

**A NATIONAL SURVEY  
OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' VIEWS ON THE  
IMPACT OF REFORM AND RESTRUCTURING ON SCHOOL  
BOARD POWER AND AUTHORITY**

by

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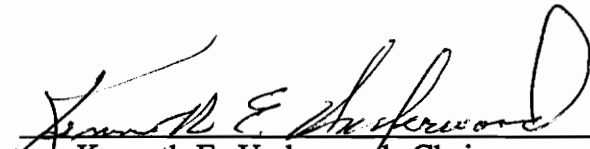
Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

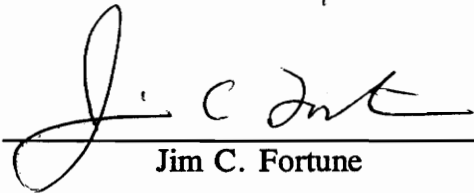
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION


in


Educational Administration


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July, 1993

Blacksburg, Virginia

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(ABSTRACT)

The major purpose of this study was to ascertain the views of school board members concerning the impact of reform and restructuring initiatives on their school districts and on their power and authority to govern. Data were gathered regarding the frequency of reform programs and cross tabulated with selected demographic variables to include region, size of district, and school community type. These data provided an overview of how board members perceived where and to what extent reform programs were impacting on districts. Additionally, members were asked about the quality of reforms in their districts to determine if reforms were having a positive impact, negative impact, or no impact on the quality of education. Lastly, board members were asked to share their perceptions of power and authority to govern their school districts. Did they perceive a shift in power? If changes in power and authority were taking place, who or what was gaining or losing power? Were these shifts related to reform initiatives from the national, state, and local level?

Descriptive research methods were employed in this study. A stratified, random sample of school board members was identified from the list of subscribers to

The American School Board Journal. Of the 23,958 board members in the population, 6,000 or 23% were surveyed using a mailed questionnaire. The response rate was 22.4%. The study was sponsored by The American School Board Journal, published by the National School Boards Association, the national professional organization for school board members in the United States.

The study revealed that reform programs are widespread across regions, district size, and urban, suburban, and rural areas. The Northeastern region appeared less involved in reform than other regions. Additionally, school board members expressed positive attitudes about reform and appeared to associate implementation with improved quality of education. School board members associated reform impetus with local initiative and felt more powerful when involved in the reform process. Despite the positive attitudes about reform and restructuring, many board members did not believe much reform was occurring in their districts and did not believe their power and authority was changing. However, many board members believed that if they had more money and fewer budget concerns more reform would occur.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses his appreciation for the patience and understanding of his Advisor and Committee Chairman, Dr. Kenneth Underwood, who never stopped encouraging, consoling, and guiding the writer.

The writer also extends his appreciation to the other members of his committee: Dr. Ron McKeen, Dr. Wayne Worner, Dr. Jim Fortune, and Dr. Carla Yock.

Further appreciation is expressed to Eileen Grattan, Joe Hairston, Jack Albert, and Mary Jane Scharf. Special thanks goes to Nick who always hung in there with me through the process.

Finally, the writer is grateful to Pat who suffered the slings and arrows of many frustrating moments and who never gave up on me. Without her this could not have happened.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Educational reform and restructuring recommendations have become part of the national political and social agendas (Toch). The mine field created by various factions proposing or imposing reform on schools has yet to be traversed, and the impact of these reform agendas is unclear. More unclear is whether or not local school boards have been part of the reform and restructuring movement (Twentieth Century Fund, Kirst). Have reforms been implemented in school districts and have school board members been the impetus for these reforms or have they been "out of the loop" (Olson, 1992, p. 27)?

School boards are the governing body for over 15,000 public school districts in the United States (Guthrie, 1986). Citizens on these boards oversee the public school system and govern the destiny of millions of school children. As part of their oversight responsibilities, board members are expected to perform duties common to almost every board member (Barham, 1977). One common duty, identified by Barham and Holmes, "determining educational policy and program of the system" (Barham, 1977, p. 12), is the focus point of this research.

Even before the creation of school boards, education reformers had called for new and "better" ways to educate children (Goodlad, 1989). Recent calls for reforming the public education system have gained new momentum (Olson, 1992). Participating in recent reform efforts have been a president, state governors,

legislators, local superintendents, school boards, citizen groups, business men and women, teachers, and students--all with the potential for initiating educational reform designed to alter the nation's schools (Toch, 1991; Neal, 1991).

On the national level, impetus for educational reform came from the Education Summit in 1989, when former President George Bush met with the governors of 50 states to declare, "The time has come, for the first time in United States' history, to establish clear, national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive" (National Education Goals Report 1991, 1991, p. 2). Roy Romer, Governor of Colorado and National Education Goals Panel Chairman, noted that the President and the nation's governors agreed that establishing national education goals would capture the attention of Americans to restructure the schools and radically increase expectations for student performance (Romer, 1991). On April 18, 1991, President Bush announced America 2000, an education strategy to move every community in America toward the National Education Goals. "The strategy anticipates major change in our 110,000 public and private schools, change in every American community, change in every American home, change in our attitude about learning" (America 2000, 1990, p. 1).

Additionally, in recent years, state departments and legislators designed and developed reform agendas (Toch, 1991). Fueled by widespread discontent, a failing economy, and a poor "report card," demands to change the present educational system continued to intensify (Toch, 1991). As a result, state politicians and

department of education officials began looking for answers hoping to appease predicted voter reaction (Toch, 1991).

At the local level, reform initiatives like site-based management have enabled teachers, citizens, and administrators to introduce programs designed to improve the quality of education. Local advisory committees and teacher groups have focused on empowerment and local decision making based on collaboration and consensus building. Such efforts have caused reaction from wary board members. For example, in April, 1992, a school-based managed district with 60 schools and 45,000 students proposed over 150 deviations to existing school board policy and regulations. One high school in the district restructured itself to include an element of private school within the public school. A school board member announced to the superintendent in open session, "There is not one policy in place dealing with school-based management and yet we have just approved dozens of waivers and deviations to existing policies. Who is in control here?" (Jones, 1992).

Reform initiatives from national, state, and local levels may have siphoned away traditional school board power and authority (Olson, 1992). Olson concluded that school boards have been caught in the "cross-fire of rapidly changing ideas about who should control public schools and school reform" (Olson, 1992, p. 3). Frustration rose as school boards struggled to maintain authority and power (Olson, 1992).

Clearly, if school board members are to perform their duty as educational program and policy makers, then they should perceive that they are in the

informational loop and, to that end, understand which reform programs are impacting on their district and comprehend what is happening to their power and authority.

Responding to critics like Olson, the Task Force on School Governance, in April, 1992, reported to the National School Boards Association, that if schools are to keep pace with changing technologies, remain competitive with global economies, and prepare students for the world of tomorrow, then school board members must be able to understand their role in school change (Twentieth Century Fund, 1992). This report exhorts school board members, as chief policy makers, to exercise their authority and power to lead their school districts through the process of change.

In response to these concerns, this study was undertaken. An initial step was to identify reform and restructuring initiatives from the national, state, and local levels prevalent in the literature. Professional articles were reviewed, educational reformers were consulted, and reform and restructuring programs were investigated. From this, reforms including site-based management, school choice options, curriculum and educational programs, and restructuring the school day were used to determine to what degree reform programs were impacting on districts and to what extent these programs caused shifts in the power and authority of school board members. School board members were also asked to share their perceptions about how these reform programs impacted on the quality of education.

### Purpose of the Study

This study determined the extent to which school board members perceived reform and restructuring programs were being implemented in their districts and determined whether these programs were impacting positively or negatively on the quality of education. Additionally, the study asked board members to identify reform programs which may have had an impact on their power and authority to oversee and govern their district. This study provided information to compare with other studies regarding the impact of reform on education.

Additionally, this study provides school board members with a "report card" of reform programs. The study identifies board members' perceptions regarding where and to what extent reform and restructuring programs are being implemented across the country and quantifies board members' perceptions about the positive or negative impact these programs are having on the quality of education. Other studies like The National Education Goals Report, supplemented by the "report card" generated by this study, broadened the information base regarding reform and its impact on education.

This research should provide educators and board members with a better perspective of the direction needed to manage education reform and the implications of school reform initiatives on school board members' roles in governance issues.

### Need for the Study

The traditional way school boards performed their roles came under increased scrutiny as reform initiatives were generated from the local, state, and national levels (Twentieth Century Fund Report, 1992). Critics claimed that school boards protected the status quo and stood in the way of needed reform (Kirst, 1992, p. 4). Toch, Kirst, and Olson have suggested that to be effective policy-makers during a period of change, school board members had to begin looking for new ways to do business. Recent reform agendas, including initiatives to establish a national system of schools, to incorporate choice through vouchers and tax credits, to privatize public schools, and to restructure through school based autonomy were calling for new ways to educate the youth of America (Toch, 1991) and were, in essence, potentially redefining the role of school boards.

In 1989, the United States Center for Educational Information studied how board presidents perceived their authority to administer their district (NCEI). At that time, fifty-eight percent of the school board presidents responding indicated that their authority had decreased. Since 1990, when America 2000 was introduced, numerous state legislative initiatives have been implemented (Toch, 1991), site-based management has continued to spread, schools-of-choice initiatives have been proposed, and a myriad of curriculum and instructional reforms have been introduced (Pipho, 1992; Neal, 1991; Daggett, 1991). Has school board authority decreased as a result? Further research on how reform issues were impacting on the authority and power of school boards was needed to enable board members to develop a better

understanding of their roles and to empower them to make appropriate decisions regarding school governance.

### Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed were:

1. To what extent do school board members perceive that reform initiatives are occurring in local districts?
2. What are school board members' perceptions regarding the impact of reforms on the quality of educational programs?
3. Do board members perceive changes in their power and authority to oversee the school district as a result of reform and restructuring initiatives?
4. Do these perceptions vary as a consequence of the region, size of district, or school community type?

### Definitions

As used in this study the following terms have certain restrictions placed on their usage.

School board members: The term school board member refers to an individual, either elected or appointed, who is a member of a local board of education.

**Demographic characteristics:** This term refers to the variables of region of the country, student enrollment, or type of community that describe a local school district.

**Personal characteristics:** This term refers to the social descriptive variables of age, gender, race, occupation, income, and education identified by the individual school board member.

**Reform:** For the purpose of this study, reform is defined to mean suggested innovation, or redesign to a district's educational program(s) and practice(s) as a result of and/or reaction to local, state, and national mandates primarily since the Charlottesville Summit in September, 1989. Specific examples include changes in policies and regulations of districts related to America 2000, school choice, and school-based management, curriculum and educational program, and restructuring the school day/year.

**School Board:** This term refers to a group or committee of people elected or appointed to manage and govern a local public school district.

**Restructuring:** This term refers to a complete change in the culture, organizational assumptions, leadership, curriculum, instructional approach, and accountability of the school primarily since the Charlottesville Summit (Reavis, 1975, p. 2).

**Power:** This term refers to the ability of a person (school board member) to exercise control and/or influence over specified outcomes. It is the measure of impact

a person has on a particular event to influence change. It refers to the measure of one's ability to influence outcomes regarding reform and restructuring.

Authority: For the purpose of this study, authority is defined as the right of a public agency or agent, with specified administrative control, to administer an organization or policy related to public education. It is the right to administer and/or set policy within the purview of constitutional limitations.

School-based management: School based management is a carefully designed and organized management system based on administrative decentralization.

#### Limitations of the Study

1. The sample for this study was drawn from the population of subscribers to The American School Board Journal, not from the entire population of school board members in the country.
2. Because The American School Board Journal requires anonymity, a follow-up survey to improve the response rate could not be undertaken.
3. The responses to the questionnaire were assumed to reflect the true attitudes of the respondents based upon their personal perceptions, observations, or experiences.
4. The researcher does not know how many school boards were represented by the respondents.

5. Indications of reform and restructuring initiatives were limited to programs related to site-based management, schools of choice, charter schools, curriculum and instructional programs, and restructuring school time options.

### Organization of the Study

This study of how reform impacts on the power and authority of school boards is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of need, purpose of the study, research questions, definitions, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature relevant to factors involved in reform and its impact on school board authority and power.

Chapter 3 includes a description of research methodology, selection of the sample, instrumentation, collection of data, and method of analysis.

Chapter 4 describes the data and the findings of the survey and provides an analysis of data concerning the research questions.

Chapter 5 contains the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a review of the literature relevant to educational reform and the impact reform has had on the authority and power of school boards. This chapter was divided into sections that correspond to the general areas in the literature which appeared to influence the incidence of and reasons for reform impacting on school board authority and power. These sections included: school board authority and power, description of reform movements and the related components, and the impact of reform on board authority and power.

#### School Board Authority

The literature concerning the authority of school boards has an historical perspective. Therefore, this section is arranged to illustrate how board authority evolved to its present status.

To begin, local school boards received their authority from state constitutions which were empowered by the U.S. Constitution in a round about way. Specifically, James Guthrie in Educational Administration and Policy: Effective Leadership for American Education notes, "The Constitution is silent with regard to national authority for the operation of educational systems. This fact, when combined with the Constitution's Tenth Amendment, preserving for states those powers not specifically assigned to the federal government or expressly prohibited to the states, renders

education a state function. Constitutions of the fifty states contain clauses which assume state government responsibility for the provision of school services" (Guthrie, 1986, p. 20).

The various state constitutions, however, reflected Jeffersonian Democracy--the basis for the present education system in the United States. Perhaps the system as we know it evolved more from implication than direct design. The states retained their authority and power through the Tenth Amendment.

The U.S. Constitution's Tenth Amendment specifies that "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, not prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people." This provision strongly reflects the social contract theories of government which were vitally important to those framing the Constitution. (5) Individual self-determination was held to be an inalienable right of each human being and was to be ceded to representative governing bodies only in restricted dimensions. Hence, the Tenth Amendment explicitly asserts that the national government was to be imbued only with those powers expressly granted to it. All other authority was to be held by individual states, unless specifically denied by the Constitution. The Tenth Amendment's ending "...or the people." makes it clear that the citizenry is the source from which governing authority ultimately stems (Guthrie, 1986, pp. 66-67).

Constitutional scholars concluded that the absence from the constitution of express national government responsibility for education and schooling, when coupled with the language of the Tenth Amendment, cedes plenary, meaning ultimate, legal authority for education to state government (Hamilton & Reutter, 1985, p. 67).

As the country developed, differences in the way in which the state educational systems distributed authority and power to local districts also developed. Many of these differences were results of the customs and traditions of the people settling in the different states. Settlers from different parts of the world who traveled to the new

world brought with them their brand of education. In the colonies the dominant culture was that of the English. Soon the educational system resembled the English class system. This system viewed the household as the focus of family education (Reeves, 1954).

In 1642, the General Court of the Massachusetts colonial legislature enacted the first American educational ordinances. These statutes reaffirmed the family's primary responsibility for instilling the ability to read and for providing vocational training for children. The statutes also emphasized public responsibility in that any household which failed to provide for a child's education would have to give up the child to a type of apprenticeship program (Reeves, 1954).

Local school boards as they are known today had their origins in Massachusetts. As towns grew, managing the education of the community became more demanding. To meet this need selectmen were given the responsibility to run the local schools. "In 1692, the Massachusetts General Court granted to selectmen the power to supervise schools and employ teachers. The selectmen, in turn, began to delegate educational responsibilities to special school committees comprised initially of their own members and later expanded to include others who were not selectmen" (Guthrie, 1986, p. 22). The Massachusetts General Court established by law many of the actual practices that had developed in the state. With respect to control and supervision of the schools, the law stated:

And it shall be the duty of the minister or ministers of the Gospel and the selectmen (or other such persons as shall be specially chosen by each town or district for that purpose) of the several towns or districts to use their influence

and best endeavors, that the youth of their respective towns and districts, do regularly attend the schools appointed ... and once in every six months at least ... to visit and inspect the several schools in their respective towns and districts ... (Cremin, 1951, pp. 136-37).

In The American Common School, Cremin noted, "By the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, Massachusetts had virtually accepted the principle of community control for public supported common schools, and throughout the colonial and early national period, laws in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut followed the example set by Massachusetts" (Cremin, 1951, pp. 136-37).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the framework for governance of America's present-day system of schools had been formulated. Alexander in Public School Law noted:

States, through their own constitutional and statutory provisions, regulate and control public education ... The courts have consistently held that this power over education is an essential attribute of the state's sovereignty just as is the power to tax, establish and maintain a system of courts, and exercise the police power of the state.

In holding that education is a state function, the courts maintain that the state's authority over education is not a distributive one to be exercised by local government but is a central power residing in the legislature of the state. The legislature has unrestricted right to prescribe the methods of education, and the courts will not intervene unless the legislation is contrary to constitutional provisions (Alexander, 1969, p. 19).

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century, education was well established as a separate public function, rooted in state law, and administered primarily by local officials (Reeves, 1954).

From this period on, school districts served as the primary unit of local school management. Each district had a governing board, comprised of lay persons. These

lay persons were to represent the general public in making educational policy. The governing bodies received their authority expressly from state constitutions while evolving power of local boards developed through judicial interpretation of implied powers. Reutter noted, "This attitude of the courts has encouraged freedom and experimentation out of proportion to that suggested by the legal structure itself" (Reutter, 1985, p. 138). Further, he noted:

Typically, creative local school districts lead off with the introduction of a new practice. In legal parlance, this is the exercise of a latent implied power. If the practice is not challenged judicially, it may spread until it becomes generally accepted even though its legal foundation may be insecure. If, of course, it is challenged and sustained, its status is as if the legislature had expressly given permission for the activity to be provided locally. In an overwhelming number of the instances of legal challenge to a new educational practice, the local school district has been upheld (Reutter, 1985, p. 139).

By the mid-twentieth century there were approximately 80,000 local school districts administered by local school boards. It was at the local level that the overwhelming majority of educational professionals were employed. This was where most of the curriculum planning and instructional program development occurred. It was at this level that America's educational systems were the most visible, and it was here that the public framed its views regarding the success or failure of schools (Guthrie, 1986).

However, despite the impression that schools were being run by local districts, legal authority for local boards continued to come from state constitutions. These constitutions, for the most part, classified school districts as quasi corporations. Newton Edwards in The Courts and the Public Schools noted:

Strictly speaking, a school district is not a municipal corporation; it is a quasi-corporation. A municipal corporation proper is a city or town incorporated primarily for purposes of local government. While such a corporation is in part an agency of the state established to assist in the affairs of civil government, it is created, in the main, to enable the locality to regulate and administer its own local concerns (Edwards, 1955, p. 54).

Hamilton and Reutter (1985) noted that school boards are agencies of limited power and can exercise only those prerogatives specifically delegated to them by the state legislatures. "Nevertheless, by law and by custom, school boards have very significant decisional responsibilities concerning local schools" (Reutter, 1985, p. 139). Further, Reutter and Hamilton pointed out that local school districts have often gained power through implied power. The authors noted:

The evolution of the public school system has been characterized by broad judicial interpretation of implied powers of local school authorities in most states. This attitude of the courts has encouraged freedom and experimentation out of proportion to that suggested by the legal structure itself. Typically, creative local school districts lead off with the introduction of a new proactive. In legal parlance, this is the exercise of a latent implied power... In an overwhelming number of the instances of legal challenge to a new educational program, the local school district has been upheld (Reutter, 1985, p. 139).

Bolmeir (1968) commented on the variety of board powers and functions as to how each may differ from state to state. "State laws vary with respect to the extent of direct control delegated to local school boards. In some states the legislature preempts, to some degree, the authority which may be exercised by local boards over schools by writing detailed specifications of school control into the statutes" (Bolmeir, 1968, p. 63). Depending upon statute specificity, local board power was relatively great. However, Bolmeir warned, "The subsequent high degree of control delegated to local boards should not be construed as a surrender of state authority over school

affairs. On the contrary, the state's supreme authority is evidenced by the fact that the state may prescribe the scope of control exercised by its designated subdivision" (Bolmeir, 1968, p. 63).

Reeves noted further on the legal status of school boards, "Legally, school boards are corporate bodies and can act only as such" (Reeves, 1954, p. 72). School boards have authority to transact business only within the limits authorized by law and to perform actions necessary to make the laws effective. They have no other legal function than to act for the state in providing the kind of education required or permitted by the state (Reeves, 1954).

