating to the region of the country, school district enrollment, and type of community were also collected.

The majority of respondents were 41-50 years old, white, male, held advanced college degrees, earned incomes over \$40,000, married, and had children in public schools. They had served on the board for three years or less in a school division whose enrollment ranged from 1,000-4,999 students, and were serving either a three or four year term.

Board members were asked if their respective school systems provided alternative off-site programs for troubled youth. Results indicated that a substantial majority (64%) responded that such programs were indeed available. When asked if such services were appropriate and should be provided, an overwhelming number of board members (89%) responded affirmatively.

An analysis of data revealed that responses relating to

availability differed for board members who lived in rural versus urban areas. Respondents from urban districts indicated the availability of services to a much greater extent (83%) than did those who responded from rural districts (57%). However, 85% of the rural members responded that alternatives should be provided, indicating a significant gap in rural school divisions between the "desired" and "existing" conditions. Data from other community types failed to reveal similar discrepancies.

Data did confirm that the larger the school system, the more likely that alternative services were being provided. While 30% of those who served in districts with fewer than 1,000 students said that alternatives existed, 63% of those in districts from 1,000-4,000 students made the same claim, and 87% of members from districts of more than 25,000 students were of the opinion that alternatives were in existence.

The questionnaire explored the issue of collaboration by asking respondents if other school systems or community agencies were working with their districts to provide alternative services. Almost two out of every three (65%) board members stated that collaboration with other community agencies was happening in their respective divisions. Slightly fewer (62%) said that collaboration was in existence with other school systems or the state education

agency.

Perhaps reflecting a climate in which downsizing and re-organization in many businesses and organizations are more and more commonplace, 91% of school board members expressed the opinion that collaboration should occur with both other agencies and school systems. There was little variation reflected by the data in the opinions regarding collaboration from board members representing various community types. The size of the district showed some contrasts, however, as a majority of board members from small districts (less than 1,000) said that collaboration was not occurring ... while all other district size groupings indicated an overwhelming majority of responses claiming programs in existence.

When board members were asked to identify those target groups which were being served by alternative programs, the majority (61%) cited existing programs for dropouts, while more than half noted that programs were provided by their respective school divisions for failing students (54%), multiply suspended students (54%), and truants (52%).

Fewer programs were identified for weapons policy violators (30%), and gang members (27%). An analysis of data reveals the greatest discrepancy between "what is" and "what should be" happening with programs for gang members. While 44% of board members said that such a target



population should be served, only 27% claimed that programs were in existence.

The prevailing philosophy that "early intervention" is an appropriate strategy for dealing with many school-related issues was also articulated by the data from this study. Almost one-half (43%) of the respondents claimed that grades 1-6 should be provided alternative services, while 34% stated that such services were currently in existence. The greatest number of programs were reported for grades 9-12 (73%), while 59% of respondents cited alternative services for grades 7-8.

The size of the district was again a factor in reporting the data for the existence of programs for selected target populations. The vast majority (81%) of members from the largest districts cited the existence of programs for dropouts, while only one-half (52%) of members from the smallest districts made the same claim. While other data variations were noted, significant discrepancies were less obvious.

The questionnaire also asked board members to provide opinions as to the purposes of alternative education off-site programs. Almost one-half (41%) of board members claimed that "providing appropriate services to enable students to graduate" was the primary purpose of off-site alternatives. Almost one-fourth of respondents claimed that

"assisting students to return to their home schools" was the most important purpose of these programs.

In contrast, only 1.7% of board members selected "encouraging community support" as the primary purpose, while a scant 2.0% felt that "decreasing the number of expulsions" was the most significant purpose. Board members were directed by the questionnaire to either select one "purpose" from the seven provided, or to write-in their individualized version of the primary purpose. While 8% selected "other" as their purpose of choice, no discernible trend was provided by the variety of comments which were suggested.

The final research question referred to the effectiveness of alternative education, and the extent to which formal evaluation procedures exist in local school divisions. Board members varied significantly in their responses to each target population. It should be noted that the questionnaire was designed to discourage the rating of effectiveness by those in whose division services were nonexistent.

Almost two-thirds (60%) of board members rated dropout alternatives as either partially effective or effective, while only 21% provided similar ratings for gang member alternative services. Slightly more than half (51%) of board members stated that alternatives for failing students

were either effective or partially effective, while only 28% felt that the same level of effectiveness was accurate for programs serving students who had assaulted staff numbers.