All states provided constitutionally for public education. For example, Article VIII Section 1 of the Constitution of Maryland stated:

The General Assembly, at its first Session after the adoption of this Constitution, shall by Law establish throughout the State a thorough and efficient System of Free Public Schools; and provide by taxation, or otherwise, for their maintenance (Maryland State Department of Education, 1978, p. 11).

Maryland statutes further defined local board authority:

- To the best of its ability carry out the applicable provisions of this article and the bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies of the State Board;
- Maintain throughout its county a reasonably uniform system of public schools that is designed to provide quality education and equal educational opportunity for all children;
- Subject to this article and to the applicable bylaws, rules, and regulations of the State Board, determine, with the advice of the county superintendent, the educational policies of the county school system; and
- Adopt, codify, and make available to the public bylaws, rules, and regulations not inconsistent with State law, for the conduct and management of the county public schools. (Maryland State Department of Education, 1978, p. 78).

Each state had similar provisions outlining local authority of school boards.

For example, in California, functions and responsibilities of school boards were defined as follows:

Establishes general policy and rules and regulations regarding:

Employment of superintendent

Employee personnel functions

Instructional program

Pupil personnel functions

School plant functions

Public relations functions (California School Boards Association, Inc., 1955, pp. 95-98).

Frank E. Barham and George W. Holmes, III, in Virginia School Board

Members, outlined a summary of responsibilities which relate to school board authority. The summary listed three general headings:

1. To adopt policies for the school system,
2. To provide adequate means for executing them, and
3. To see that they are executed (Barham & Holmes, 1977, p. 12).

They listed some of the important duties and responsibilities as follows:

1. Appointing a division superintendent of schools;
2. Determining educational policy and program of the system;
3. Adopting rules and regulations governing board procedures and the entire administration of the system;
4. Controlling school finances, which includes examining and approving the budget, capital outlays, awarding contracts, fixing salary schedules and wages, overseeing all business transactions and regular auditing of all accounts;
5. On recommendation of the division superintendent, employing teachers and other personnel and assigning their duties;
6. Maintaining and improving the school plant;
7. Presenting the needs of the schools to appropriating bodies;
8. Representing the schools and the education program, as opportunity occurs, before the public and generally;
9. Hearing and acting upon communications, written and oral, from citizens and organizations;

10. Acting as a "court of appeals" for teachers, other employees, and citizens who may have grievances that already have been heard by appropriate administrative officials;
11. Appraising the work of the superintendent and his or her subordinates to determine whether or not the results obtained meet with the approval of the board; and
12. Assisting the superintendent by advice and counsel, supporting him or her loyally and vigorously so long as his or her work conforms with what is expected of him or her at the proper time and in the proper manner if he or she fails (Barham & Holmes, 1977, pp. 12-13).

Generally, the evolution of local school board authority developed to where local boards exercised specific authority regarding school finances, school property, teachers, pupils, and curriculum. However, even in these areas of responsibility, restraints existed:

The statutes and regulations under which the school board must operate constitute a very important constraint upon its free action. School districts exist as independent arms of the state specifically for the purpose of administering local schools. However, unlike municipal corporations, they do not have home rule charters which give them exclusive jurisdiction over their areas of legal concern. Frequently, states impose an intermediate education unit or county school office above the local district, and certain limitations upon the local school board's independent action result (Goldhammer, 1964, p. 60).

### Summary

Through the judicial process of implied authority many local districts in many states established a relatively strong power base to control many functions of local schools. In the past, administrative regulations and court decisions permitted local boards a semblance of leeway to exercise their limited authority. However, this

relationship proved tentative in that states may narrow that administrative and judicial gap at their own discretion.

### School Board Power

School boards became more than intermediary agencies responsible solely for making sure state mandates were implemented. Local boards developed a degree of latitude in interpreting how they applied their authority and power. The major reason why local boards evolved their own power base was due to the unique arrangement inherent in the political process.

This unique arrangement involved a complex system of lay control (Lutz, 1980). Local authority and power of lay boards evolved primarily as a by-product of implied power from national and state levels. Boards became synonymous with local control and with local autonomy and power. School boards became a "fundamental grass-roots unit of democracy in the United States" (Lutz, 1980, p. 452). In this system of free public education, lay participation was deemed essential at its origin, and remained a critical part of the "ideal" of American public education (Bell, 1986, p. 18).

Campbell pointed out that, practically, board members were either elected or appointed locally and were required to be responsive to their constituencies in order to politically survive (Campbell, 1969). This relationship tended to focus board power at the local level. The board member received his or her authority--implicit or explicit--from state charter. However, board members could not ignore the fact that a

board member's power was related to the local election or appointment process. Boards, then, became more responsive to local district politics and their populace. The latitude to act in this way was directly proportional to the degree of implied authority permitted by the state. In effect, board members performed a dual role (Campbell, p. 160). According to Iannaccone and Lutz, this latitude created a "belief that the local school district 'belonged' to its citizens, ignoring, in effect, the fact that the local school district was legally an agency of the state" (Campbell, p. 15). Exercising the latitude of implied authority, local school boards often attributed their power and authority to local rather than to state or to national level influences.

Campbell and Layton in Policy Making for American Education studied the dynamics of school boards with specific reference to what influences board members to make the decisions they make. The participants in board policy making at the local level were primarily one or more of four interacting groups. These were: 1) boards of education, 2) education professionals, 3) parents/voters, and 4) local civic officials (Campbell & Layton, 1969, p. 18). A board member with close ties to parents/voter constituents derived a power base from this group sometimes in reaction to other groups. Perhaps, another board member aligned himself with the superintendent. If the superintendent operated from a strong power base, then the board member also shared in the power.

A number of studies like Campbell and Layton's have studied the relationship between board members and various internal and external influences. The studies of Iannaccone and Lutz (1970) found that:

the government of school districts rests on more than force and the sanctions of law. Beyond these there is the power of emotional ties and beliefs. Here, indeed, error believed becomes truth in effect. People behave on the basis of their beliefs and emotions (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970, p. 13).

Lutz in a later study found "school board behavior shaped by a set of significant symbols called a culture of school boards that includes norms and values shared by the majority of the 15,000 local school boards" (Lutz, 1970, p. 464).

Studies like Lutz indicated that often the socialization process is so great that board members give up their individual power base to become part of the group. Cistone notes:

The socialization model held that the process of socialization onto the board overpowered any influence social characteristics had on the behavior of board members. Socialization was described as the process by which individuals selectively acquire the values and attitudes, interests and dispositions, skills and knowledge current in the group of which they are members (Cistone, 1977, p. 19).

The purpose of this research was to determine who or what may be gaining or losing power as it relates to school board power and authority. Cistone, Lutz, and Campbell identified groups which may interact with the power and authority of school boards (Cistone, 1977; Lutz, 1970; Campbell, 1969). Toch, more recently, identified potential recipients of power, as a result of the governor and state involvement in reform efforts (Toch, 1991a). Futrell, Bracey, and Goodlad spoke of the shifting power and authority and identified groups which may be becoming more or less powerful. Generally, the literature came to consensus on the following as groups which may be related to shifts of power and authority: local advisory councils, teachers, parent groups, superintendent, state department of education, governors

from various states, U.S. Department of Education, the President, local bargaining units, state teacher associations, state school boards associations, community interest groups, city councils, mayors (local politicians), and county councils. The research asked if school board members perceived their power or authority was shifting to any or all of these groups.

Additionally, the literature indicated that there were specific inhibitors or obstacles to change which board members perceived to be blocking reform in their district. The list included the following individuals or groups: the superintendent (Alvey, 1985), local citizens (Neal, 1991), parent councils (Marburger, 1985), teachers (Neal, 1991), board members (school) (Cistone, 1977), budget concerns (Ferrebee, 1992), and teacher unions (Toch, 1991a).

### Summary

Whether acting as an individual or as a socialized member of a group, board members, by the very nature of their implied authority and power, have been the key figures in controlling change. However, studies indicated that board members have perceived changes in their authority to govern. Often these changes were perceived to be at the expense of board members while benefiting some other group or agency. In the late 1980s, studies indicated that board members sensed that state departments were gaining power. This shift in power was explicit and was perceived by school board members to inhibit local boards' abilities to govern effectively.

## Educational Reform

To what extent are local, state, and national reforms being implemented in school districts? What are the trends over the past four years related to educational reform? Are school board members' perceptions of changes in their power and authority a consequence of reform and restructuring initiatives?

Ever since the first school house was built in the early years of the colonies, efforts to reform the system were not far behind. Throughout the history of the United States, educational reform was an important part of the evolution of education (Guthrie).

It was not within the purview of this paper to outline the historical perspective of reform in the United States. Rather, for the purpose of this study, emphasis was placed on the past decade, specifically from the early 1980s until 1992 when the frequency of reform intensified. It was this era which most directly impacted on board authority and power as wave after wave of reform developed.

The "Excellence in Education" movement of the 1980s emerged from a relatively tumultuous era of the 1960s and 1970s. John Goodlad relates:

At the White House Conference on Education of 1965, Vice President Hubert Humphrey said that our country would go down in history for having used its educational system to overcome problems of illiteracy, unemployment, crime and violence, urban decay, and even war among nations. However, just a few years later some citizens were asking if our schools were capable of teaching our young to read, write, and spell. The press picked up this theme vigorously, reflecting an impression that parents as well as other adults generally favored returning to a time of more limited expectations for schools. "Back to basics" became a popular slogan. Many school board members and school administrators responded as though this were a mandate from the people (Goodlad, 1989, p. 33).

Public education came under fire for not delivering quality. The country was shaken by the civil unrest and relatively "poor" results in the Vietnam War. Schools were expected to solve the discontent among the races and to provide equal opportunity for all Americans.

In 1966, sociologist James S. Coleman published Equality of Educational Opportunity. His research indicated that there was little correlation between quality of a school and student achievement but an overwhelming link between student achievement and the socioeconomic background of students (Coleman, 1966). Closely following the Coleman Report was Christopher Jencks' Inequality. Jencks argued that "the character of a school's output depends largely on a single input, namely the characteristics of the entering children. Everything else--the school budget, its policies, the characteristics of the teachers--is either secondary or completely irrelevant" (Jencks, 1966, p. 256). These two studies became the keystones of criticism of public schools in the late 1960s and 1970s. Educators would spend much time over the next ten years expending a great deal of energy refuting these claims, often to little or no avail.

The literature noted that the tumult of the 1970s took a heavy toll on public opinion regarding the performance of public schools. As early as 1975, the nation was shaken by newspaper reports of a previously unpublicized twelve-year decline in average scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the nation's largest college-admission exam. By 1981, the National Assessment of Educational Progress was reporting that the ability of the nation's students to write and think had declined dramatically during

the previous decade. Established by Congress in 1968, the assessment measured large samples of the nation's students in a range of subjects, and as a federally sponsored organization, its reports attracted wide attention (Toch, 1991a, p. 8).

Other reports indicated that the United States was losing ground to other countries. The public educational system seemed to be offering watered down curriculum to an undisciplined adolescent population. In 1981, the National Science Foundation reported that there had been a substantial decrease in standards. The report pointed out that in over one third of the country's districts, it was possible for a student to graduate from high school with only one year of mathematics and one year of science. Further, the number of students taking foreign language had decreased from 23% to 15%. More importantly, the report pointed out that while just 12% of high-school students took a less-rigorous "general" course of study in the mid-1960s, 42% of all students were doing so by the end of the 1970s (Toch, 1991a, p. 8).

The literature summarizes the growing frustration with the school system:

The educational upheavals of the 1970's lost education much of its popular and political support, as the property-tax revolt and the exodus of students to private schools made clear. The declining performance of the schools, in particular, aroused the public's resentment, for the nation's public schooling tab had skyrocketed to \$90 billion annually by decade's end, quadrupling the rate of inflation over the previous twenty years. Polls reflected the depth of the public's disenchantment. A 1981 Newsweek survey revealed that 47 percent of the public believed the schools were doing a "poor" or "fair" job, up from 34 percent in a similar poll conducted for the magazine seven years earlier. A 1983 Harris poll reported that only 29 percent of the public had "a great deal of confidence" in the nation's educators, less than half the number that expressed strong confidence in educators in a similar 1966 survey (Toch, 1991a, p. 9).

Criticism continued to grow until it was increasingly the view that public education was no longer meeting the needs of the citizens. Time reported in a 1980 edition, "Like some vast jury gradually and reluctantly arriving at a verdict, politicians, educators, and especially millions of parents have come to believe that the U.S. public schools are in perilous trouble" (Toch, 1991a, p. 10).

Despite the fact that reform movements were underway, nothing did more to focus the feeling on education reform than the publishing of A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, the report of Secretary Bell's National Commission on Excellence in Education. The report warned, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." (Nation at Risk, 1983, p. 5). This report galvanized the emerging reform movement. Numerous studies emerged. The Education Commission of the States in Action for Excellence, the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, the Twentieth Century Fund's Making the Grade, the College Board's Academic Preparation for College, the National Science Board's Educating Americans for the 21st Century, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America, Sizer's Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School, and Goodland's A Place Called School were some of the more important studies concluding that reform was needed to drastically improve schooling in America. Paul DeHart Hurd, professor emeritus of science education at Stanford University, writes, "Since 1980, there have been over 350 national reports by panels,

commissions, and committees lamenting the condition of education in America and calling for changes" (Toch, 1991a, p. 36).

The effect of this collective cry for change was to create a myriad of quick fix solutions, primarily in the form of mandates from the states.

Mary Hatwood Futrell, former president of the National Education Association, in Phi Delta Kappan identifies four distinct waves of reforms. She observed that the first wave originated as a result of political response. Futrell noted, "With education so clearly 'in the service' of national interests, politicians--to no one's surprise--quickly volunteered for action...Dictates from on high proliferated. Governors and state legislators swept into action. Their battle cry was, 'More!': more tests for students and teachers, more credits for graduation, more hours in the school day, more days in the school year, more regimentation, more routinization, more regulation" (Futrell, 1989, p. 11).

Similarly, Toch notes, "Many governors, moreover, were drawn to school reform by their political instincts. A backwater issue just a few years earlier, the plethora of reform reports, the wide publicity they received, and the linking of education to economic renewal transformed education into a hot political topic. Polls revealed that school reform was a 'winning' issue, one that politicians would do well to be associated with" (Toch, 1991a, p. 18).

As a result, governors in many states established commissions. In addition, many governors sponsored their own solutions by devising reform programs. Programs like the Tennessee's "Better Schools Program", New Jersey's "Blueprint for

Reform", and Pennsylvania's "Turning the Tide: An Agenda for Excellence" were examples of growing involvement in reform at the state level. Many states were enacting statutes to improve the educational system. Futrell noted, "Between 1983 and 1985 state legislatures enacted more than 700 statutes stipulating what should be taught, when it should be taught, how it should be taught, and by whom it should be taught" (Futrell, 1989, p. 11). The result of all of this legislation and the mass of bureaucratic mandates that followed was to shift control to the states and to regulate local districts.

Second wave reforms according to Futrell were in response to the first wave. "This second wave sprang from the realization that, if education were to act as an instrument for social and economic revitalization, the instrument ought to be wielded by educators, not legislators" (Futrell, 1989, p. 11). From 1985 through 1986, a sudden growth in reform emanating from the profession began to permeate the literature. Each of six major reports condemned the top-down approach characteristic of the first wave and promoted solid, research-based consensus. Reports included the Holmes Group, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, the National Governors' Association, the Education Commission of the States, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The characteristics of this wave included elements of local control, equity issues, and collaboration. It was during this wave that school-based management efforts began to take root and spread. The local school was seen as the focus of reform initiatives that would be tailored to local needs

(Futrell, 1989). With some reluctance and a great deal of suspicion school boards began to consider school-based management options for their districts.

The third wave, like the first, was driven by a top-down mentality. This time, however, economic imperatives took the place of legislative mandates. Systems analysts, economists, and business leaders began to initiate reform. Drucker (1978), Peters (1982), Demming (1991), and others espoused solutions. The solutions were not easily applied to education. Theory and practice were difficult to bring together in the classroom in the traditional school setting.

The fourth wave, Futrell described as a "democratic, grassroots reform"

(Futrell, 1989, p. 13). She noted:

It demands a return to schools that are organized to facilitate educational renewal and improvement from the bottom up. Because the fourth wave defines education as both an instrumental value and an intrinsic value, the goals of education become less parochial, more expansive, and less determined by economic forces. Fourth-wave reform is predicated on the assumption that schools must offer both excellence and equity (Futrell, 1989, p. 14).

Futrell's four wave description of the 1980s was one of several studies attempting to describe the dynamics of change proposed in the wake of The Nation at Risk report. She described the ebb and flow of reform as a battle among forces to control education and, specifically, educational reform. Forces like state governors and legislators, economists, and professional educators, according to Futrell, had to give way to local communities and to the schools their children attend.

Goodlad, rather than seeing separate waves of reforms, proposed that the period of the 1980s was one wave of reform influenced by several forces. These

forces included state, presidential, and economic initiatives along with efforts by educators to respond to growing criticism.

The literature recorded that in the 1980s, most of the reform was driven by state initiatives. Arkansas (1983), Florida (1983), Tennessee (1984), Maine (1984), Utah (1984), Kentucky (1985), Alabama (1985), and West Virginia (1988) were states called into special sessions to act on educational reform. California's Hart-Hughes Education Reform Act enacted over 80 reforms throughout the California system. Other states followed California's lead: Tennessee's Comprehensive Reform Act of 1984; South Carolina's Education Improvement Act of 1984; a second Florida law, the Omnibus Education Act of 1984; Indiana's Education Board Reorganization Act of 1984; Idaho's School Improvement Act of 1984; Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act of 1984; the Missouri Excellence in Education Act of 1985; Massachusetts's School Improvement Act of 1985; Illinois's Better Schools Accountability Act of 1985; and Connecticut's Education Enhancement Act of 1986 (Toch, 1991a). By the end of 1989, the states had enacted over 3000 separate school-reform measures (Toch, 1991a).

The literature confirmed that the 1980s represented a reform agenda overwhelmingly regulatory in nature. It imposed reform on localities from above. The impact on board authority was direct. State boards and legislatures became very aggressive in their efforts to solve the problems facing schools. Lawmakers sought solutions which were relatively easy to understand and quick to enact. Reforms dealing with new testing programs, teacher salaries, teacher/student ratios, and the

like spread quickly from state to state. These reforms circumvented local board authority and decreased local board members' power to deal effectively with change. The numerous mandates spawned by the reform movement have reduced the authority of the localities in many areas of school life, from length of classes to content of courses. "Most dramatically, a dozen states have granted themselves authority to remove the administrators and school boards of underachieving school systems. Public educators lost the nation's confidence, and they paid the price" (Toch, 1991a, p. 39).

Near the end of the decade came another decisive event: the Charlottesville Summit. In September, 1989, in the rotunda on the campus of the University of Virginia, President George Bush met with the governors of 50 states to declare, "the time has come, for the first time in U.S. history, to establish clear, national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive" (National Education Goals, 1991, p. 2).

The six goals to be measured annually until the year 2000, were the center of the bi-partisan effort to improve our schools. The goals were:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn;
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent;
3. American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy;
4. U.S. students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement;

5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a safe, disciplined environment conducive to learning (Goals Report 1991, 1991, p. ix).

The panel responsible for measuring the nation's progress over 10 years was composed of six governors, four members of the administration, and four members of Congress. Although statements regarding the sanctity of the states' and localities' responsibility to provide the major impetus for change are made, the new role of the federal government was to have a major impact on the authority and power of state and local governance. Principally, the National Education Goals were to spur a new wave of state programs. Similar to Futrell's First Wave, this newest wave helped generate a myriad of state mandates. Many local districts perceived this as more top-down imposition than assistance. Shortly after the announcement of the national goals strategy, on April 18, 1991, President Bush announced America 2000: An Education Strategy. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander proclaimed this plan as a "bold, comprehensive, and long-range plan to move every community in America toward the National Education Goals adopted by the President and the Governors" (America 2000, 1991, p. 1).

The plan offered four major strategies or "Tracks" to get the nation moving. Track I and Track II provide examples of how these national initiatives impacted on local school districts.

To begin, the first, Track I, was the Accountability Package. Through this 15-point accountability package, parents, teachers, schools and communities were encouraged to measure results, compare results and insist on change when the results were not good enough. Track II referred to the development of a new generation of schools. Bush noted: "We will unleash America's creative genius to invent and establish a New Generation of American Schools, one by one, community by community. These will be the best schools in the world--schools that enable their students to reach the National Education Goals, achieve a quantum leap in learning, and help make America all that it should be" (America 2000, p. 19). Bush's plan called for the establishment of 535 New Generation Schools by 1996. These schools were to be developed by Design Teams that would set aside "traditional assumptions about schooling and all the constraints under which conventional schools work" (America 2000, 1991, p.20). The schools would be located in America 2000 Communities. These were to be communities that adopt the six National Education Goals; develop a community-wide strategy to achieve them; design a report card to measure results; and plan for and support a New American School (America 2000, 1991, p. 21).

As a result of these two initiatives, hundreds of state and local efforts to reform the United States education system began to emerge. Focus quickly shifted from reform to restructuring (Pipho, 1992).

Following the Summit and America 2000, reform movements were being replaced by calls to restructure rather than to more conservatively reform the existing

system. Impetus for this more radical interpretation of change found its root in a variety of efforts including America 2000. As early efforts to restructure evolved, confusion regarding the concept developed. Michael Kirst comments on restructuring, "Restructuring is a word that means everything and nothing simultaneously. It is in the eye of the beholder" (Olsen, 1992, p. 7). Goodlad said, "We are rapidly moving toward the use of the word 'restructuring' whenever we talk about school reform at all. This is becoming another catchword when the truth of the matter is that hardly any schools are restructured" (Olsen, 1992, p. 7).

However, after the Governors' Summit and America 2000, consensus regarding restructuring began to develop as more and more schools and school districts began to become involved. Reavis and Griffith in Restructuring Schools: Theory and Practice define restructuring in the following way:

It means a complete change in the culture, organizational assumptions, leadership, curriculum, instructional approach, and accountability of the school. Ideas of how things get done, work norms, decision making, authority, motivation, and professional expertise all must be radically revised (Reavis, 1992, p. 2).

These authors note that a nationwide consensus is beginning to emerge on a common definition of restructuring. Reavis and Griffith identify seven elements:

1. Site-based decision making in the critical areas of budget, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and personnel;
2. A shift to a market-driven orientation, usually on the basis of parental choice of school;
3. An increase in and shift in the focus of technology use, from simple drill to an integrated instructional package;
4. A shift in instructional emphasis to conform more closely to new understandings of human cognition;

5. A shift in curriculum from an emphasis on coverage of a wide range of topics to an emphasis on understanding and assisting students in constructing their own meaning;
6. A shift to hierarchies within teaching, reflecting differing levels of responsibilities with various sizes of student groups;
7. A change in accountability toward more performance-oriented/real-life assessments of students (Reavis, 1992, p. 2).

In 1992, the NASSP produced a booklet entitled A Leader's Guide to School Restructuring: A Special Report of the NASSP Commission on Restructuring. The authors cite the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools funded by the U.S. Department of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Center proposes four domains of restructuring:

The Center defines restructuring as "changes in the organizational features of schools, to increase the intellectual and social competence of students, that focus on 1) students' experiences in subject matter learning, 2) the professional life of teachers, 3) leadership, management, and governance of schools, and 4) the coordination of community resources to support education (NASSP, 1992, p. 3).

Thomas Timar in "The Politics of Restructuring" made the following observation, "One current in the waves of education reform that is attracting increased attention among policy makers is school restructuring. Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools and the 'Carnegie Plan,' both of which began as grassroots reform efforts, are now moving onto state legislative agendas." Further he observed, "Such states as Massachusetts, Arkansas, and Washington--and such school districts as Dade County, Florida; Rochester, New York; and Santa Fe, New Mexico--have adopted some form of school restructuring as a major component of their reform efforts" (Timar, 1989, p. 265).

Throughout the literature a number of reform and restructuring initiatives were identified and described as impacting on educational programs. For the purpose of this study reform programs identified by recent state reform initiatives, America 2000, professional reports, local district reform efforts in site-based managed districts, and reform programs identified by the researcher through interviews with educational reformists, were used to determine how school board members perceive reform as impacting on their district and, in turn, on their power and authority to oversee their district. These programs were grouped into four areas: site-based management (Neal, 1991; Strembinsky, 1988; Wolfe, 1992; Etheridge, 1992; Brown, 1992; Bennett, 1992; Olson, 1992b; Henderson, 1992; Arthur, 1992), schools of choice (Goldman, 1992; Chubb, 1991b; Toch, 1991b; Brandt, 1991; Raywid, 1991; Elmore, 1991; Heckman, 1991; Doyle, 1989; Walsh, 1993), restructuring school time (Natale, 1992; White, 1992; Sardo-Brown, 1992; Schneider, 1992; Wehling, 1992; Peltier, 1991; Wesson, 1992; Ohlrich, 1992), and curriculum reform programs. The list of curriculum reform programs reviewed in the literature was extensive. For the purpose of this study emphasis was placed on reform programs promoted by state reform and America 2000 and those which have become more prevalent and recognizable in the past four years. Programs included whole language, ungraded schools, pass/fail options (Fortune), alternative assessments (Herman, 1992), additional graduation and course requirements (Cleary, 1985), outcome-based education (DiegmueLLer, 1993; West, 1993; O'Neil, 1993), core curriculum (Virginia Common Core, 1992; America 2000, 1991), computer instruction, preschool

programs (America 2000, 1991), dropout prevention programs (America 2000, 1991), apprenticeship programs (America 2000, 1991), adult education programs (America 2000, 1991), parent training and support to help prepare preschool children (America 2000, 1991), nutrition and health care programs (America 2000, 1991), foreign language programs (America 2000, 1991), multi-cultural programs (Yeh, 1993; Atwater, 1993; Sleeter, 1993; Kleg, 1993; Vann, 1993), minority achievement programs, and programs for at-risk students (America 2000, 1991).

### Summary

In recent years, reform and restructuring have gained momentum. Change has been proposed from the national, state and local levels. Several forces have come together to make these recent waves of reform more potent than ever. These economic, political, and/or sociological forces have combined to nourish new reform and restructuring initiatives. A list of reforms was selected from the literature as being more recognizable. These reforms came from national, state, and local efforts and represented basic changes in the way districts educated students.

#### The Impact of Reform on School Board Power and Authority

L. Boyd, professor of education at Pennsylvania State University observed, "In theory, local control enables citizens to determine the purpose and character of education in their school, presumably ensuring a type of schooling that is consonant with, and responsive to, local community values. In practice, however, the cherished

American value of 'local control' of schools has been undergoing a steady erosion for many years for a variety of reasons" (Rothman, 1992, p. 4).

These reasons included the consolidation of boards and districts at the turn of the century, the reaction to desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s, the response to Sputnik, the incursion of state rule, the rise of teacher unionism, and community rights issues. Each of these issues, complete with a history of their own, impacted on the power and authority of local school boards. The recent wave of reform, like others, began to have additional implications for board authority and power.

Thomas Timar, who studied the impact of restructuring on schools, concluded that school boards may have inherent problems dealing with restructuring for several reasons. He suggested three primary reasons why board members have had problems responding to the pressure to restructure. First, local boards were part of the "system." They were part of the fundamental institutional culture. They were, in essence, part of the bureaucracy. "Like most schools, a school district is hierarchically organized, with rigidly assigned roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability" (Timar, 1989, p. 267). Timar concluded that hierarchical structures "protect their turf" and were sometimes resistant to broad change, particularly restructuring (Timar, 1989).

Another reason school boards had difficulty with restructuring was that there were few experiences and models upon which to draw. The tendency then for the policy makers was to define change in response to existing programs and practices. As a lay oriented group, one of their duties was to protect the community and

children from useless or harmful folly and experimentation in the name of educational reform.

Thirdly, lay board members often lacked professional expertise in the area of educational change. This presented a dilemma for policy makers. How much change should a district permit?

Under such circumstances, fundamental organizational change did not occur (Timar, 1989, pp. 267-268).

For these reasons, some critics have viewed school boards as protectors of the status quo. In one northern Virginia school district where school based management was in its third year, a poll of the principals revealed that the school board was considered to be the greatest inhibitor of restructuring and reform.

The literature supported the concept that school boards, more and more, were caught in the middle between mandates from the state and national levels and the growing number of reform initiatives from the local level. Olson and Bradley reported that school boards were caught in the cross fire of rapidly changing ideas about who should control public education in America (Olson, 1992, p. 2). They reported:

The 1980s witnessed an unprecedented growth in state control of education, as one state after another passed comprehensive reform laws dealing with everything from who should teach to the content of the curriculum.

State financing for public education is also approaching local expenditures for the first time in history. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the state share of K-12 schooling is now 46.4 percent; the local share is 47.6.

In the midst of such changes, local school boards have been largely left out of the debate (Olson, 1991a, p. 2).

Howard M. O’Cull, the executive director of the West Virginia School Boards Association observed the following regarding school boards and reform, "Local boards never, ever caught the big picture of what needs to be done in public education, and because they haven’t, states simply moved the policy arena to the state capital" (Olson, 1991a, p. 2).

After reviewing the numerous state and local initiatives documented in the literature, Olson and Bradley concluded that school boards were being overwhelmed:

Hemmed in by mandates from above, boards have also found themselves challenged from below.

If schools are empowered to make decisions about everything from budgets to curricula--as many reformers now advocate--then boards of education cannot continue to exercise the same kind of direct management they have in the past.

The rapid growth of parental-choice plans that enable youngsters to attend schools outside the district in which they live has also threatened the sovereignty of school boards.

Finally, the competing demands on boards from a host of special-interest groups have resulted in what some observers describe as 'policy gridlock,' in which boards cannot possibly satisfy all parties (Olson, 1991a, p. 2).

In 1989, the United States National Center for Education Information conducted a survey to gather information regarding whether or not board members believed they were losing authority. The Center surveyed 1,212 school board presidents. Survey results indicated that over 50% of those responding indicated they felt a loss of authority over the five years previous to 1989. The survey was prior to

the Governor's Summit, America 2000, and the rapid spread of school-based management.

In February, 1992, the "Final Report" draft of the Twentieth Century Fund's Report of the Task Force on School Governance was forwarded to Gregg Downey of the NSBA. This report studied school board governance and its relation to reform. The report presented two sides of the school board issue. First, the report criticized boards for being failed leaders and partners in the deterioration of the United States public educational system. The report noted:

Many boards have become bogged down in the minutiae of routine administration and spend endless time dealing with detail. The Tucson, Arizona, school board, for example, met 172 times in one year.

In the eyes of many, boards are viewed as barriers to school-based management and decentralization--a major reform movement of recent times.

Boards tend to oppose student choice of school assignment--especially options that would allow pupils to transfer to schools in other districts, taking their revenue allotment with them. Bureaucratic convenience and budget protection get put ahead of students' interests--assuming of course that the advocates are correct in saying that choice would improve the quality of teaching, lead to sharpened curriculums, and create more spirited, mission-driven school settings.

Constructive board-superintendent relationships have collapsed almost entirely in many large cities. In 1990, 20 of the 25 largest central city school superintendencies were vacant. Most big city superintendents did not last three years on the job and, as a result, fewer qualified candidates offered themselves for the posts.

School board election turnouts have become so low in many localities--in New York City they have been as low as 7 percent--that questions have arisen about their legitimacy.

Boards often fail to coordinate their activities with the general purpose institutions of local government, such as departments of health, child care

agencies, and protective and juvenile services. As a result, there is both overlap and neglect in the provision of social services to children.

State governments tended to bypass school boards almost entirely in the "reform" efforts of the 1980s on the grounds that school boards had not been sufficiently vigilant in addressing what is taught, how it should be taught, who should teach it, and how results should be measured (Twentieth Century Fund Report, 1992, p. 6).

Several of the above failings of school boards related directly to the local school board's inability and/or unwillingness to handle reform. Specifically, the Report referred to school-based management initiatives and state "reform" efforts. The critics claimed that much of the poor performance of today's schools occurred under the watchful eye of today's school boards. Ultimately, it was the board that must bear the responsibility and the blame.

On the other side of the argument, the Report listed a number of strengths that the school board system possessed. These strengths were weighed against the weaknesses in determining the relative impact on board authority and power. The strengths as identified by the report were outlined in the following section of the report:

Many of the serious governance problems--except for the prevalent state mandates undercutting the boards--have been centered in large urban school districts. The large districts encompass some 40 percent of school children but only a small fraction of the 15,000 school boards.

School boards vary immensely in quality. But within the 15,378 scattered across the United States, it is easy to find exceptional leadership and exemplary operational practices.

School boards provide local control and accessible level of government. In a country committed to representative democracy, they provide citizen access that remote state and federal capitals cannot duplicate.

School boards are thus a cornerstone of local democracy. Education is one of the ways in which youth are socialized, and communities look to their schools to impart the values of the community to their children.

State governments, which have mandated requirements forcing boards to micromanage, must take primary responsibility for the manner in which boards function. Since they assumed responsibilities that normally are reserved to local boards, the failures cannot be laid at the feet of those boards (Twentieth Century Fund Report, 1992, p. 8).

After analyzing both sides of the issue, the members of the Task Force concluded that school boards have all too often been part of the problem. However, the members also recommended that boards can also be part of the solution (Twentieth Century Fund Report, 1992). Their solution involved redesigning boards to make them more responsive and more a part of strategic planning to involve reform and restructuring. The members concluded their report by noting, "We believe basic change is necessary in the way schools are governed. School boards are no longer providing the quality of leadership needed to secure America's future. Our recommendations are aimed at transforming one of America's great institutional innovations, local school boards, into a force for reform, creativity, and support for the real needs of children. Without the kinds of changes we recommend, the whole debate over education will be hollow, filled with wonderful concepts and ideas and without a structure that can make reform a reality" (Twentieth Century Fund Report, 1992, pp. 21-22).

The literature indicated that there was a growing concern regarding school board governance issues. In the August 18, 1992, edition of School Board News, was the call for school boards to consider new challenges. These challenges were

presented in response to the growing demand for changes to local school governance structure. The editors noted, "Typically, these changes, such as site-based management and state takeover, embody solutions that would transfer school board powers to other entities. What these proposals don't do is examine ways in which the local school board needs to be strengthened in its unique role in achieving education improvement" (Resnick, 1992, p. 2).

The editors of School Board News suggested that there were five challenges facing public education today that require self-governing through school boards. Challenge one noted that the public was expecting improved student performance. The second challenge called for the establishment of partnerships with the many public agencies to provide services to needy students. Challenge three asked that all become involved with reversing the alienation and apathy toward schools. Next, challenge four suggested that the school board have an active role in the coordination of state and national interests with that of the local. Lastly, challenge five referred to a governing body that "needs to operate within an agenda that primarily focuses on children. School system's governance agendas also need to focus on education policy and accountability. To do that, school boards must be the driving force, if we are going to successfully reverse the bureaucratic proclivities and state mandates that have forced school systems to become unnecessarily preoccupied with administrivia" (Resnick, 1992, p. 2).

The position taken by the editors of this National School Board Association publication was an acknowledgement that waves of reform were impacting on boards

down to their fundamental governance superstructures. Further, they stated unequivocally that boards must take a proactive role in meeting this new challenge. "The point is that challenges face school systems that require action by fully empowered school boards. NSBA urges local school boards to assess the principal challenges facing their systems and define a role for their board that heightens the school board function within the school system, the community, and at the state and federal levels" (Resnick, 1992, p. 2).

Chris Pipho in "Sweeping the Boards Clean" observed several recent actions around the country that suggested that the role of local school boards in the overall reform process was undergoing some serious rethinking:

With funding from the Joyce Foundation, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is completing a study of the school board's role in restructuring initiatives. The study will attempt to learn how the role of school boards has changed and to determine the major issues boards have faced as site-based management and other reforms have been introduced.

The Danforth Foundation and the 20th Century Fund will be releasing a report on the governance of American education.

The National School Boards Association (NSBA), the preeminent organization representing board members, is not shying away from the debate. In three successive issues of School Board News in January 1992, NSBA Executive Director Thomas Shannon took on some of the critics of local boards of education. In the final analysis, Shannon said, "School boards are the people," and it is these representatives of the people who best understand the reform needs of local school districts (Pipho, 1992, p. 511).

The literature identified some new designs for school board governance.

Critics indicated that if boards are to play a prominent role in determining education program and policy and to retain their authority and power, then new governance

models must be considered. One model, developing in New York, called for transforming boards into governing bodies focused on setting goals and standards for teacher and student performance. Boards would act as policy and strategic planning bodies and would remove themselves from the administrivia which has bogged down boards under the present system (Wagner, 1992).

Another model was related to the charter school movement. Charter schools were found in Minnesota where qualified groups or institutions can establish a public school. Tuition vouchers were used to finance these enterprises which stand or fall based upon choice and program success.

A similar model to the charter was the Contract School Management System. With this model local or state authorities contracted out the management of individual schools, or indeed an entire system. "Boston University, for example, runs the public school system for Chelsea, Massachusetts. On Chicago's tough West side, a group of more than fifty corporations has been running a tuition-free model elementary school since the late 1980s" (Twentieth Century Fund Report, 1992, p. 4).

Site-based school management models were cropping up all over the United States. In the most successful settings, the traditional school boards have delegated broad policy-setting and administrative control to individual school sites. Allocation of funds, school maintenance, and even educational program were designed and developed at the local level with input from parents, students, and staff.

Still another model advocated merging education into general purpose government. This option would make school districts a department of city

government reporting to the mayor and city council. The policy board would become a city-wide education advisory board of elected citizens for every ten or more school sites.

These models were offered by critics and reformers as options for operating the education system in ways other than the traditional implied power model operating in most states today.

### Summary

In the last three years, agendas for reform and reconstruction of the school system have increased in number and in intensity. The literature chronicled a dramatic rise of concern born from an intense desire from national, state, and local levels to improve our schools. As reform developed and took hold, traditional models of education and governance were called to question. More and more, people were asking, "Is there a better way?" School board members, too, were asking that question. Many board members had seen elements of their traditional power base siphoned away by a plethora of state mandates. Others were satisfied with the status quo.

The literature indicated that most boards exercised enough authority and power to manage their own destiny. However, waves of reform were bombarding districts from all sides causing many districts to react in a variety of ways. Were school boards assisting in the reform process or were they inhibitors? A look at the attitudes

of school board members as they related to reform agendas assisted in the analysis of the role school board members play in the change process.

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research method utilized in this study, explain the sampling frame, describe the data collection instrument (questionnaire) and the procedures followed in its administration, and explain the statistical procedures used in analyzing the data. This study is a continuation of a series of research studies carried out by Virginia Tech in conjunction with The American School Board Journal. The method employed in this study paralleled that used by Yock (1988), Freeman (1990), Seaton (1991), and Michener (1992).

#### Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research methodology was utilized in this study. Survey researchers study large and small populations (or universes) by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelation of sociological and psychological variables (Kerlinger, 1973).

Earl Babbie wrote, "Surveys are frequently conducted for the purpose of making descriptive assertions about some population, that is, discovering the distribution of certain traits or attributes. In this regard, the researcher is concerned not with why the observed distribution exists but merely with what that distribution is. In addition to describing the total sample (and inferring to the total population),

survey researchers often describe sub-samples and compare them" (Babbie, 1990, p. 51).

Wiersma related that survey research deals with incidence, distribution, and interrelation of psychological and sociological variables (Wiersma, 1991). He noted,

Surveys are used to measure attitudes, opinions, or achievements--any number of variables in the natural setting. Such studies may be local, regional, national, or even international. Survey research can include a status quo study or a study in which the interrelationships of sociological or psychological variables are determined and summarized (Wiersma, 1991, p. 51).

In an analysis of survey research methods, Fowler (1984) said:

(1) The purpose of the survey is to produce statistics--that is, quantitative or numerical descriptions of some aspects of the study population. (2) The main way of collecting information is by asking people questions; their answers constitute the data to be analyzed. (3) Generally, information is collected about only a fraction of the population--that is, a sample--rather than from every member of the population (Fowler, 1984, p. 9).