The greatest dissatisfaction as to effectiveness was cited by board members in rating programs for violent students. Approximately one in ten (10%) said that such programs were ineffective, while only 8% said that these services were effective.

When board members were asked to rate the effectiveness of programs at certain grade levels, 21% of all respondents stated that grades 9-12 services were effective, while 5% claimed that they were ineffective. More board members approved than disapproved of the effectiveness of services at the various grade levels.

Finally, when board members were questioned as to the utilization of formal systems of evaluation, 38% stated that systems were in existence, while 43% said that they were not. In instances in which such programs did exist, 32% of board members said that the evaluation had been used to modify the alternative program, while 15% claimed that no adjustments had been made as a result of the evaluation.

### Conclusions

The results of this study clearly demonstrated the

presence of a wide variety of off-site alternative education programs for the students attending public schools. Board members from a diverse array of backgrounds both acknowledged the presence of existing programs and services, and sounded the alarm for a need for additional services for a number of target populations.

School board members from every corner of the country have accepted the challenge of many of the nation's leading educational researchers and writers, a number of whom are included in the literature review of this study, to accept their responsibility to meet the needs of at-risk students "by permitting alternative methods for meeting curriculum requirements." (Vandermolen, 1993, p. 41).

The nation's board members provided an overwhelming endorsement for collaboration as alternatives are provided for a number of target populations. This call to collaborate may have resulted from a number of factors which are shaping America's schools. During periods of decentralization and school-based management, individual principals and department heads have been encouraged and trained to develop partnerships and to avoid the isolation which sometimes existed during periods of autocratic control and top-heavy bureaucracies.

Perhaps the call to collaborate stems solely from the notion that present-day economics are forcing alliances of

strange bedfellows. Even previously competitive organizations and school systems find themselves in a cooperative spirit, when improvements in both effectiveness and efficiency are on the horizon.

The target populations of alternative services are as complex and diverse as might be expected during a period in which a renewed focus on decreasing dropouts is dominating the educational landscape. School board members are well aware of the public's cry to keep students off the streets and the nation's welfare rolls. It is not surprising, therefore, that each of the pre-selected targeted populations found a home in a wide variety of school divisions, from rural to urban, from east coast to west coast, and from small division to large division.

The national focus on dropouts led to this target population's presence in alternative off-site programs throughout the country. Perhaps somewhat surprising was the board members' claim that programs for failing students were much more prevalent than services for violent students, weapons toters, or even expelled students.

One targeted population which was somewhat overlooked by the majority of school board members was the group of students who are violators of board weapons policies. With reported increases in the number of weapons being brought onto school grounds, with estimates of 270,000 youngsters

bringing guns onto school grounds at least once each year, (Smith, 1990), it may be concluded that these incidents are occurring in isolation and have yet to result in the design and implementation of programs. Or, the lack of action in this area may suggest that such young people must be expelled, and that the taxpayer is not willing to foot the bill for yet another targeted population.

Early intervention advocates may applaud the relatively high level of response (approximately one-third of board members) which indicates the existence of off-site alternative programs for students in grades 1-6. While, as expected, secondary programs are more often available, board members appear to be in concert with the national attention on intervening early, both for academic and non-academic rationale.

"It does seem to be true that many alternative schools... are opened as much in response to a community and educational system perceiving threat from their youngsters, as from any coherent plan to provide comprehensive and intensive services to youngsters with a given set of needs" (Grosenich, 1984, p.33).

Not so, says the majority of the school board member respondents, who claim that the primary purpose of alternative programs is to provide services which enable troubled students to graduate from high school. A sizeable

group of board members felt that the most significant purpose was to provide services which would lead targeted groups back into the mainstream/neighborhood school. This complimentary rationale underscores a philosophy which speaks less to perceptions of "get tough" policies, and more to a desire of policy makers to affect lasting, long-term change in the behaviors of those being served.

The effectiveness ratings of various off-site alternatives revealed that board members were generally pleased with programs for most target populations. In particular, programs for pregnant students, dropouts, failing students, multiply suspended students, and truants were most effective in the eyes of board members. The highest ineffective rating was noted for programs serving violent students.

Grade level effectiveness ratings failed to establish significant findings. The greatest degree of effectiveness was recorded for secondary students, which perhaps results from the reality that these programs are older and more established than those for students in grades 1-6.

Program evaluation was established by the literature review to be a significant component for any educational service. However the majority of respondents indicated that no formal system of evaluation existed. It may be concluded that the need for ever changing target populations and

services is creating a scenario wherein programs are developed rapidly, with little concern for assessment. However, the majority of members who confirmed the existence of a system of evaluation in their respective divisions did indeed state that these systems have been used to modify alternative services.