Descriptive research methodology was used in this study to gather information about the way school boards perceive educational reform. According to Babbie, descriptive statistics is a method for presenting quantitative descriptions in a manageable form (Babbie, 1991, p. 283).

Good defined the role of the descriptive-survey as follows: (1) To secure evidence concerning an existing situation or current conditions; (2) to identify standards or norms with which to compare present conditions, in order to plan the next step; and (3) to determine how to make the next step (Good, 1966).

This study surveyed a nationwide sample of school board members by means of a mailed questionnaire. Wiersma observed the following regarding questionnaires,

One of the distinguishing characteristics among surveys is the method of data collection, and certainly the mailed questionnaire commonly is used for data collection. Questionnaires are used for surveys ranging in magnitude from national surveys to local surveys such as a community survey for a school system or even a single school (Wiersma, 1991, p. 176).

Regarding item formulation, Wiersma noted, "Formulating items is essentially a matter of common sense. The law of parsimony applies: Keep things as simple as possible to obtain the necessary data" (Wiersma, 1991, p. 176). He adds:

There are two general types of items used for questionnaires: (1) selected-response or forced-choice items (also called closed-form items) for which the respondent selects from two or more options, and (2) open-ended items for which the respondent constructs a response. Selected-response items enhance consistency of response across respondents; data tabulation generally is straightforward and less time-consuming than for open-ended items....A disadvantage of open-ended items is that responses tend to be inconsistent in length, and sometimes in content, across respondents. Both questions and responses are susceptible to misinterpretation (Wiersma, 1991, p. 176).

Wiersma also discussed the questionnaire format. "Questionnaire format should be attractive and straightforward, with the items ordered in a logical sequence. Responding to the items should be convenient and without confusion" (Wiersma, 1991, p. 181).

Wiersma noted the following: "Survey data can be analyzed using any appropriate procedures, and in many surveys at least part of the results are reported in a descriptive manner. Percentages or proportions of respondents selecting the options for an item are often provided. Survey results typically are summarized in tables including common descriptive information. The important characteristic is that the analysis and subsequent reporting of results fit the research problem" (Wiersma, 1991, p. 198). Also, along these lines, Mouly noted:

Among the major advantages of the questionnaire is that it permits wide coverage at a minimum expense both in money and effort. It not only affords wider geographic coverage, but it also reaches persons who are difficult to contact. This greater coverage makes for greater validity in the results through promoting the selection of a larger and more representative sample.

Particularly when it does not call for a signature or other means of identification, the questionnaire may, because of its greater impersonality, elicit more candid and objective replies (Mouly, 1970, p. 242).

Huck, Cormier, and Bounds state:

The purpose of descriptive research is to describe things the way they are. Descriptive statistics are methods used to derive from raw data certain indices that characterize or summarize the entire set of data...Inferential statistics are methods that allow the researcher to generalize characteristics from his set of data to a larger population. While descriptive statistics are concerned only with characteristics of the set of data obtained by the researcher, inferential statistics are concerned with generalizations to a population larger than the set of data obtained by the researcher (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974, pp. 18-19).

The researcher chose to use descriptive survey procedures utilizing the questionnaire in order to determine perceptions, attitudes and opinions of school board members regarding the extent to which reform was impacting on quality of educational programs in public schools. The relationship of these data to selected demographic, personal, and other school board variables was included in the study.

Data were analyzed to determine if results varied as a consequence of demographic variables. Variables chosen for study included those from previous National School Board Journal surveys. These variables have been studied over 15 years as part of an annual survey and are located on the first page of the survey found in Appendix A.

Additionally, the survey gathered data about reform programs relative to where these programs were occurring. The purpose of this was to provide school board members with a "report card" on reform which would provide a picture of where specific programs were occurring throughout the United States so that comparisons could be made between regions, size of districts, and school community types (urban, suburban, rural, small town).

Information regarding the quality of reform programs was also gathered. School board members were asked to identify whether reforms were positively or negatively impacting on the quality of education in their districts. Again, data were analyzed to see if there were differences by region, size of district, and school community type.

### Sample

This study surveyed a nationwide stratified random sample by means of a mailed questionnaire (Appendix A). The study was one in a series 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 subscriber list was examined and those subscribers who were not local school board members were deleted. Sampling error was reduced both by sampling large numbers and by sampling within homogeneous populations (Babbie, 1991). As in Michener's study in 1992, a stratified random sampling was used (Michener,

1992). Stratified random sampling was used as a technique for obtaining a greater degree of representation and decreasing sampling error. For this study a geographical region stratified sample was identified. Babbie noted that within a nation, geographical stratification "increases representativeness in a broad range of attitudes as well as in social class and ethnicity" (Babbie, 1991, p. 86). A sample size of about twenty-five percent was chosen (Table 1).

### Instrumentation

The survey instrument for this study was designed to accomplish three purposes: (1) collect selected opinions and personal information about school board members; (2) compile school board members' attitudes regarding how reform impacted on their districts; and (3) assess school board members' attitudes regarding how reform impacted on their power and authority to govern their district.

Demographic data collected specifically for The American School Board Journal were not reported as a part of this study.

The survey instrument was divided into two parts. The ordering of the questions was identical to that used by Yock, Freeman, and Seaton. The staff at National School Board Association requested a return to this format from the format used by Michener in 1992.

In Section I on page one of the survey, demographic information about members' school districts were requested. In Section II of the survey, information regarding where and to what extent reform programs were occurring around the

Table 1

Population and Sample by Region

Region	School Board Member Subscribers	25% Sample
Northeast	5,345	1,355
Central	8,022	2,039
Southern	4,214	1,072
Western	3,277	809
Pacific	3,100	*725
TOTAL	23,958	6,000
* 23% sample		

United States was surveyed. Section II also gathered information about the perceived quality of reforms impacting on districts. The survey attempted to answer the question, "Were reforms positively or negatively impacting the quality of education?" Lastly, Section II assessed school board members opinions regarding reform programs and the impact on board power and authority.

In order to design questions for the survey, a comprehensive literature search was conducted. From this research, reform and restructuring programs were identified. In addition to the literature search, a number of educational leaders noted in the literature and associated with reform and restructuring were interviewed. Leaders included Dr. Edward Kelly, Hugh Burkett, Mike Strembinsky, Dr. C. Krill, Dr. Richard Neals, and Dr. Joe Hairston. Also, interviews were conducted with members of sixty advisory committees composed of educators and parents of local schools in Prince William County. These advisory members were veterans at sifting through reform initiatives to determine direction for their schools. Also, approximately 120 school plans of site-base managed schools were scrutinized to determine prevalent reform plans and initiatives. Plans from Fairfax and Prince Williams Counties in Virginia and Edmonton, Canada, were included.

Over the course of reviewing the professional literature and the school plans mentioned above, several types of reforms were identified as being more common than others. Those most common were site-based management reforms, school choice options, instructional and curriculum programs, and restructuring school time.

Many of the popular elements of reform were found in programs like America 2000 and Essential Schools.

Thus, the variables selected for this study were derived from a comprehensive review of the literature, interviews with educational reformers, and by reviewing reform and restructuring plans from a number of schools in several districts. As mentioned previously, variables included reforms in four general areas: site-based management, school choice options, curricular and instructional programs, and restructuring school time. For further analysis, specific programs were identified from the literature for each of the four general areas. These specific programs were the most prevalent and recognizable.

Statistical techniques used to analyze data on the returned surveys included frequency distribution, percentages of responses, and cross tabulation. For additional analysis, in some questions, categories of responses were combined (collapsed) to filter data for enhanced response. Specifically, this technique was used to obtain data for "happening here" categories in Question 28. Thus, by totalling response categories "generally negative," "slightly negative," "slightly positive," "generally positive," and "no impact" and then excluding the category "not happening here," a frequency for programs "happening here" was derived. Also, combined categories were used in the last part of Section II: school board power and authority to analyze relationships between quality and power.

The last part of the questionnaire collected information to determine how board members believed reform impacted on their power and authority to govern their

district. Frequency of responses were compiled and analyzed utilizing percentages for descriptive purposes. Additionally, cross tabulation calculations were performed to determine relationships between specific reforms like site-based management and perceived changes in authority and power. Levels of significance were set by taking expected frequency rates from SPSS and determining whether or not expected data varied by plus or minus twenty percent. Twenty percent was the level set by the researcher based on the sample sizes of the original population sample.

In order to validate the questionnaire the researcher field tested initial drafts of the instrument on convenience samples of local educators, graduate students, members of local school boards, and several former members of a local school board. Additionally, the researcher collected and coded all data, ran a frequency analysis, and cross tabulated calculations when appropriate. In addition, dissertation committee members and chairman, editorial staff members of The American School Board Journal, and selected staff and school board members were asked to provide feedback to the following:

1. Are the directions of the questionnaire clearly stated and explained?
2. Are the questions of sufficient interest and appeal to motivate the respondent to complete the questionnaire?
3. Are the questions relevant to current educational concerns so as to elicit a realistic and accurate response?
4. Are the questions clearly worded?
5. Do the questions anger or embarrass the respondent?

6. Are the questions too restrictive, limited, or narrow in scope?
7. Are the questions designed in such a way that, when taken as a whole, they will answer the basic research questions of the study?

Responses were analyzed for possible misinterpretations of any items, and revisions were made. Additionally, the questionnaire was shortened by combining several categories of questions so that several conclusions could be drawn from one set of questions. Specifically, information was collected to determine where reforms were occurring by asking respondents to react to a "not happening here" section on Questions 18, 19, and 21. Thus, information regarding where reforms were occurring and regarding how reforms were impacting on the quality of education was collected in one question. This procedure greatly reduced the length of the survey.

#### Collection of Data

Local school board members chosen by the stratified random sampling technique were asked to participate in this study. Questionnaires accompanied by a cover letter (Appendix) were mailed to potential respondents. A pre-addressed, postage-paid return envelope was included. Returns included in the analysis were received by April 30, 1993.

Because of the anonymity of respondents required by The American School Board Journal, there were no follow-up mailings to non-respondents.

The five preceding national studies of school board members in this series achieved a return rate from 18 to 27 percent. After seven weeks a return rate of 22.4 percent was achieved in this study.

### Method of Analysis

Returned questionnaires were examined for correctness and completeness. Any questionnaires with one or more parts substantially incomplete were discarded.

Questionnaires were identified by numbers from 1 to 1347 and coded. The data were analyzed through use of the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) package computer routines. All questions were analyzed using frequency distributions, percentages, and cross-tabulation of selected variables when appropriate.

Frequency of responses and percentages were computed for each question on the survey. In question number five, in order to collect data regarding frequency of occurrence of specific reforms, the first five categories were combined, separated from the last category, and titled "happening here."

Information was compiled and presented in tables. Tables presented data by frequency distribution, percentages, and cross tabulation.

### Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methods used in this study, the development of the survey instrument, data collection procedures, and the statistical methods used in analyzing the data collected. The survey was developed by culling

the literature and interviewing educational reformers. Additionally, schools known for being involved in reform were identified. Personnel from these schools were asked to present their annual school plans. These plans were reviewed to determine reform and restructuring programs. From this information, variables were identified for study. A questionnaire was developed and distributed randomly to subscribers to the National School Board Journal.

The primary method of analysis was to present the data in frequency of response and percentages. Additional information was collected through the use of cross tabulation.

## Chapter IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the data derived from the returned surveys. The first section presents a description of the respondents. The second section contains the findings related to each research question. The third section provides a summary of the chapter.

#### Description of the Respondents

A questionnaire was mailed to a stratified, random sample of 6000 school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal on or about March 10, 1993. After eight weeks 1347 (22.5%) questionnaires had been returned. Of the surveys returned, twenty-five percent were received from the Central region, twenty-three percent from the Northeastern, seventeen percent from the Southern, seventeen percent from the Western, and twenty-five percent from the Pacific (Table 2).

The distribution of returned surveys by community description and district enrollment is reported in Table 3. The respondents indicated that their community is best described as suburban (31%), rural (24%), small town (27%), or urban (11%). Regarding size of district by enrollment, the highest response (53%) came from members in districts in the 1,000 to 2,000 enrollment range and the smallest response (4%) was received from members in districts of 2,000 to 5,000 (Table 4).

Table 2

Distribution of Returned Surveys by Region

Region	Mailed	Returned	Percentage Returned	Percentage Total Returned
Central	2039	507	25	8
Northeast	1355	313	23	5
Pacific	725	176	24	3
Southern	1072	179	17	3
Western	809	134	17	2
Missing Data	0	38	0	0.5
TOTALS	6000	1347	23	23

Table 3

Distribution of Returned Surveys by Type of Community

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	144	11
Suburban	420	31
Rural	333	25
Small Town	368	27
Other	68	5
Missing Data	14	1
TOTAL	1347	100%

Table 4

Distribution of Returned Surveys by District Enrollment

Enrollment	Frequency	Percentage
Fewer than 1,000	205	*15
1,000 - 4,999	712	53
5,000 - 9,999	225	17
10,000 - 24,999	141	11
Greater than 25,000	58	4
Missing Data	6	0.4
TOTALS	1347	100%

\*Percentage of returned questionnaires does not reflect percentages of districts.

## Context of Reform

**Involvement in reform.** Information was collected regarding the degree of involvement of school board members in the reform process. Board members were asked, "How would you categorize your school board's involvement in reform and restructuring initiatives over the past four years?" (Question 16, Appendix A). Board members responded by choosing one of the following: none, little, moderate, or great. Survey returns indicated that 937 of the 1347 board members or about seventy percent said their boards were either "moderately" or "greatly" involved in reform and restructuring initiatives in their district. Only eighty-five respondents or approximately five percent indicated that their board was not involved (Table 5). Similar results occurred when board members were asked to estimate their district's involvement (Table 5). In this question, 957 board members indicated involvement of the district. Only sixty respondents indicated no involvement of their the districts.

In summary, board members indicated that their boards and their districts were highly involved in reform and restructuring.

**Impetus for reform.** Next, information was collected to determine school board members' perceptions of the impetus of reform (Table 6). Four general categories of reform were listed. The four general categories of reform were site-based management, school choice options, curricular and instructional programs, and restructuring school time. To expedite this process, board members were given several options consisting of groups or individuals identified in the literature as those potentially involved in promoting reform (See Question 18, Appendix A). Results

Table 5

Distribution of Responses of School Boards' Involvement in Reform

Degree of Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
School Board Involvement		
None	60	5
Little	318	24
Moderate	662	49
Great	295	22
Other	2	0.1
Missing Data	10	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1347</b>	<b>100%</b>

Distribution of Responses of School Districts' Involvement in Reform

Degree of Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
District Involvement		
None	85	5
Little	310	24
Moderate	636	47
Great	301	22
Other	4	0.3
Missing Data	10	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1347</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6

Impetus for Reform

	Local School Board	State Department of Education	U.S. Department of Education	Superintendent and Administration	Teacher Association or Union	Community Interest Groups	Professional Reports and Literature	Not Happening Here								
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%								
SBM	253	10	336	18	11	1	316	24	40	3	14	1	21	2	337	25
SC	95	7	149	11	13	1	40	3	13	1	40	3	13	1	889	66
C&I	350	26	202	15	13	1	418	31	27	2	27	2	27	2	121	9
RS	189	14	148	11	13	1	216	16	41	3	13	1	13	1	593	44



SBM = Site-Based Management  
 SC = School Choice  
 C&I = Curriculum & Instructional Reform  
 RS = Restructuring School Time

indicated curriculum and instructional reforms were the most popular and that the impetus for these reforms came from the superintendent and administration (31%), followed by community interest groups (27%), and local school boards (26%). Next, site-based management reforms were perceived by board members to have received their impetus from the superintendent and administration (24%), followed by the state department of education (18%), and local school boards (10%). Restructuring school time programs received impetus from the superintendent and administration (16%) and the local school board (14%). School choice options were not very prevalent. Of the 1347 respondents, only 458 indicated that school choice options received any impetus from anyone. And restructuring school time programs were not prevalent.

Generally, board members perceived that most of the impetus for site-based management and curriculum and instructional programs came from local school boards (10% & 26% respectively) and from the superintendent and local administration (24% & 31% respectively). The state was recognized as providing major impetus for reform by eighteen percent of the respondents for site-based management and by eleven percent for school choice options.

In summary, board members perceived that a great degree of curricular and instructional reform and restructuring programs originated at the local level. By combining site-based management and curriculum and instructional program responses, fifty-six percent of the respondents indicated that these programs received impetus from the local administration and local school board members (Table 6). Generally, board members perceived that their boards were involved in reform and

restructuring and that much of the impetus for reform originated at the local level with the superintendent and local administration and with the school board.

**Format for the study.** For the purpose of this study, board members were asked to respond to survey questions which gathered information about where reforms were happening in districts around the country. Specific reforms were from the literature, interviews, and reform oriented districts and schools. Reforms were classified in four major categories: 1. Site-based Management; 2. School Choice; 3. Curriculum and Instructional Programs; 4. School Time Restructuring. School board member's responses to the various reforms were then analyzed by region of the country, size of districts, and school community type (urban, rural, suburban, and small town). These classifications of location have been part of an on going study conducted by the National School Board Journal staff and Virginia Tech. Additionally, utilization of these variables (region, size of district, and school community type) allowed for comparison and a frame of reference for distribution of reforms impacting on districts around the country.

Next, school board members were asked to determine whether or not these same categories of reform had impacted on the quality of education in their districts. Again these result were analyzed by region of the country, size of the district, and school community type.

Lastly, school board members were asked several questions to determine whether or not reforms were impacting on their power and authority to govern their districts. Results were cross tabulated with the four categories of reform and with

specific examples of each broad category. Again, these results were compared with region, size of district, and school community type.

**Research question number one: To what extent do school board members perceive that reform and restructuring initiatives are occurring in local districts?**

The questionnaire solicited information from school board members regarding whether or not reform and restructuring programs were "happening" in their districts (Question 21, Appendix A). Responses were tabulated in Table 7 by number and percentages of responses based on the total number of respondents. Results indicated that a large number of school board members perceived that reforms were "happening" to a relatively large extent in their districts. Ninety-one percent noted that some form of curricular and instructional program development was "happening," while seventy percent responded that site-based management was "happening" in their districts.

Next, school time restructuring options were perceived as "happening" by sixty-seven percent, followed by school choice options at forty-six percent. In general, board members agreed that reform and restructuring initiatives were occurring in their districts.

Site-based Management: Where? For the purpose of this study, the country was divided into five geographic regions. Respondents were identified by region.

Table 7

Distribution of Reform Initiatives in School Districts

Reform Program	Percentage Happening		Percentage Not Happening		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Site-Based Management	946	70	381	28	20	2
School Choice	624	46	695	52	28	2
Curriculum and Instruction	1227	91	97	7	23	2
School Time and Structure	900	67	418	31	29	2
TOTAL	3697	69	1591	30	25	2

Percent total by column = mean

N Total = 1347

Percent total by row = 100%

Chart consists of collapsed categories (see note below).

Note: Responses for Table 7 were tabulated from Question 21. Data in "Percentage Happening" categories were derived by combining "Increased," "Not Changed," and "Decreased" categories in Question 21.

Additionally, selected demographic variables of district size and school community type were chosen to assist in the description of the spread of responses (Table 8).

**Site-based management by region.** Responses by geographic region are presented in Table 8. Regional data indicated that site-based management reforms were wide-spread. Respondents from the Northeastern region reported the lowest rate of occurrence (63%), while the Pacific Region had the highest (83%) (Table 8). The Western region rated next to the highest with seventy-eight percent of the respondents indicating that site-based management reforms were evident, while the Central region scored next to the lowest with sixty-five percent. Site-based management reforms were evident throughout the regions, but were highly concentrated in the Pacific and Western regions.

**Site-based management by community type.** When the data were cross tabulated with school community type, it was noted that small towns (70%), rural (68%), urban (76%), and suburban districts (71%) (Table 8) had a relatively large percentage of responses indicating that site-based management programs were "happening." School board members from urban districts indicated a slightly higher level of occurrence (76%) for site-based management than did board members from other school community types.

**Site-based management by district size.** Questions soliciting whether or not site-based management programs were occurring were cross tabulated with the variable size of district. Again, all districts regardless of size noted substantial occurrence. However, district category "Fewer than 1,000" recorded a smaller

Table 8

Cross Tabulation of Site-Based Management Reforms

By Region	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central (N=507)	330	65	168	33	9	2
Northeast (N=313)	196	63	115	37	2	0.6
Pacific (N=176)	146	83	28	15	3	2
Southern (N=179)	136	76	38	21	5	3
Western (N=134)	105	78	29	22	0	0
Missing Data (N=38)						
By Community Type	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural (N=333)	227	68	100	30	6	2
Small Town (N=368)	257	70	106	29	5	2
Suburban (N=420)	298	71	116	28	6	1
Urban (N=144)	109	76	34	24	1	0.7
Missing Data (N=82)						

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

By Size	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fewer than 1,000 (N=205)	123	60	79	34	3	2
1,000 to 4,999 (N=712)	498	70	206	29	7	1
5,000 to 9,999 (N=225)	167	74	56	25	2	1
10,000 to 24,999 (N=141)	106	75	32	23	3	2
25,000 or more (N=58)	54	92	3	6	1	2
Missing Data (N=6)						

N = number

Note: Responses for Table 8 were tabulated from Question 21. Data in "Percentage Happening" category were derived by combining "Increased," "Not Changed," and "Decreased" categories in Question 21.

percentage of involvement (60%) than larger districts (Table 8). Thirty-nine percent of those responding in this category indicated that site-based management reform was "not happening" in their district. On the other hand, larger districts with student enrollments of 25,000 or more had the highest response rate (91.4%).

**Site-based management's specific programs.** Next, specific site-based management components were studied. School board members were asked to respond to specific reform and restructuring programs (Question 19, Appendix A).

The respondents indicated that in a majority of cases, all but two of the specific site-based reform elements listed in the survey were occurring in the school districts (Table 9) represented by the respondents. These two elements, site-based control of cafeteria and transportation services, were identified by fifty-two percent and sixty-five percent respectively of respondents as "not happening" in their district. All other site-based management components were perceived by a majority of board members as "happening" in their district.

Next, specific site-based reform programs were cross-tabulated with region, district size, and school community type. Site-based management funding at school sites program was reported as occurring less frequently in the Northeastern region (23%) and more in the Pacific (24%), Southern (29%), and Western regions (21%).

School personnel decisions at the local site occurred in the Northeastern region (27%). Also, the Northeastern region reported that school site control of educational program development was less prevalent than expected (26%). In general, a review of the data indicated that respondents from the Northeastern region believe their

Table 9

School Board Members' Responses to Occurrence of Site-Based Management Reform

Reform Program	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Site-based Management						
Local advisory groups	843	6	413	31	91	7
Funding at local school site	707	53	575	43	65	5
More autonomy at local site for maintenance	659	49	603	45	85	6
More autonomy at site for personnel decisions	749	56	504	38	89	7
More autonomy at site for educational program design	831	62	416	31	100	7
More accountability at the local site for results	919	68	341	25	87	7
Teacher empowerment	923	68	330	25	94	7
Local site control of transportation	445	33	823	61	79	6
Local site control of cafeteria services	566	42	695	52	86	6

Note: Responses for Table 9 were tabulated from Question 19. Data in categories from "Generally Negative" to "Generally Positive" were combined and labeled "Happening Here" above.

school districts are less involved in specific site-based management reforms than respondents from other regions.

Survey responses indicated that site-based management specific programs were distributed much the same when cross-tabulated with district size and school community type. Reforms were broad-based and not occurring as a result of district size and school community type.

School Choice: Where? The next major category of reform studied was school choice. School choice reform programs were the least prevalent of the categories of reform. Only forty-six percent of the respondents indicated that some form of school choice option was "happening" in their district. When analyzed by specific program components, school choice options became even less prevalent. Board members reported that these reform options were having a smaller impact on their district than site-based management (Table 7).

When responding to specific school choice programs, a majority of board members indicated that school choice reforms were "not happening here," (80%) while only fifteen percent indicated that some type of school choice reform was occurring (Table 10) in their districts. Again, school choice options were not reported to be as prevalent as site-based management.

**Region, school community type, size of district.** School choice programs were cross tabulated with region, type of school district, and size of district (Table 11). A difference occurred in the Northeastern region where respondents indicated a greater than expected rating in the category "not happening here" (71%). Similarly,

Table 10

School Board Members' Responses to Occurrence of School Choice Reform

Reform	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
School Choice students and parents are permitted to choose schools within the district	457	34	852	63	38	3
Students and parents are permitted to choose schools in or out of the district	400	30	888	66	59	4
Students may use vouchers or tax incentives to attend school of choice (public or private)	87	6	1200	89	60	5
Students have access to magnet schools	218	16	1064	79	65	5
Students have access to charter schools	93	7	1190	88	60	5

Note: Responses for Table 10 were tabulated from Question 19. Data in categories from "Generally Negative" to "Generally Positive" were combined and labeled "Happening Here" above.

Table 11

Cross Tabulation of School Choice Reforms

By Region	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central (N=507)	265	52	232	46	10	2
Northeast (N=313)	90	29	221	71	2	0.6
Pacific (N=176)	104	59	68	39	4	2
Southern (N=172)	75	42	94	53	10	6
Western (N=134)	71	53	63	47	0	0
Missing Data (N=38)						
By Community Type	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural (N=333)	177	53	151	45	5	2
Small Town (N=368)	152	41	209	57	7	2
Suburban (N=420)	172	41	237	56	11	3
Urban (N=144)	90	63	53	37	1	0.7
Missing Data (N=82)						

Note: Percent may exceed 100% due to rounding.

(table continues)

Table 11 (continued)

By Size	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fewer than 1,000 (N=205)	92	45	109	53	4	2
1,000 to 4,999 (N=712)	313	44	385	54	14	2
5,000 to 9,999 (N=225)	97	43	126	56	2	1
10,000 to 24,999 (N=141)	83	59	52	37	6	4
25,000 or more (N=58)	39	67	18	31	1	2
Missing Data (N=6)						

N = number

Note: Responses for Table 11 were tabulated from Question 21. Data in "Percentage Happening" category were derived by combining "Increased," "Not Changed," and "Decreased" categories in Question 21.

in the Northeastern region, school board members reported a lower than expected "happening here" rating regarding the "school out of district" (82%) category.

Responses indicated that the Northeastern region was less involved in school choice options.

Additionally, urban schools were more likely to have school choice than other community types (63%) (Table 11). Small towns and suburban districts were less likely to have school choice options (41%).

Regarding district size, respondents indicated that larger districts were more likely to have school choice options than the smaller districts (Table 11). Districts larger than 25,000 students had a response rate of sixty-seven percent "happening here," while the smaller districts of less than 5,000 students responded with only about a forty-five percent "happening here" rate.

Curriculum and Instructional Reforms: Where? Respondents throughout the country indicated that curriculum and instructional reforms were very prevalent in their districts. Ninety-one percent of those responding indicated that some curriculum and instructional reform was taking place. The curriculum and instructional reforms identified as "happening" most often in districts were computer instruction, foreign language programs, at-risk student programs, adoption of core curriculum programs, and whole language strategies. Those occurring less frequently were pass/fail options, ungraded schools, minority achievement programs, and apprenticeship programs (Table 12). In general, the data indicated that curriculum and instructional reforms were happening in more school districts than site-based management and

Table 12

School Board Members' Responses Indicating Curriculum & Instructional Reform Occurrence

Curriculum Reform & Restructuring Programs	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Whole Language strategies	981	73	272	20	94	7
Upgraded school strategies	438	32	821	61	88	7
Pass/no fail options	422	31	833	62	92	7
Alternative assessment options	700	52	514	38	133	10
Increased course requirements	921	69	430	25	86	5
Increased graduation requirements	912	68	353	26	82	6
Outcome based curriculum	869	64	376	28	702	8
Adoption of a common core curriculum	1004	75	248	18	96	7
Computer technology instruction	1221	91	55	4	71	5
Dropout prevention programs	974	72	296	22	77	6

(table continues)

Table 12 (continued)

Curriculum Reform & Restructuring Programs	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Programs for at-risk	1127	83	155	12	65	5
Minority achievement programs	579	43	683	51	85	6
Multi-cultural programs	790	58	479	36	78	6
Foreign language programs	1135	84	136	18	76	6
Nutrition and health care programs	860	63	357	27	130	10
Parent training and support to help prepare preschool children	805	60	460	34	82	6
Adult education programs	855	60	418	31	74	5
Apprenticeship programs	61	46	651	48	80	6
Preschool programs	968	72	299	22	80	6

N = number

Note: Responses in Table 12 were tabulated from Question 19. Categories were collapsed as previously noted.

school choice (Table 7). Curriculum and instructional reforms were the most widespread and prevalent of the reforms (Table 7). Of those listed in Question 19 in the survey, computer technology instruction (91%), common core (75%), whole language instruction (73%), increased course requirements (69%), and increased graduation requirements (69%) were the most common reforms.

**Curriculum and instructional reforms by region.** Specific curriculum and instructional reforms were cross tabulated with regions of the country. Adult education programs occurred less frequently in the Pacific region. Parent training programs were more wide spread in the Southern (46%) and less prevalent in the Northeastern region (24%). Pass/fail options were less frequent in the Northeastern region (16%). Alternative assessment programs were reported to be occurring with greater frequency in the Pacific region (34%). Additionally, the Northeastern region indicated a lower rate of involvement in outcome-based education, while the Central region reported a higher rate of involvement. Dropout prevention programs were checked more frequently "not happening here" in the Central region (20%). Again, the Northeastern region indicated a higher frequency rate in "not happening here" (40%) for preschool programs (Table 14).

**Curriculum and instructional programs by school community type and size of district.** Additionally, curriculum and instructional programs were cross tabulated by type of community and size of community (Table 13). Results indicated that regardless of the type of community, curriculum and instructional reform programs

Table 13

Cross Tabulation of Curriculum and Instructional Reforms

By Region	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central (N=507)	462	91	37	7	8	2
Northeast (N=313)	275	88	34	11	4	1
Pacific (N=176)	163	93	7	4	6	3
Southern (N=179)	166	93	9	5	4	2
Western (N=134)	126	94	8	6	0	0
Missing Data (N=38)						
By Community Type	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural (N=333)	307	92	23	7	3	1
Small Town (N=368)	334	91	33	8	1	1
Suburban (N=420)	376	90	36	9	8	1
Urban (N=144)	136	94	8	6	0	0
Missing Data (N=82)						

(table continues)

Table 13 (continued)

By Size	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fewer than 1,000 (N=205)	181	89	23	11	1	1
1,000 to 4,999 (N=712)	649	91	57	8	6	1
5,000 to 9,999 (N=225)	206	92	13	6	6	2
10,000 to 24,999 (N=141)	136	96	1	1	4	3
25,000 or more (N=58)	54	93	3	5	1	2
Missing Data (N=6)						
N = number						

Table 14

School Board Members' Responses to Occurrence of Restructuring School Time Reform

Restructuring School Time Programs	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Extended School Day	570	42	727	54	50	4
Extended School Year	572	38	781	58	54	4
Year Round School Options	215	16	1078	80	54	4
Tutorials (Before and After School)	647	48	633	47	67	5
Flexible Scheduling Options (block, variable time)	537	40	733	54	77	6
Summer Schools	916	68	375	28	56	4
Total = 1347						
N = number						

were widespread. Each school community type, whether rural, small town, suburban, or urban, reported a high degree of impact.

Districts, regardless of size, had similar response rates (Table 13). Districts of all size categories reported curriculum and instructional reforms at eighty-nine percent or more as "happening here."

Restructuring School Time: Where? A significant number of board members indicated that restructuring school time was "not happening" in their districts when compared to site-based management and curriculum and instructional reforms (Table 7). Specific school time restructuring programs were analyzed. The most popular of these options was summer school (68%). The least popular was "year-round schools" (16%). Tutorial programs were reported in forty-eight percent of the respondents districts. Only seventeen percent of those responding indicated that year-round schooling was available. Flexible scheduling options for blocking, teaming, and organizing the school day were present in only forty percent of the respondents' districts. Respondents indicated that a majority of districts were not involved in altering the traditional school day and year structure (Table 14).

**Restructuring school time reform by region.** Data were analyzed by region. School time restructuring programs were most prevalent in the Western region (77%). The Pacific region was next with a seventy-three percent response, closely followed by the Southern region with seventy-two percent. The Northeastern region had the lowest involvement with a response rate of fifty-six percent (Table 16). Again, the Northeastern region was less involved than other regions.

Table 15

Cross Tabulation of Restructuring Time Reforms

By Region	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central (N=507)	341	67	156	31	10	2
Northeast (N=313)	175	56	134	43	4	1
Pacific (N=176)	128	73	42	24	6	3
Southern (N=179)	129	72	43	24	7	4
Western (N=134)	103	77	31	23	0	0
Missing Data (N=38)						
By Community Type	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural (N=333)	242	73	86	26	5	2
Small Town (N=368)	227	62	131	36	10	3
Suburban (N=420)	278	66	131	31	11	3
Urban (N=144)	101	70	43	30	0	0
Missing Data (N=82)						

(table continues)

Table 15 (continued)

By Size	Happening Here		Not Happening Here		Missing Data	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fewer than 1,000 (N=205)	127	62	74	36	4	2
1,000 to 4,999 (N=712)	477	67	221	31	14	2
5,000 to 9,999 (N=225)	146	65	72	32	7	3
10,000 to 24,999 (N=141)	101	72	36	26	4	3
25,000 or more (N=58)	46	79	11	19	1	2
Missing Data (N=6)						

N = number

Table 16

Distribution of Responses Regarding Quality of Education

Degree of Quality	Frequency	Percent
Lowered Quality	42	3.1
Not Changed Quality	453	33.6
Raised Quality	775	57.5
Missing Data	59	4.4
TOTAL	1,347	100%

**Restructuring school time reform by school community type and size of district.** School time reform programs were cross-tabulated with type of school community, and district size. Small towns indicate a lower "happening here" (62%) rating than the other community types (Table 15). Rural communities responded with the highest "happening here" rating (73%). Regarding size of districts, the larger districts had higher "happening here" ratings than the smaller districts (Table 15).

A review of the data indicated that reform and restructuring, as perceived by a random sample of school board members, was widely practiced and extensively implemented throughout the country regardless of type, size, or region. Popular reforms included site-based management and a variety of curricular and instructional programs. The Northeastern Region appears to be less involved with some of the major reform and restructuring programs than the other four regions. A regional breakdown indicated that the Northeastern region responses were below average in 17 categories. The other four regions combined scored below average in two categories.

**Research question two asks: What are school board members' perceptions regarding the impact of reform on the quality of education?**

A random sample of school board members was asked to respond to whether or not reform and restructuring programs had (1) raised the quality of education, (2) lowered the quality of education, or (3) not changed the quality of education in their districts. Fifty-eight percent of those responding indicated that their district had been

impacted positively by reform and restructuring initiatives. Thirty-four percent indicated no change, while only three percent determined that reform and restructuring had lowered the quality of education (Table 16). A majority of school board members perceived that reform and restructuring initiatives were raising the quality of education in their districts.

Site-based Management: Quality? Board members were asked to rate whether site-based management reforms were having a positive impact, no impact, or negative impact on their district's educational programs (Question 19, Appendix A). Responses indicated that in districts where site-based management activities were occurring, they were having a positive impact on districts (Table 17).

In Table 17 results were derived by combining categories marked "slightly positive" and "generally positive."

Additionally, data were analyzed by considering only those responses indicating "happening here." This analysis was provided to determine how respondents who were knowledgeable of reform in their district felt about the impact on their district. These data were compiled in the category "Percent of Degrees of Quality Where Happening" and presented in Table 17. Data indicated that those who had site-based management reforms and restructuring programs were "generally positive" about the impact. A majority of these respondents rated each specific site-base management reform as having either a "slightly positive" or "generally positive" impact. Several specific programs were rated as "not happening here" by a large

Table 17

Distribution of Responses Regarding Quality of Site-Based Management Reforms

Site-Based Programs	Happening Here		Percent of Degrees of Quality Where Happening						Not Happening Here		Missing Data					
	N	%	GN	SN	SP	GP	NI	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Local advisory groups have power	844	63	17	2	85	10	280	33	323	38	144	17	418	31	94	7
Funding at school site	714	53	57	8	64	9	164	23	286	40	150	21	579	43	67	5
More autonomy at local site for maintenance	647	48	26	4	39	6	162	25	226	35	188	29	606	45	81	6
More autonomy at site for personnel decisions	754	56	15	2	68	9	204	27	339	45	136	18	512	38	81	6
More autonomy at site for education program design	970	72	10	1	39	4	233	24	446	46	243	25	418	31	94	7
More accountability at local site for results	916	68	9	1	55	6	266	29	449	49	137	15	337	25	94	7
Teacher empowerment	929	69	28	3	84	9	307	33	390	42	121	13	337	25	94	7

(table continues)

Table 17 (continued)

Site-Based Programs	Happening Here		Percent of Degrees of Quality Where Happening						Not Happening Here		Missing Data					
	N	%	GN	SN	SP	GP	NI	N	%	N	%					
Local site control of transportation	445	33	13	3	27	6	67	15	160	36	174	39	822	61	81	6
Local site control of cafeteria services	566	42	11	2	28	5	108	19	243	43	175	31	700	52	81	6

N = Number  
 GN = General Negative  
 SN = Slightly Negative  
 SP = Slightly Positive  
 GP = Generally Positive  
 NI = No Impact  
 Note: Columns GN, SN, SP, GP, and NI = 100% of Happening Here.

number of respondents, but were proving to be having positive impacts on districts by those who rated the program as "happening here." Two of these programs were "funding at school site" and "autonomy at the local site for maintenance."

Several specific site-based management elements were perceived by a large number of respondents as having a positive impact on their districts. These included local advisory group empowerment (70%) and autonomy at site for personnel (72%). The mean percentage for categories "generally positive" and "slightly positive" when combined was thirty-eight percent. Only twelve percent of those responding to this question of the survey indicated that site-based management reforms were not having an impact on their district. The combined score for "generally negative" or "slightly negative" was a mean of only three percent. A complete display of the data is compiled and presented in Table 17.

**Site-based management quality by region, school community type, district size.** Site-based management elements were cross-tabulated with region, size of community, and school community type. There were no differences noted.

School Choice: Quality? Data indicated that most specific school choice reform programs were not occurring in districts. For example, voucher incentives, charter schools, and magnet schools were not popular programs and were not occurring in most districts.

However, when data were analyzed by considering only those who indicated that school choice options were "happening here," it appears that several specific school choice programs were impacting more positively than others. "Students and

parents choosing schools within districts" was rated as impacting positively by sixty-three percent of the respondents. Also, "students having access to magnet schools" was rated at "slightly positive" or "generally positive" by sixty-seven percent of the respondents. Although these programs were seen as generally "not happening," when they were "happening," they were perceived to be impacting positively. On the other hand, "students using vouchers or tax incentives to attend schools of choice" and "students having access to charter schools" were perceived as "generally negative" by respondents (Table 18).

**School choice reform programs by region, school community type, size of district.** School choice options were cross tabulated with region, school community type, and size of district. Percentages of responses were similar in each category.

#### Curriculum and Instructional Program Reform: Quality?

Next, school board members were asked to rate the quality of several curriculum and instructional reform programs. Results indicated that curriculum and instructional reforms were impacting on districts (Table 19). Sixteen of nineteen programs listed were recognized by board members as impacting on their districts. Programs identified by board members as "generally positive" and "slightly positive" were computer technology, programs for at-risk, preschool programs, adoption of core curriculum, dropout prevention programs, and stiffer course requirements.