In summary, this research attempted to determine perceptions of board members as to the availability, target populations, and effectiveness of alternative education off-site programs for troubled youth.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Based upon the results of the data, a number of recommendations for further study are made.

This study was intended to provide data to determine perceptions of board members concerning alternative education issues in America's schools. As the study was limited in scope to a sampling of school board members who are subscribers to the American School Board Journal, it should not be assumed that this population reflects the opinions of the larger group of school board members who do not subscribe to the Journal. Therefore, a comprehensive national study might provide a more accurate assessment of the opinions of the nation's board members.



One of the more interesting findings of this limited study was the idea that a significant demand for alternative programs for certain targeted populations exists, while existing services fail to meet the perceived needs. It might be advisable for further study to be conducted to clarify and explain the discrepancy between what should be happening, and what is happening.

Another topic of further study would be a focus on small school divisions to determine the reasons why collaborative efforts to provide alternatives are not in existence, according to the majority of respondents in this study. If these findings are accurate nationally, what are the barriers to collaboration for small divisions? Is geographic isolation the primary issue? Or are other factors, including economics, responsible for a lack of collaborative efforts? Further research may shed light on this issue.

Another focus area for additional study would be an analysis of off-site versus on-site services. While every attempt was made by the researcher to limit this study to off-site programming, it may be that survey results were tainted by confused board members who do not have a clear understanding of the differences between on-site and off-site services ... or who simply overlooked the off-site designation when answering questions. The need for a common

definition of alternative education was noted in the literature review, and may impede efforts to analyze this widely accepted practice.

### Commentary

The purposes of public education have been discussed and debated since the origins of the common school. Who should be served by the public schools, and what should be taught?

Alternative education has an important niche in the continuum of services for today's public school student. Many of the nation's public school systems offer some form of alternative or non-traditional programming, and some of these services are offered in an off-site atmosphere.

This study resulted in data which verify the existence of a wide variety of alternative services. While it is dangerous to claim definitive conclusions in a study with limitations as previously noted, it may be stated that the existence of alternative education programs speaks volumes about the mission and priorities of local school boards throughout the country.

The existence of a wide variety of well-conceived alternative services suggests the commitment by a given board and community to the education of all of its children.

While the lack of programming should not be considered an indictment of any locality, it should raise questions as to how those school systems are able to function within the changing fabric of an increasingly more diverse and complex society. Indeed, lessons can be learned from the perspectives of both those who provide alternatives and those who don't, as board members, educators and the general public continue the debate which was commonplace two centuries ago. What is the purpose of public schooling? Who and what should be taught in a place called school?

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## Appendix A

# 1995 National Survey of School Board Members

## The American School Board Journal/Virginia Tech

### SECTION ONE: AVAILABILITY AND SUPPORT OF OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVES FOR TROUBLED YOUTH

To assist you in completing this survey, the following definitions are provided:

1. Alternative Education — nontraditional programs that are designed to meet the needs of identified, target populations.
2. Off-Site — programs housed in facilities that are separate and apart from regular K-12 buildings.
3. Troubled Youth — include such populations as violent students, substance-abusing students, dropouts or potential dropouts, and others who are having difficulties in regular school settings.

Please indicate the most appropriate responses by marking "X" in the blocks provided.

	Yes	No
Does your school system provide alternative education off-site programs for troubled youth?		
Do parents and the general community support the development of off-site alternative programs/services for troubled youth in your school system?		
Does your school system work in collaboration with your community agencies (police, local government, social services, etc.) to provide alternative off-site programs/services for troubled youth?		
Does your school system work in collaboration with other school systems and/or the state department of education to provide alternative off-site programs/services for troubled youth?		
Does your school system enter into contracts with private firms/companies to provide alternative services for troubled youth?		
Does your school system enter into contracts with private firms/companies to provide either instructional or administrative services of any type? (i.e. cafeteria/food services, transportation of students, management of alternative services)		
Is it appropriate for school systems to provide alternative education off-site programs for troubled youth?		
Is it appropriate for your school system to work in collaboration with other community agencies (police, local government, social services, etc.) to provide alternative off-site programs/services for troubled youth?		
Is it appropriate for your school system to work in collaboration with other school systems and/or the state department of education to provide alternative off-site programs/services for troubled youth?		
Is it appropriate for your school system to enter into contracts with private firms/companies to provide alternative services for troubled youth?		
Is it appropriate for your school system to enter into contracts with private firms/companies to provide either instructional or administrative services of any type? (i.e. cafeteria/food services, transportation of students, management of alternative services)		

**SECTION TWO: WHO IS BEING SERVED IN YOUR SCHOOL SYSTEM — AND WHO SHOULD BE SERVED IN YOUR SCHOOL SYSTEM — BY OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVES FOR TROUBLED YOUTH?**

Please indicate the most appropriate responses by marking "X" in the blocks provided.