Programs identified as having the lowest ratings of "generally negative" and of "slightly negative" were parent training and support to help prepare preschool

Table 18

Distribution of Responses Regarding Quality of School Choice

School Choice Programs	Happening Here		Percent of Degrees of Quality Where Happening						Not Happening Here		Missing Data					
	N	%	GN	SN	SP	GP	NI	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Students and parents choose schools within districts	457	33	14	3	32	7	87	19	29	44	123	27	857	64	33	2
Students and parents choose schools in or out of district	400	30	44	11	64	16	64	16	100	25	128	32	890	66	57	4
Students may use vouchers or tax incentives to attend school of choice (public or private)	87	7	27	31	8	9	8	9	8	9	37	42	1208	89	55	4
Students have access to magnet schools	216	16	19	9	4	2	52	24	93	43	48	22	1066	79	63	5
Students have access to charter schools	93	7	13	14	5	5	9	10	24	26	42	45	1199	89	55	4

N = Number  
GN = General Negative  
SN = Slightly Negative  
SP = Slightly Positive  
GP = Generally Positive  
NI = No Impact

Note: Columns GN, SN, SP, GP, and NI = 100% of Happening Here.

Table 19

Distribution of Responses Regarding Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Reforms

Curriculum & Instruction Programs	Happening Here		Percent of Degrees of Quality Where Happening						Not Happening Here		Missing Data					
	N	%	GN	SN	SP	GP	NI	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Whole language	981	73	20	2	39	4	235	24	579	59	98	11	275	20	91	7
Ungraded	433	33	22	5	31	7	116	25	206	47	70	16	823	61	86	6
Pass/no fail	422	31	21	5	46	11	97	23	135	32	122	29	836	62	89	7
Alternative assessment	700	52	14	2	21	3	259	37	301	43	105	15	518	38	129	10
Increased course requirements	929	69	9	1	28	3	269	29	530	57	93	10	340	25	86	6
Increased graduation requirements	912	68	9	1	27	3	237	26	547	60	91	10	356	26	79	6
Outcome-based curriculum	869	64	26	3	43	5	269	31	434	50	96	11	380	28	98	8
Common core curriculum	1004	75	100	1	201	2	291	29	572	57	110	11	248	18	95	7
Computer technology	1221	91	122	1	122	1	256	21	904	74	87	3	58	4	68	5
Dropout prevention	924	72	10	1	29	3	273	28	525	59	88	9	298	22	75	6
Programs for at-risk	1127	84	23	2	34	3	327	29	699	62	45	4	158	12	62	5

(table continues)

Table 19 (continued)

Curriculum & Instruction Programs	Happening Here		Percent of Degrees of Quality Where Happening										Not Happening Here		Missing Data		
	N	%	GN	SN	SP	GP	NI	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Minority achievement	579	43	6	1	29	5	174	30	232	40	139	24	686	51	82	6	6
Multicultural programs	790	58	16	2	40	5	269	34	332	42	134	17	482	36	75	6	6
Foreign language	1135	84	16	1	34	3	329	29	602	53	759	14	142	10	70	6	6
Nutrition and health care	860	63	9	1	17	2	284	32	430	50	120	14	372	28	115	9	9
Parent training support to prepare pre-school children	805	60	8	1	24	3	274	34	427	53	72	9	474	35	68	5	5
Adult education	855	63	9	1	9	1	761	89	0	0	77	9	423	32	69	5	5
Apprenticeships	616	46	6	1	12	2	209	34	314	51	74	12	651	48	80	6	6
Pre-school programs	968	72	10	1	19	2	184	19	716	74	39	4	303	23	76	6	6

N = Number  
 GN = General Negative  
 SN = Slightly Negative  
 SP = Slightly Positive  
 GP = Generally Positive  
 NI = No Impact

Note: Columns GN, SN, SP, GP, and NI = 100% of Happening Here.

children, nutrition and health care programs, and dropout prevention programs. These programs were seen by board members as not contributing positively to the quality of education in their districts. Those programs identified as in district but having "no impact" on the quality of instruction were foreign language programs, multi-cultural programs, and minority achievement programs.

Next, only data from those respondents indicating that curriculum and instructional reforms were "happening" in their districts were analyzed. In every case, a majority of respondents indicated that curriculum and instructional reforms were impacting "slightly positive" or "generally positive." In general, respondents perceived that curriculum and instructional reforms were having positive impacts on their districts' educational programs.

#### **Curriculum and instructional program reforms: Quality by region.**

Several possible relationships were noticed when looking at a regional analysis of respondents. Increased graduation requirements were rated as "slightly negative" more in the Northeastern region (35%). Also, outcome-based education was viewed to be less positive in the Northeastern region (28%) than in other regions. Core curriculum programs were lower (21%) in the "generally positive" and higher in the "not happening here" category in the Northeastern region (31%). On the other hand, whole language was perceived to be impacting more positively in the Northeastern region (20%) than in the other four. Preschool programs were rated lower in the "slightly positive" and "generally positive" categories in the Northeastern. In general,

respondents from the Northeastern region indicated reforms were having less impact on the quality of education than the other regions.

### Restructuring School Time: Quality?

Respondents indicated that several of the restructuring school time options were having a positive impact on the quality of education in their district (Table 20). These programs included summer school and tutorials. Flexible scheduling options received a positive rating from seventy-nine percent of those responding "happening here." Results indicated that, in general, where reforms were "happening" the impact was rated as "positive."

**Board members perceptions of quality by region, school community type, and size of district.** Site-based management, curriculum and instructional programs, school choice, and school time restructuring were cross tabulated with questions measuring perceptions of quality of instruction (Question #23, Appendix A). Observations indicated that by region (Table 21), community type (Table 22), and district size (Table 23), board members perceived that reform and restructuring programs raised the quality of education in their districts. Specifically, data indicated that every region responded with a majority of board members perceiving that reforms raised the quality of education. The average percentage in the "raised quality" category was fifty-seven percent for all regions. When analyzing the data by school community type, similar results were noted. The average percentage for the "raised quality" category was fifty-six percent. In urban districts, board members

Table 20

Distribution of Responses Regarding Quality and Restructuring School Time

School Time Programs	Happening Here		Percent of Degrees of Quality Where Happening						Not Happening Here		Missing Data					
	N	%	GN	SN	SP	GP	NI	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Extended school day	570	42	11	2	63	11	131	23	222	39	143	25	727	54	50	4
Extended school year	519	38	21	4	73	14	130	25	161	31	135	26	774	58	49	4
Year-round school	220	16	7	3	24	11	31	14	53	24	46	21	1077	80	50	4
Tutorials (before & after school)	643	48	13	2	13	2	212	33	328	51	77	12	631	47	73	5
Flexible scheduling	537	40	11	2	32	6	161	30	263	49	70	13	733	54	77	6
Summer school	916	68	18	2	18	2	247	27	531	58	701	71	375	28	56	4

N = Number

GN = General Negative

SN = Slightly Negative

SP = Slightly Positive

GP = Generally Positive

NI = No Impact

Note: Columns GN, SN, SP, GP, and NI = 100% of Happening Here.

Table 21

Cross Tabulation of Region by Quality of Reform

Region (N=1347)	Impact on Quality							
	LQ		NCQ		RQ		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central (N=507)	15	3	160	32	303	60	29	6
Northeast (N=313)	5	2	109	35	172	55	27	9
Pacific (N=176)	3	2	71	40	93	53	9	5
Southern (N=179)	10	5	54	30	106	59	9	5
Western (N=134)	9	6	46	34	78	58	1	1

LQ = lower quality  
 NCQ = not changed quality  
 RQ = raised quality  
 MD = missing data

Table 22

Cross Tabulation of School Community Type by Quality of Reform

District Type (N=1347)	Impact on Quality							
	LQ		NCQ		RQ		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural (N=333)	17	5	110	33	188	56	18	5
Small Town (N=368)	9	2	123	33	221	60	15	4
Suburban (N=420)	11	2	130	31	257	61	22	5
Urban (N=144)	2	1	67	46	70	48	5	3

LQ = lower quality  
NCQ = not changed quality  
RQ = raised quality  
MD = missing data

Table 23

Cross Tabulation of District Size to Quality of Reform

District Size (N=1347)	Impact on Quality							
	LQ		NCQ		RQ		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fewer than 1,000 (N=205)	13	6	83	41	99	48	10	5
1,000 to 4,999 (N=712)	17	2	224	32	433	61	38	5
5,000 to 9,999 (N=225)	6	3	73	32	131	58	15	7
10,000 to 24,999 (N=141)	4	3	47	33	82	58	8	6
25,000 or more (N=58)	1	2	25	43	28	48	4	7
Missing data (N=6)								
LQ = lower quality								
NCQ = not changed quality								
RQ = raised quality								
MD = missing data								

perceived a higher degree of no change (47%) in quality than their peers in rural, suburban, or small town communities. Also, urban members selected the "raised quality" category less frequently (49%) than their peers from suburban, rural, and small town districts. Analysis of data by district size indicated similar results. Most respondents reporting reforms were "happening here" in their districts also indicated those reforms increased quality. Additionally, cross tabulations were calculated on selected variables to determine possible relationships. "Degree of district involvement" was cross tabulated with "degree of perceived quality" (Table 24). Results indicated that most board members selecting "raised quality" also selected "moderate" or "great" involvement. The same trend was evident when "degree of board involvement" was cross referenced with "degree of perceived quality" (Table 25). In summary, data indicated board members perceived that as board and district involvement in program reform and restructuring increased, so did the quality of education.

**Research question #3 asks: Do board members perceive changes in their power and authority as a result of reform and restructuring initiatives?**

Board members were asked, "In your opinion, implementing reform or restructuring programs in your district have (1) broadened the power of the school board, (2) not affected the power of the school board, or (3) curtailed the power of the school board?" (Question 22, Appendix A). Most board members responded by indicating there were no noticeable differences relative to reform and restructuring

Table 24

Cross Distribution of District Involvement in Reform and Degree of Perceived Quality

Degree of District Involvement	Degree of Perceived Quality							
	LQ		NCQ		RQ		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None (N=85)	1	1	40	47	32	38	12	14
Little (N=310)	6	2	152	49	133	43	19	6
Moderate (N=636)	25	4	192	30	394	62	25	4
Great (N=301)	9	3	72	24	208	69	12	4
No Response (N=15)	1	7	2	15	5	35	7	42
Total = 1347								
% = 100								

LQ = lower quality

NCQ = not changed quality

RQ = raised quality

MD = missing data

N = Frequency for row

Table 25

Cross Distribution of the Degree of School Board Involvement By the Perceived Degree of Quality

Degree of School Board Involvement	Degree of Perceived Quality							
	LQ		NCQ		RQ		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None (N=60)	3	5	33	55	18	30	6	10
Little (N=318)	13	4	140	44	137	43	28	9
Moderate (N=662)	26	4	212	32	398	60	26	4
Great (N=295)	3	1	59	20	224	76	9	3
No Response (N=12)	0	0	1	8	2	17	9	75
Total = 1347 % = 100								
LQ = lower quality NCQ = not changed quality RQ = raised quality MD = missing data N = total frequency in row								

initiatives (67%). The majority indicated that the reform movement had no impact on the power and authority of local boards (Table 26). On the other hand, sixteen percent agreed that their power was curtailed while twelve percent indicated that their power had broadened (Table 26).

Data were analyzed to determine trends or patterns emerging over region, type of community, and size of community. Generally, there were no discernable differences noted. Specifically, when size of district was cross-tabulated with perceived power, the respondents from districts of 10,000 to 24,999 indicated that their power broadened more frequently than those from other districts of different size (Table 27). Also, districts of fewer than 1,000 indicated a broadening of power (Table 27).

Board members were asked to indicate to whom or to what school board authority and power was lost over the past four years (Table 28). The majority of board members perceived no change in their power or authority over the past four years (Table 28). Respondents who perceived they were losing power indicated they were losing power and authority to local advisory councils (33%), community interest groups (31%), the governor (32%), local bargaining units (18%), parent groups (40%), the state level (36%), the superintendent (24%), the teachers and or the teachers association (48%), and the U.S. Department of Education (16%).

Responses from board members regarding shifting power were cross tabulated with questions regarding perceived changes in power and authority. For the most part, there were no discernable differences noted. However, when responses

Table 26

Distribution of Respondents Regarding Reform and the Impact on Board Power and Authority

Reforms Impact on Power	Frequency	Percentage
Broadened power	158	11.7
Curtailed power	211	15.7
Not affected power	908	67.4
No response	70	5.2
Total	1347	100.0

See Figure 1 in Appendix E

Table 27

Cross Tabulation of Size of District by Impact on Power

Size of District	CP		NI		BP		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fewer than 1,000 (N=205)	45	22	129	63	20	10	11	5
1,000 to 4,999 (N=712)	99	14	493	69	83	12	37	5
5,000 to 9,999 (N=225)	40	18	151	67	24	11	10	4
10,000 to 24,999 (N=141)	19	14	90	64	25	18	7	5
25,000 or more (N=58)	8	14	40	69	6	10	4	7
Missing data (N=6)								

N = Number  
 CP = curtailed power  
 NI = no impact  
 BP = broadened power  
 MD = missing data

Table 28

Distribution of Respondents Indicating a Shift in Power

Groups	Gained		Lost		No Change		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Local advisory	445	33	42	3	719	53	141	11
Teachers	401	30	94	7	760	56	92	7
Parent groups	532	40	58	4	648	48	109	8
Superintendent	328	24	180	13	743	55	96	7
State	481	36	148	11	612	45	106	8
Governor	433	32	127	29	664	49	123	9
U.S. Department of Education	215	16	118	9	849	63	165	12
U.S. President	198	15	109	8	863	64	175	13
Local bargaining	241	18	136	10	821	63	133	10
State teachers association	239	18	130	10	845	64	149	11
State school boards	172	13	164	12	862	64	149	11
Community groups	414	31	61	5	724	54	198	11
City Council	94	7	67	5	971	72	215	16
Mayor	66	5	65	4	983	73	233	17
County Council	41	3	58	4	1019	76	229	17
Total: N=1347, %=100								
% = % of total responses by row								

regarding power shifts were cross tabulated with school community type (urban, rural, suburban, small town), urban board members perceived that they were losing power and authority to superintendents more often than those from other district types (Table 29). In general, the regions and sizes of districts did not affect shifts in power.

Board members were asked to determine if their boards' power or authority had increased, decreased, or not changed as a result of the introduction of specific reforms: site-based management, school choice, curriculum and instructional reform, and/or restructuring school time programs. Most respondents indicated their power and authority was unaffected by reform and restructuring efforts. Respondents indicated that of the four programs, site-based management impacted highest on the reduction of power and authority. However, the impact was relatively small (11%) (Table 30).

As mentioned above and profiled in Table 30, school board members were asked to indicate whether site-based management, school choice options, curriculum and instructional reforms, and restructuring school time had affected their board's authority or power. To further analyze the data and determine possible relationships between reform and power, only those respondents indicating involvement in reform initiatives were considered. Those who indicated "not happening here" were excluded from the data. This information was compiled and presented graphically in Figure #2. Figure #2 represented all categories of data for this question, while Figure #2b represented only those respondents involved in reform. Those responding to the

Table 29

Cross Tabulation of District Type by Shifting Power

District Type	Reform Impact on Power							
	CP		NAP		BP		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural (N=333)	62	19	212	64	39	12	20	6
Small Town (N=368)	65	18	258	70	32	9	13	4
Suburban (N=420)	48	11	281	67	61	15	30	7
Urban (N=144)	23	16	101	70	16	11	4	3
No Responses	13	16	56	68	10	12	3	4
Missing Data (N=82)								

N = number

CP = curtailed power

NAP = not affected power

BP = broadened power

MD = missing data

Table 30

Distribution of the Effect of Reform on School Board Power

Reform	I		D		NC		NHH		MD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Site-based management	262	27	144	11	440	33	381	28	20	2
School choice	153	11	55	4	416	31	695	52	28	2
Curriculum & instruction	601	45	72	5	554	41	97	7	23	2
Restructuring time	289	22	52	4	559	42	418	31	29	2
Total = 1347										

N = number

I = increased

D = decrease

NC = no change

NHH = not happening here

MD = missing data

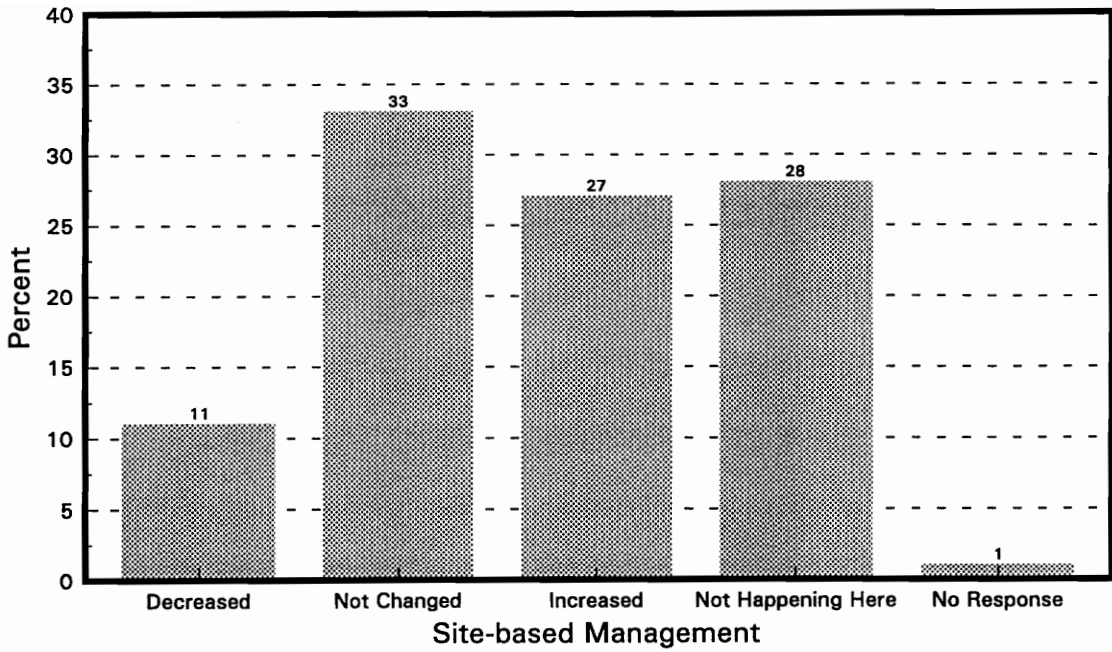


Figure 2: Effect of SBM on School Board Power

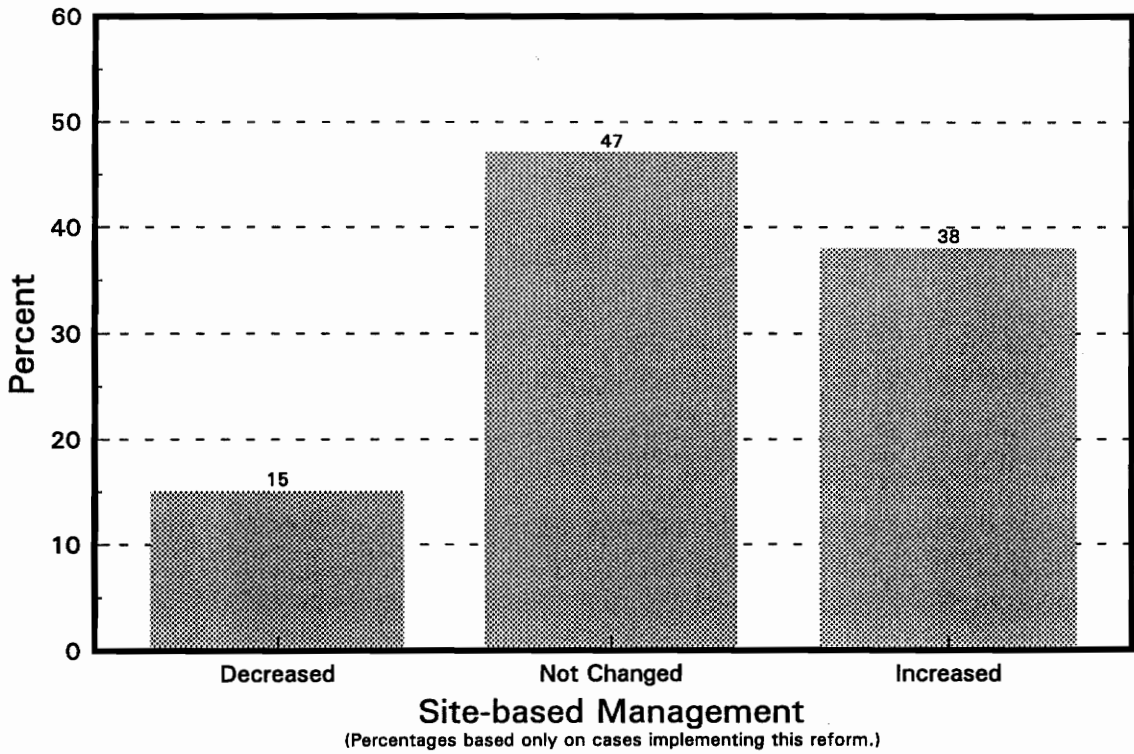


Figure 2b: Effect of SBM on School Board Power

survey question "not happening here" were excluded. An analysis of these data indicated that forty-seven percent of the respondents maintained that reforms were not changing their power and authority. Another thirty-eight percent perceived that site-based management reforms were increasing their power, while fifteen percent believe they are losing power.