WHO IS CURRENTLY SERVED?		WHO SHOULD BE SERVED?	
YES	NO	YES	NO
<b>PART A - TARGET POPULATIONS</b>			

**PART B - GRADE LEVEL OF SERVICE**

If you answered "yes" to one or more items above, please indicate below (columns to the left) the grade level(s) where any of these services are offered. Make an "X" in the appropriate block(s). In the column to the right, indicate whether or not services should be offered at certain grade levels.

YES	NO	YES	NO

**QUESTION THREE: WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR TROUBLED YOUTH?**

Indicate the most appropriate response by marking "X" in the blocks provided. Indicate only one response.

	Primary Purpose
To remove bad influences from regular K-12 settings.	
To provide services (as appropriate) to enable troubled students to graduate or receive a G.E.D.	
To encourage/develop community support for regular K-12 schools and programs.	
To eliminate/decrease the frequency of expulsions from school.	
To provide services (as appropriate) to enable troubled students to return to their home/neighborhood schools.	
To eliminate/decrease the frequency of "out-of-school" suspensions.	
To demonstrate a "hard-line, get tough" philosophy to the community by removing students from regular K-12 settings.	
Other (specify)	

**SECTION FOUR: WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS THAT SERVE THE TROUBLED STUDENTS OF YOUR SCHOOL SYSTEM?**

On the basis of your response to Section Three (purpose), please indicate the most appropriate responses by marking "X" in the blocks provided.

<b>PART A - TARGET POPULATIONS</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Partially Effective</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Not In My System</b>
Pregnant students				
Alcohol and drug policy violators				
Weapons policy violators				
Dropouts and/or potential dropouts				
Gang members				
Truant students				
Students with multiple suspensions				
Expelled students				
Violent students				
Students who assault staff				
Students who assault students				
Students not making appropriate progress (one or more class failures, etc.)				
<b>PART B - GRADE LEVEL OF SERVICE</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Partially Effective</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Not In My System</b>
Grades 1-6				
Grades 7-8				
Grades 9-12				
<b>PART C - FREQUENCY/UTILIZATION OF SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM EVALUATION</b>			<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Is a formal evaluation of alternative programs conducted by your school system? If no, skip question 2.				
Has the evaluation been used to modify (in any way) the alternative program?				

**SECTION FIVE:**

**Demographic Information**

In what state is your school district?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the approximate enrollment of your school district?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Fewer than 1,000
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ 1,000 to 4,999
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ 5,000 to 9,999
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ 10,000 to 24,999
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ 25,000 or more

What kind of community does your school district serve?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Rural
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Small town
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ Urban
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

Gender:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Male (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Female

Are you:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Asian
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ Black
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ White
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

Age:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ 25 or under (4) \_\_\_\_\_ 41-50
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ 26-35 (5) \_\_\_\_\_ 51-60
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ 36-40 (6) \_\_\_\_\_ over 60

What is your current occupation? (Check one)

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Homemaker
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Retired
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ Laborer
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ Skilled trade
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ Clerical
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Sales
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_ Business Owner
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_ Professional/managerial
  - (1) \_\_\_\_\_ banker (4) \_\_\_\_\_ lawyer
  - (2) \_\_\_\_\_ dentist (5) \_\_\_\_\_ teacher
  - (3) \_\_\_\_\_ doctor (6) \_\_\_\_\_ other
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

What level of education did you complete?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Less than high school graduate
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ High school graduate
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ Post high school training
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ Four-year college degree
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced college degree

9. What is your family income?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Less than 20,000
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 to \$59,999
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ \$60,000 to \$69,999
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_ \$70,000 to \$79,999
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_ \$80,000 to \$89,999
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_ \$90,000 to \$99,999
- (10) \_\_\_\_\_ \$100,000 to \$149,999
- (11) \_\_\_\_\_ \$150,000 or more

10. Are you married?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ No (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

11. Do you have children currently attending public school (K-12)?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ No (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

12. Do you have children currently attending private school (K-12)?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ No (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

13. Do you rent or own your home?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Rent (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Own

14. How do you classify yourself politically?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Conservative
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Liberal

15. How many years have you served on the school board?

\_\_\_\_\_ Years

16. How many years is a term on your school board?

\_\_\_\_\_ Years

17. How many members are on your school board?

\_\_\_\_\_ Members

18. Are members of your board appointed or elected?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Appointed (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Elected

19. Are you compensated for your service as a board member?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ No (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

20. If yes, how much?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Under \$5,000 (2) \_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 to \$10,000
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,001 to \$20,000 (4) \_\_\_\_\_ \$20,001 to \$30,000
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ \$30,001 to \$40,000 (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Over \$40,000

21. Do you receive reimbursement for expenses incurred for participation in board development activities (conferences, workshops, etc.)?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ No (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

**SECTION SIX:**

ues

From the following list, please rank the **top three** most pressing concerns in your school district. Write **1** next to your most pressing concern; **2** next to your second most pressing concern; and **3** next to your third most pressing concern.

- |            |                        |            |                                |
|------------|------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) _____  | Integration/busing     | (12) _____ | Parent involvement             |
| (2) _____  | At-risk students       | (13) _____ | Collective bargaining          |
| (3) _____  | Increasing enrollment  | (14) _____ | School finance/budget          |
| (4) _____  | Declining enrollment   | (15) _____ | Use of drugs by students       |
| (5) _____  | Crime and violence     | (16) _____ | Use of alcohol by students     |
| (6) _____  | Management issues      | (17) _____ | AIDS education                 |
| (7) _____  | Facilities             | (18) _____ | Truancy and dropouts           |
| (8) _____  | Personnel relations    | (19) _____ | Teacher shortage               |
| (9) _____  | State mandates         | (20) _____ | Immigration                    |
| (10) _____ | Curriculum development | (21) _____ | School prayer/religious issues |
| (11) _____ | Race relations         | (22) _____ | Other (please specify)         |

**SECTION SEVEN:**

Use indicate with an "X" which of the following publications you receive and which you read regularly.

	Receive	Read Regularly
American School Board Journal	_____	_____
School Board News	_____	_____
SSP Bulletin	_____	_____
School Administrator	_____	_____
American School & University	_____	_____
Executive Educator	_____	_____
School and College	_____	_____
Educational Leadership	_____	_____
Delta Kappan	_____	_____
Principal	_____	_____
School Business Affairs	_____	_____

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this annual survey.

The results will be published in an upcoming issue of *The American School Board Journal*. If you have any additional comments, please make them on the bottom or back of this page. Use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return your completed survey to:

***The American School Board Journal***  
 1680 Duke Street  
 Alexandria, VA 22314



## Appendix B

Table B-1

## Regions of the United States According to NSBA Membership

Region	Membership	States	
Northeast	6,018	Connecticut Delaware D.C. Maine Maryland Massachusetts New Hampshire	New Jersey New York Pennsylvania Rhode Island Vermont Virgin Islands
Central	9,209	Illinois Indiana Iowa Kentucky Michigan	Minnesota Missouri Ohio Wisconsin
Southern	5,032	Alabama Arkansas Florida Georgia Louisiana Mississippi	North Carolina South Carolina Tennessee Texas Virginia West Virginia
Western	3,523	Colorado Kansas Montana Nebraska New Mexico	North Dakota Oklahoma South Dakota Wyoming
Pacific	3,359	Alaska Arizona California Hawaii Idaho	Nevada Oregon Utah Washington

Table B-2

Population and Sample by Region

Region	Member Subscribers	22% Sample
Northeast	6,018	1,324
Central	9,209	2,026
Southern	5,032	1,107
Western	3,523	775
Pacific	3,359	739
Total	27,141	5,971

## VITA

James E. Upperman was born in Washington, D.C. on October 26, 1946. He attended the public schools of the District of Columbia and Fairfax County (Virginia), and was a 1964 graduate of James Madison (Vienna) High School. In 1968 he graduated from Bridgewater (Virginia) College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Spanish. In 1973, he completed a Master of Education Degree in Educational Administration from the University of Virginia.

Mr. Upperman was a Spanish and English teacher in the Rockingham County (Virginia) public schools. He subsequently served the children of Rockingham as an athletic director and assistant principal, and as a high school principal at both Elkton High and Spotswood Senior High. He relocated to Manassas, Virginia in 1984, and has served that school division as a high school principal and assistant superintendent. He is currently serving as the Superintendent of Schools in the City of Manassas, a post he has held since 1989.