Similar analysis occurred for school choice options. In this case, sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that school choice options were not changing their power and authority to govern their district. Additionally, twenty-five percent indicated the school choice options increased their power, while nine percent indicated these reforms decreased their power. Figures #3 and #3b were generated to display the difference between all respondents and those indicating school choice options operating in their school districts.

Curriculum and instructional reform programs were considered next. Again, for the purpose of analysis, only those board members who indicated reforms were occurring in their districts were included in the analysis. All those who indicated "not happening here" were excluded. The results of this process were compiled and presented in Figure #4 and #4b. Results depicted in Figure 4b indicated that forty-nine percent of those board members whose districts were involved in curricular and reform programs perceived that their power and authority to govern their district had increased. Forty-five percent indicated that reform programs had not changed, while six percent noted a decrease in power.

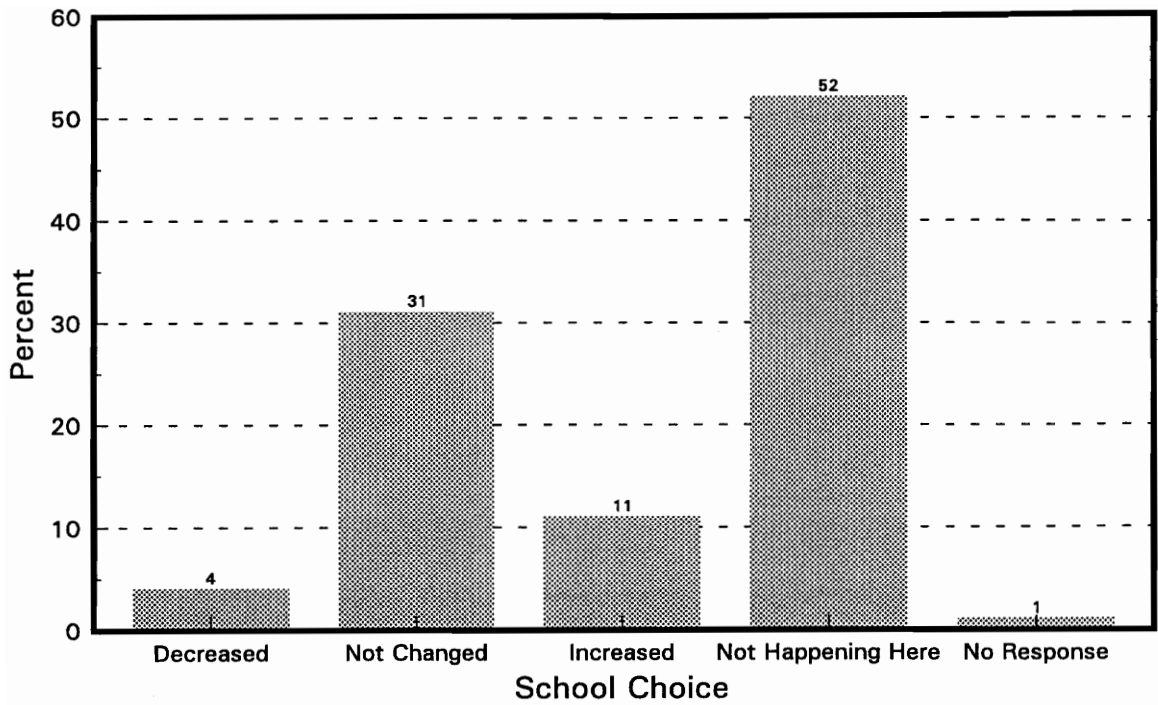
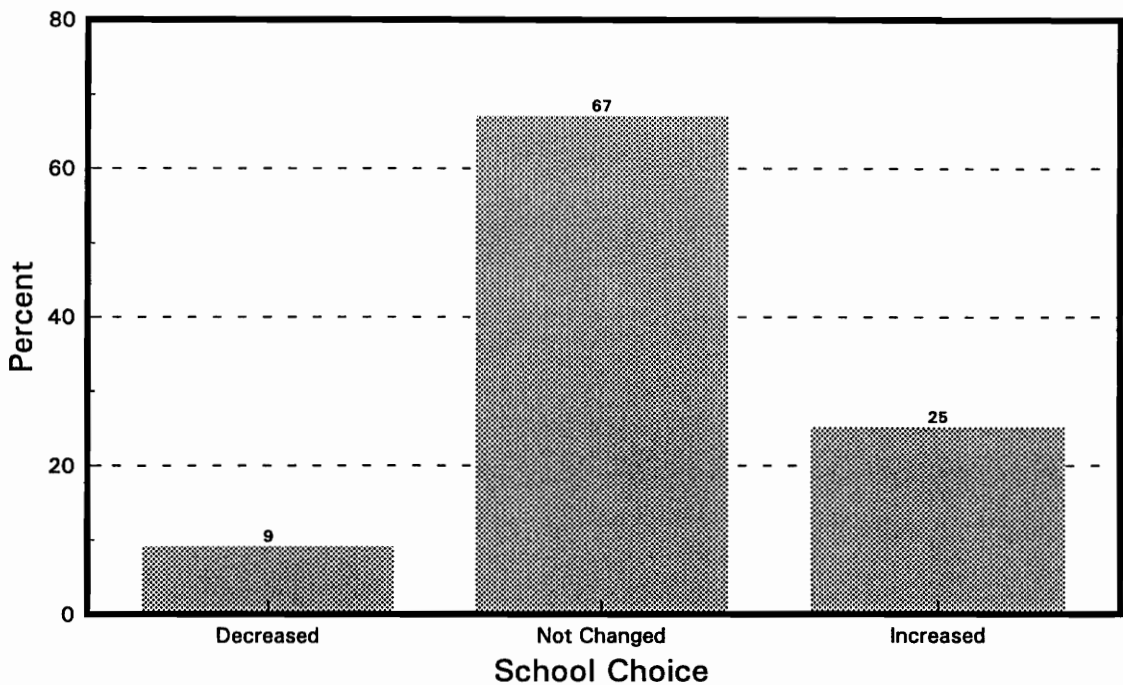


Figure 3: Effect of School Choice on School Board Power



(Percentages based only on cases implementing this reform.)

Figure 3b: Effect of School Choice on School Board Power

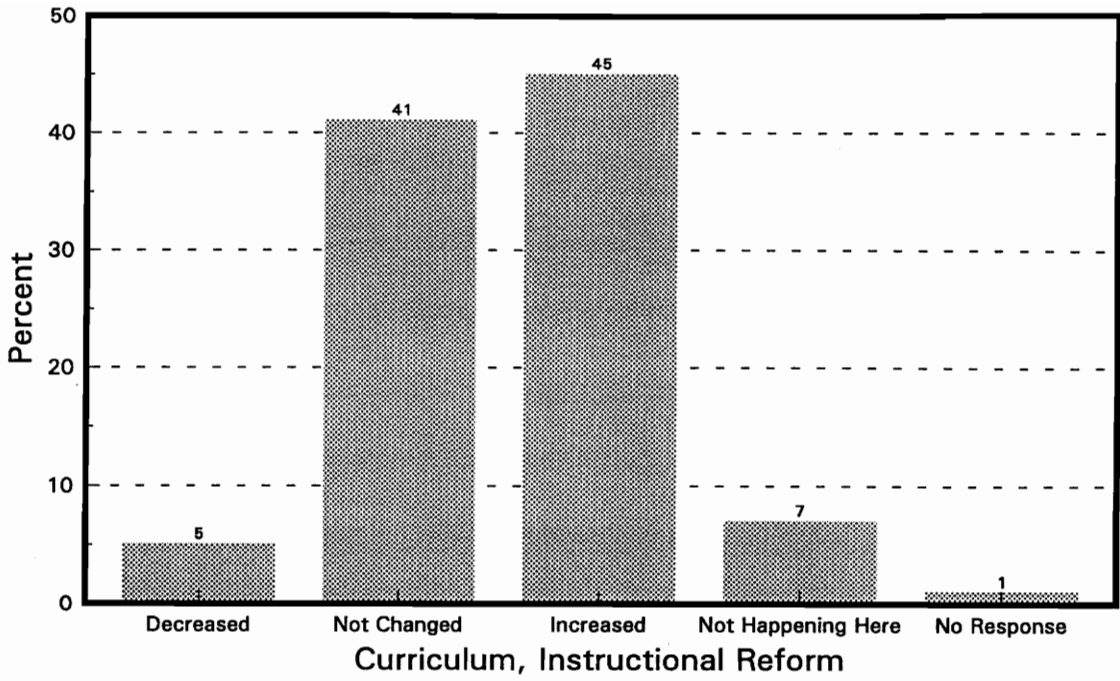
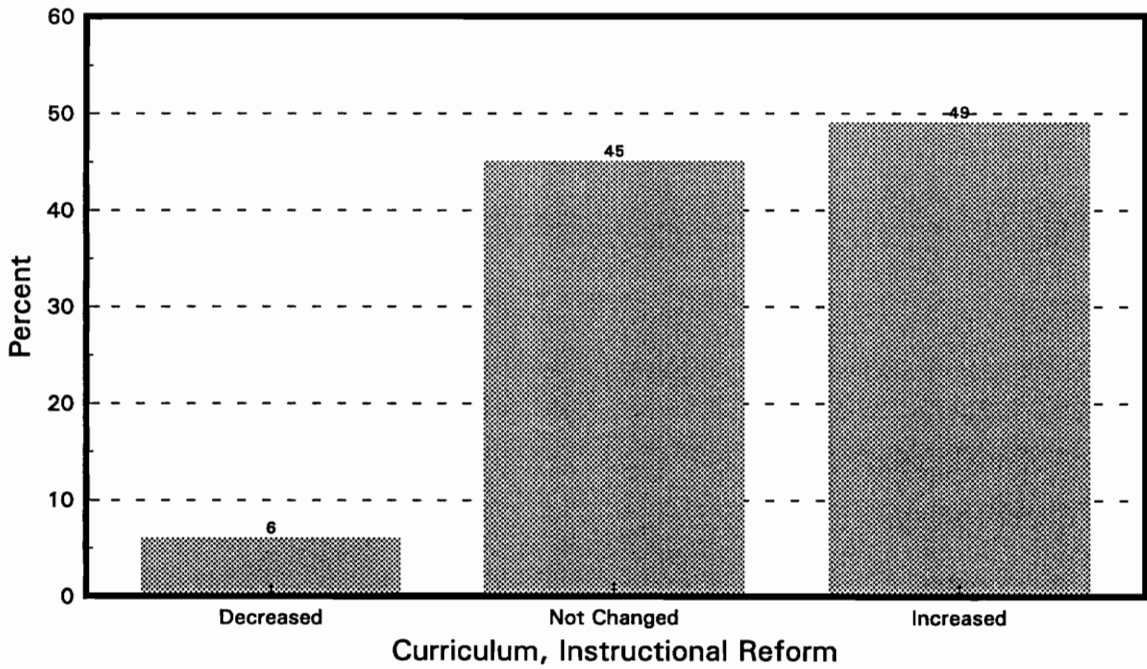


Figure 4: Effect of Curriculum Reform on School Board Power



(Percentages based only on cases implementing this reform.)

Figure 4b: Effect of Curriculum Reform on School Board Power

Restructuring school time was cross tabulated and analyzed. Data for restructuring school time were compiled and presented in Figures #5 and #5b. When considering only those board members with school time options in their districts, sixty-two percent indicated the programs were not impacting on their power and authority, thirty-two percent indicated an increase in power and authority, and six percent stated that a decrease had occurred.

In summary, results indicated that more board members who have reform programs in their districts perceived an increase in power; and, for the most part, reform and restructuring programs were not eroding school board power and authority. Rather, reforms were perceived to be increasing power and authority.

Next, board members were asked to identify the major obstacles to reform and restructuring. Results were listed in Table 31 and Figure 6. Additionally, board members reported that the number one obstacle to reform and restructuring was budget concerns (48%). The second most identified obstacle was teachers and teacher unions (21%), and the third most common obstacle was the local citizens (9%). Few board members identified board members as obstacles (3%). Respondents were asked to identify other areas of concern. Twenty-three of the surveys returned had written statements pertaining to this category. Six statements indicated that state legislatures represented obstacles. No other patterns were evident.

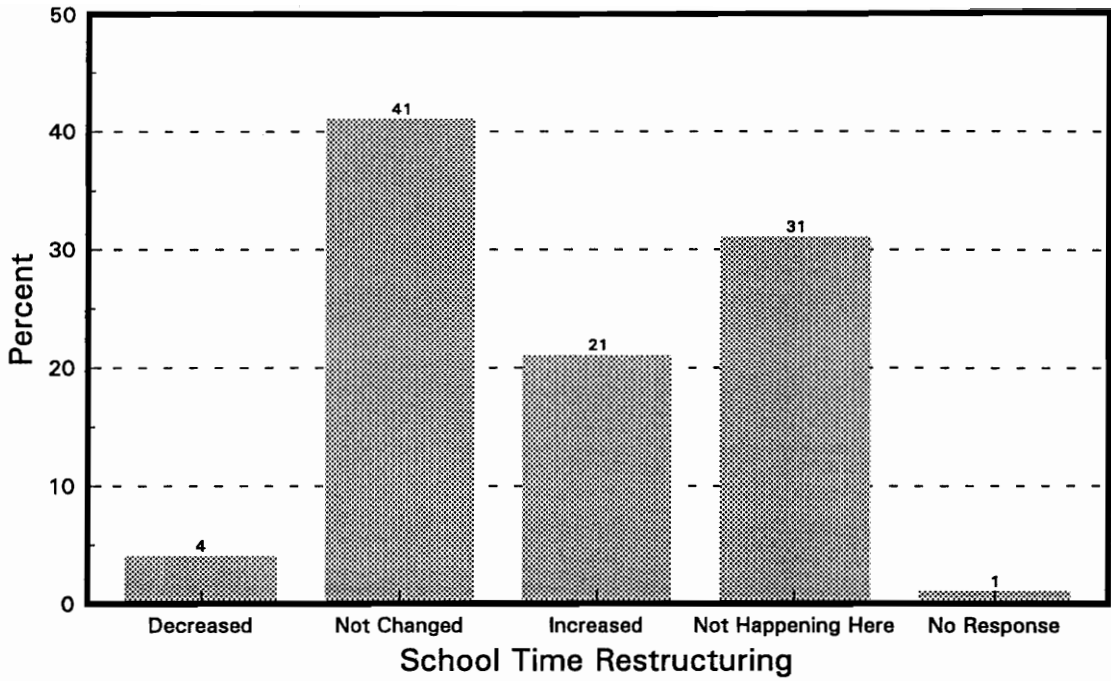
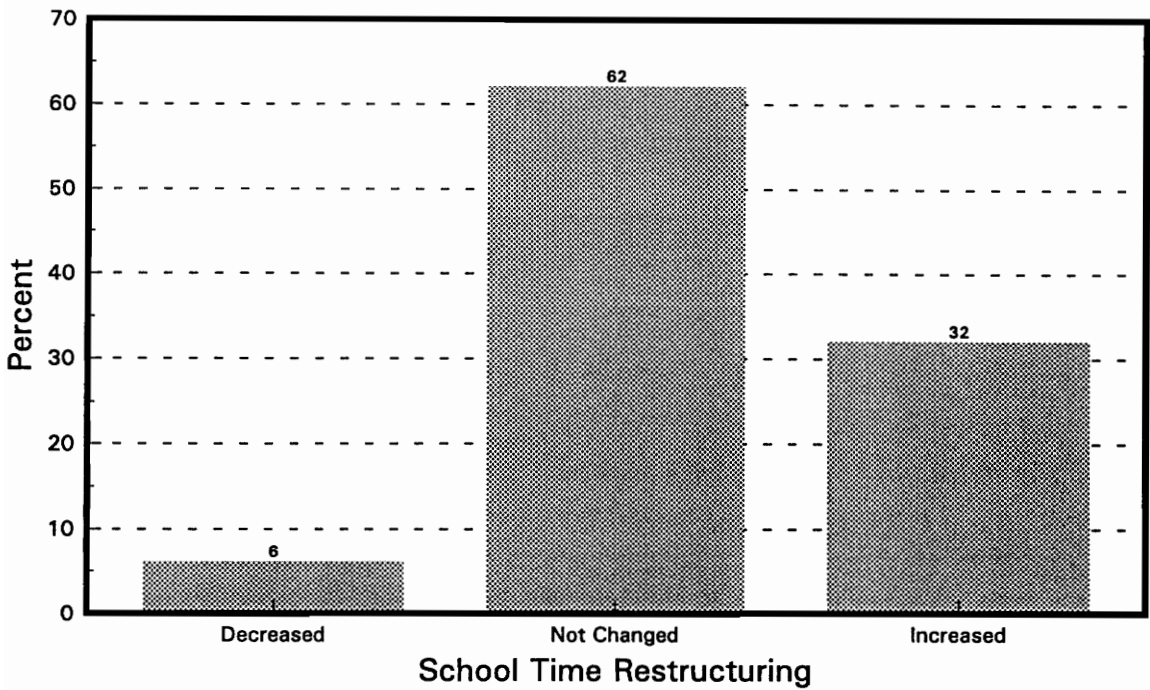


Figure 5: Effect of Restructuring School Time on School Board Power



(Percentages based only on cases implementing this reform.)

Figure 5b: Effect of Restructuring School Time on School Board Power

Table 31

Distribution of Responses Regarding Obstacles to Reform

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Rank of Respondents
Superintendent	67	5	6
Local citizens	121	9	4
Parent councils	14	1	9
Teachers	162	12	2
Students	13	1	8
Board members	40	3	7
Budget concerns	647	48	1
Teacher unions	121	9	3
Other	108	8	5
Missing data	54	4	
TOTAL	1347	100.0	

See Figure 6 in Appendix F

### **Research question #3 related to selected variables:**

Reform impact by power and quality. Questions dealing with quality of reform were cross tabulated with questions associated with power and authority. The impact of site-based management, school choice, curriculum and instruction, and school time structure on quality of educational programs were compared to questions measuring power and authority. If the quality of reform increased, would it follow that perceptions of power and authority would change? Several variables were selected for study. Cross tabulation was calculated. A summary of results for these calculations was displayed in Table 32. A twenty percent variation in significance was used to determine relationship. Data showed that in each reform area (site-based management, school choice, curricular and instructional, and restructuring school time) there were more responses from those choosing the categories measuring "increase in quality" and "broadening of power." In other words, those who indicated that reforms were increasing the quality of education, also perceived that reforms were increasing the power and authority of board members. This relationship occurred in all four categories of reforms. Another relationship was noted in the site-based management category. Although many board members found that site-based management increased their power and authority and the quality of their educational programs, others indicated a decrease in the quality of their educational programs when it was accompanied by a curtailment in power and authority. A summary of these cross tabulations referred to above was compiled and presented in Table 32.

Table 32

Cross Tabulation of Impact of Reform by Power and Authority

Reform Programs	Category of Significance	Significance
SBM (N=70)	Increase/Broaden P&A	.55
SBM (N=64)	Decrease/Curtail P&A	.66
SC (N=24)	Increase/Broaden P&A	.22
C&I (N=109)	Increase/Broaden P&A	.46
RS (N=70)	Increase/Broaden P&A	.50

SBM = site-based management  
 SC = school choice  
 C&I = curriculum and instruction  
 RS = restructuring school time  
 N = frequency  
 P&A = power and authority

To further investigate the relationship between reform programs and school board power and authority, specific site-based management program variables were analyzed. These specific programs were: advisory group empowerment, control of school education programs at the local site, funding for programs at the local site, personnel decisions at the local site, school accountability for results at the local site, and teacher empowerment. These reforms were chosen for further study because they were most often identified by school board members as "happening" in their districts and as having the greatest impact on program quality (as measured in question 28). A review of the data indicated that these six specific site-base management reform programs were seen as increasing board power (Table 33). Seventy-nine percent of those indicating that advisory group empowerment was improving the quality of education also indicated that board power was increasing. Similar results occurred for local control of educational programs, local control of personnel decisions, local accountability for results, and teacher empowerment. Of the specific site-based management reforms analyzed, only funding at the school site was not related.

To further investigate the relationship between reform programs and school board power and authority, specific curricular and instructional program variables were selected. These specific curricular and instructional program variables were adult education programs, alternative assessment, apprenticeship, computer instruction, stiffer course requirements, core curriculum, dropout prevention, foreign language program, stiffer graduation requirements, minority achievement, multi-cultural, outcome-based, parent training programs, pass/fail options, ungraded

Table 33

Cross Tabulation of Site-Based Management Variables Related to Increased School Board Power

Site-Based Variables	Impact on Power					
	Negative		No Impact		Positive	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Advisory group empowerment	28	8	34	11	245	79
School education programs at local	17	6	22	7	270	87
Funding at school site	37	13	39	15	93	72
School personnel decisions	22	8	43	15	223	77
School accountability for results	21	7	34	11	268	83
Teacher empowerment	34	11	22	7	267	83
Total = 1347						

Note: % may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: The "Happening Here" category on Table 17 was used to identify the most prevalent site-based reforms. A 20% difference among reforms was used to determine which reforms were considered most prevalent. Once identified, reforms were cross tabulated with Question 21, school board power.

schools, and whole language. These specific programs were chosen because they were perceived to be "happening" with the greatest frequency and were impacting on the quality of educational programs as measured in Question 28 (Appendix A). These specific curriculum programs were then cross tabulated with questions measuring power and authority. Whole language, stiffer course requirements, core curricular strategies, computer instruction, and programs for at-risk students were identified under the criteria mentioned above and cross tabulated with question. Results displayed in Table 34 indicated that these curriculum and instructional reforms demonstrated a relationship with school board power and authority. Results indicated that as reforms increased in number so did the quality of education and the perceived power and authority of school board members.

In summary, several specific program elements of reform which displayed significant impacts on districts were cross referenced with board members' perceptions of power and authority. Despite low frequency counts, the researcher observed differences by filtering variables and by collapsing categories of responses. Results indicated positive relationships between the degree of impact of quality on educational programs and the broadening of power and authority. As the degree of impact in these specific programs increased, so did the degree of perceived board power and authority (Table 35). These relationships across site-based management and curricular and instructional programs suggest that as reforms increase in impact, school board members sense a broadening of power and authority.

Table 34

Cross Tabulation of Curriculum Variables Related to Increases of School Board Power by Curriculum and Instructional Reform

Curriculum Variables	Impact on Power					
	Negative		No Impact		Positive	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Whole language	25	4	47	10	396	85
Stiffer course requirements	18	3	33	6	407	68
Core curricular	16	3	38	6	425	71
Computer instruction	16	3	14	2	541	95
At-risk program	20	4	19	4	494	93
Total = 1347						

Collapsed frequency chart

N in category column represent indications of high frequency of occurrence for specific curricular reform.

Table 35

Cross Tabulation of Selected Reform Variables by School Board Power and Authority

Reform Program	Category of Significance	Significance
Whole language (N=91)	Gen. Positive/Broadening P&A	26
Alternative assess (N=55)	Gen. Positive/Broadening P&A	35
Outcome-based education (N=71)	Gen. Positive/Broadening P&A	27
Core curriculum (N=98)	Gen. Positive/Broadening P&A	32
Dropout programs (N=96)	Gen. Positive/Broadening P&A	29

N = frequency  
P&A = power and authority

School choice options and school restructuring programs were not analyzed because of the low numbers of responses in "happening here" categories as measured in Question 28.

In summary, when relating school board power and authority to reform variables certain relationships occurred. First, most board members surveyed indicated that they did not perceive a loss in power. This finding is different than previous studies of board member authority (NCEI). Secondly, when shifts in power and authority were indicated, most board members perceive the power shift to be to another group at the local level rather than to state or national. Thirdly, board members who identify specific site-based management and curricular and instructional reforms as "happening" in their district, also believe that their power and authority has increased.

### Summary

This chapter has presented a description of the school board member who responded to the survey according to selected demographic, personal, and school board characteristics. The second section describes the findings of this study for the research questions. The results identified the reform and restructuring programs and the subsequent impact these programs are having on district by region, size of district, and school community type. Additionally, the results describe the perceptions school board members have regarding reform and the impact each has had on the quality of education also by region, size of district, and school community type. Lastly, the

results describe the impact reform and restructuring have had on school board power and authority over the past four years. Included, also, are the data derived from other relevant questions in the survey.

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the study that was conducted. Included is a review of the purpose of the study, a restatement of the research questions, a summary of the related literature, a recapitulation of the research method used by the researcher, and a synthesis of the findings and conclusions derived from the data analysis. Recommendations for further research are also made.

#### Summary

##### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze information from a sample of school board members in order to describe which reform and restructuring programs were impacting on districts, to ascertain whether or not reforms and restructuring programs were impacting on the quality of education, and to analyze the impact of reform on the power and authority of school board members.

##### Summary of Related Literature

The literature review focused on school board power and authority and how boards operated in an environment in which school boards were expected to participate in and oversee reform and restructuring initiatives.

School board members perception of power and authority are the product of several influences. These influences are either formal or informal and vary from board to board and member to member.

Guthrie (1986), Cremin (1951), Bolmeir (1968), Reutter and Hamilton (1985), and Alexander (1969) were cited as documenting the explicit nature of school board authority. Local school boards received their authority from state constitutions which regulated the roles and responsibilities of local school boards. Within the context of state control, local boards often operated with a high degree of implied power and authority. Campbell and Layton (1969) and Cistone (1977) researched board decision making and board culture. They concluded that whether acting as an individual or as a socialized member of a group, board members, by the very nature of their implied authority and power, have been key figures in controlling change.

The literature confirmed that school boards were more than intermediary agencies responsible solely for implementing state mandates. Local boards developed a degree of latitude in interpreting how they applied their authority and power. This latitude led to the process of local control--a unique arrangement inherent in the political process (Lutz, 1980).

The literature also focused on reform and restructuring initiatives. The literature recorded that during the 1980s most of the reform was driven by state initiatives (Toch, 1991a; Futrell, 1989). This period represented a time when reform agenda was overwhelmingly regulatory in nature (Toch, 1991a). It imposed reform on localities from above. State boards and legislatures became very aggressive in

their efforts to solve the problems facing schools. These reforms often circumvented local board authority and may have decreased local board members' power to deal effectively with change (Toch, 1991a).

Following the state regulatory period, a period of intensifying federal concern regarding educational reform developed. In September, 1989, President George Bush met with the governors of 50 states to declare, "the time has come, for the first time in U.S. history, to establish clear, national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive" (National Education Goals, 1991, p. 2). As a result of state and federal initiatives, hundreds of reform efforts began to emerge.

At the local level, reform initiatives like site-based management enabled teachers, citizens, and administrators to introduce programs designed to improve the quality of education. Local advisory committees and teacher groups focused on empowerment and local decision making based on collaboration and consensus building (Neal).

Reform and restructuring initiatives from the national, state, and local levels were identified from the literature as being prevalent and as impacting on districts throughout the United States. Reforms including site-based management, America 2000, curriculum and educational programs, and restructuring the school day were noted as popular and potentially wide-spread.

The third section of the literature review focused on how reform and restructuring initiatives were impacting on school board power and authority. Since America 2000, agendas for reform and restructuring of schools were prevalent in the

literature. The literature chronicled concerns from professional educators, researchers, journalists, business persons, and the like regarding the appropriateness of the traditional public school model. Critics continued to suggest "better" ways to educate public school children.

Reform initiatives from national, state, and local levels were siphoning away traditional school board power and authority (Olson, 1992a). Olson concluded that school boards were caught in the "cross-fire of rapidly changing ideas about who should control public schools and school reform" (Olson, 1992a, p. 3). Frustration arose as school boards struggled to maintain authority and power (Olson, 1992a).

### Research Questions Restated

The research questions addressed were:

1. To what extent do school board members perceive that reform initiatives are occurring in local districts?
2. What are school board members' perceptions regarding the impact of reforms on the quality of educational programs?
3. Do board members perceive changes in their power and authority to oversee the school district as a result of reform and restructuring initiatives?
4. Do these perceptions vary as a consequence of region, size of district, and school community type?

### Method

Descriptive research survey and analysis techniques were employed in this study. A 25% stratified, random sample of 6,000 school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal was surveyed by means of a mailed questionnaire. The survey instrument sought information about budget decisions made by school boards and members, as well as identification of personal, demographic and school board characteristics pertinent to the study. After eight weeks, responses from 1347 school board members had been received. These data were analyzed using frequency and cross tabulation procedures.

### Findings

The school board members who responded to the survey were described by region, size of district, and school community type. These data were used to identify where reforms were happening and where quality of the educational program was being impacted. Additionally, these variables were used to show where reforms were impacting on the power and authority of school boards to oversee and govern their districts.

Board members were asked to identify the impetus for reform and then to estimate their perceptions about the extent to which districts and boards were involved in reform. Results indicated that a substantial quantity (42%) of reforms were perceived to originate from local district sources: superintendent and administration and school board members. Only sixteen percent of the responses indicated that

reform impetus occurred at the state level, while four percent identified the national level.

The initial questions of the survey identified where and to what extent school reform and restructuring programs were impacting on school districts as perceived by school board members. Overall, board members perceived that reform and restructuring initiatives were impacting on their districts in significant numbers and ways. In response to Question 24: How would you categorize your school district's involvement in reform or restructuring initiatives over the past four years, seventy percent responded "moderate" or "great." Only twenty-three percent of those responding indicated "little" involvement. The responses describing the school boards' involvement almost mirrored that of the districts'. Responses indicated that a significant amount of reforming and restructuring was taking place in our nation's schools and school board members were involved in the process.

When school board members were asked about specific reform initiatives like site-based management, school choice, curriculum and instructional strategies, and restructuring school day and year, they gave a general "stamp of approval," indicating that these programs were significantly improving the quality of education in their districts (58%). Additionally, a substantial number of school board members generally agreed that reforms like site-based management were increasing the quality of education.

Specific elements of site-based management were studied. Even the more "radical" dimensions of site-based management programs like funding at local school

site, autonomy at local school site for educational program design, and teacher empowerment received ratings of fifty percent and above in positive categories used to analyze impact on the quality of educational programs.

Curriculum and instructional reforms impacted in substantially positive ways. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that whole language curricular reform programs were occurring in their district and sixty percent indicated it was having a positive impact on the quality of instruction. More recent developments in outcome based curriculum and in common core programs were seen as wide-spread, occurring in seventy-two percent and eight-two percent of the districts. Respondents representing these districts gave the programs, respectively, fifty-two percent and sixty-five percent positive ratings. These programs were having a positive impact on the quality of education.

A number of curriculum programs were not widely impacting on districts but were seen as generally positive by those board members who perceived that these programs were occurring in their districts. Alternative assessment programs, minority achievement programs, multi-cultural programs, parent training programs, and apprenticeship programs had relatively low "happening here" ratings but were seen as positively impacting on district programs.

On the other hand, a number of reform and restructuring programs were not perceived as having much of an impact, positively or negatively. Site-based management programs dealing with cafeteria services, transportation, and maintenance were not as popular. School choice options like charter schools, magnet schools, and

voucher systems were not common. Under school choice options, ninety-four percent of the respondents indicated that these reforms were not happening and were not having an impact on their districts. Several curriculum and instructional reforms and restructuring initiatives proved to be very popular and widespread over all five regions, all sizes of school districts, and all school community types. Reforms like whole language, computer technology, alternative assessments, outcome based education, and core curriculum programs were evident in most districts and perceived to be generally raising the quality of education. Several reform initiatives were not as popular as others. Two of the least popular were ungraded school strategies and pass/no fail options. Seventy percent of the respondents to the survey stated that these programs were "not happening" or have had "no impact" on their districts.

Additionally, regarding school time structure options, board members did not perceive that there were many changes in the basic structure of the school day, week, and/or year. Despite the educational rhetoric and abundance of literature, the organization of the school day and year appears to be unchanged for seventy percent of the public schools. Respondents indicated that changes in the school day including flexible, block, and modular scheduling were occurring in only thirty percent of the districts represented. Year-round school options were reported in only four percent of the sample population.

Most of the perceptions board members had regarding these reforms varied little by region, district size, and school community type. Some variance was noted in the Northeastern region where most reforms appeared less frequently than in the

other four regions. Additionally, the larger districts seemed to be slightly more involved in most types of reform and restructuring than the smaller districts. Districts of 25,000 or more students reported the highest or next to the highest involvement in the four major reform categories. On the other hand, small towns appeared to have fewer reform programs than rural, urban, and suburban communities.

The third section of the survey asked board members to share their perceptions about school board power and authority. Respondents indicated that, for the most part, school board power and authority was unaffected by specific reforms and restructuring initiatives. Reforms like site-based management had not siphoned away board power and authority by transferring it to local school sites. Overall, school board power and authority was perceived to have remained the same or to have increased as districts increased reform. Shifts in power and authority were noted by a number of board members although these shifts were not attributed to reform programs. Approximately thirty percent of the respondents noted power and authority losses to local advisory councils, teachers, parent groups, superintendents, state department, governor, and community interest groups. This power shift, though somewhat negligible, became more meaningful when considered in an historical context.

In 1989, prior to America 2000, the U.S. National Center for Education Information surveyed school board presidents. The Center asked presidents to rate their school board authority. Fifty-eight percent reported that their authority had

decreased. Further, eighty-nine percent reported that most of the authority had transferred to the state.

Four years later, school board members reported that most of their power, when lost, was lost primarily to local advisory councils, teachers, parent groups, superintendents, governor, and community interest groups. Only thirteen percent of the respondents said their power and authority was lost to state school boards and sixteen percent to state departments of education. Perhaps the results reflected the feeling of board members that the state level had assumed as much of the local authority and power as it could, and now local interest groups were continuing to erode board power. Another interpretation reflected the feeling of board members that the board and local interest groups were reassuming control from the state.

Survey results indicated that more board members perceived that their power increased as the board's and district's involvement in reform increased. Most of this perception was associated with curricular and instructional reform. Only 11% of the respondents indicated that site-based management reforms were related to a perception of loss of power and authority.

Lastly, in an effort to understand why reforms may or may not be impacting school districts, school board members were asked to identify the major obstacles to reform and restructuring. Board members identified budget concerns as the number one obstacle to reform. Teachers and local citizens were a distant second and third respectively.

## Conclusions

The results of this study clearly demonstrated the widespread impact of reform and restructuring on school districts as perceived by school board members. The emerging picture was one of growing involvement in local efforts by school boards to raise the quality of education.

Board members perceived themselves as "moderately" to "greatly knowledgeable" regarding reform initiatives and, for the most part, considered themselves to be involved in improving the system. An overwhelming majority of board members perceived reform as positive and believed that when reform occurs, the quality of education improves.

Chris Pipho, Division Director for the Education Commission of the States, chronicled the growth of reform in a 1991 study. The ECS Survey found that fifty to sixty percent of schools in six states studied were exploring major reforms; and that only ten to fifteen percent were making significant progress with reform projects. His findings indicated that there was a significant increase in activity in districts within a short period of time. Pipho's data indicated a rapid expansion of reform at the district level. He compared percentages to prior findings which showed that before 1989, one percent to two percent of the districts surveyed indicated involvement in the reform effort. The results of this survey not only substantiated the growth in reform that Pipho chronicled, but also, showed that reform initiatives continued to developed in many districts over the past four years.

Interestingly, the reforms perceived by surveyed board members were not concentrated in "rich" suburban districts, or "desperate" urban settings. Rather, reforms were broad-based and were impacting on all parts of the country from rural, small town communities to huge districts in large cities and suburbs.

One region of the country was constantly reporting less occurrence of reform and restructuring initiatives. The Northeastern region consistently reported that reforms were either not happening or were not having a positive impact on districts. The impact of the recession on the Northeast was well chronicled and may have contributed to the lack of reform. District layoffs, budget reductions, and under-funding have been serious realities in the Northeastern region. Perhaps these hardships, concentrated in a small geographical area, suggested why the once "progressive" Northeast was somewhat slower to adopt reform programs.

Also, it was noteworthy that two major areas of reform were more popular than others. Site-based management and curricular and instructional reforms were perceived by board members to be impacting more on the quality of education than were school choice options and school time restructuring.

School board members believed these multifaceted programs were having extensive impacts on their districts. Many of these components were considered quite radical only a few years ago. Today, many appear commonplace. Teacher empowerment, local advisory councils with authority to control funding at the local school site, and local control of educational program development were several of these components impacting on districts. Curriculum reforms like outcome-based

education, common core of learning, alternative assessment, and whole language were impacting on school districts and school board members saw these programs as increasing the quality of education. Computers were not even around before 1982. Now almost 85% of our districts surveyed report that computer education programs are in place and impacting on the quality of education.

In the midst of all these changes, board members were not concerned about losing the necessary authority to maintain control. All of this reform and restructuring was occurring with board members feeling little concern for losing the necessary authority to maintain control. Much of the literature surrounding America 2000 suggested that some entity other than school boards must assume control of the public education system in order to guarantee quality education. Business cooperatives, state and national departments of education, to name a few, were called upon to save the public education system. It appears, however, that the system assimilated the changes, school boards expanded their base of power and authority, and the movement eroding the power and authority of school boards, documented in the late 1980s, may have slowed.

In this research, most board members surveyed responded that 1) there was little perception of losing power or 2) most of the control lost over the past four years was to a myriad of interest groups at the local level like advisory councils, parent groups, and community interest groups.

These conclusions represent a different picture than the NCEI report painted in 1989. This survey of school board presidents, noted that respondents claimed a fifty-

eight percent loss of power with eighty-nine percent of the respondents indicating the local authority was shifting to the state. In 1993, a majority of board members were more in control and positive about the quality of education programs they governed in their district.

In summary, this research attempted to determine the perceptions of school board members regarding where and to what extent educational reforms were impacting on school districts. Also, this research gathered data to sense whether or not board members perceived that reforms were impacting on the quality of education in their districts and on the power and authority to oversee their districts.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Based upon the results of this study, the following recommendations for further study are made.

This study determined the perceptions of school board members regarding where and to what extent educational reforms were impacting on school districts. This provided a broad picture of reform and restructuring initiatives and their impact on the country's educational system. The views expressed in this study were those of school board members and might not reflect the reality of reform and restructuring. Additional information gathered from a variety of sources like school administrators, teachers, parents, and citizens groups coupled with a variety of research methodologies applied in a myriad of places will focus the picture and make possible

a better understanding of how well school board members grasp reform and its impact.

Additionally, school board members indicated that reform appeared to be associated with school improvement. Data indicated school board members perceived when reform initiatives increased, quality of education increased. This positive response from school board members regarding their perceptions of reform appear contrary to a recent Institute for Educational Leadership report entitled, Governing Public Schools: New Times New Requirements written by Michael Kirst, Jacqueline Danzberger, and Michael Usdan. In this report, the authors suggest, "School boards are in large part still organized and focused on issues more appropriate for a turn-of-the-century (19th) era" (Kirst, 1992, p. X). Also, they state, "Board members believe they are weakest in the precise areas and functions necessary for their effectiveness in changed circumstances" (Kirst, 1992, p. XI). Further study is needed to clarify the role and expectations of school board members in the change process. Are school board members capable of and involved in overseeing and governing the changes necessary to guarantee school improvement?

The results of the survey indicate that forty percent of the school board members responding believed that budget concerns were the number one obstacle to reform and restructuring programs. Critics claim that U.S. education has been heavily financed when compared to other countries. Why, then, are budget concerns such an obstacle to reform? Further research may shed light on this dilemma and

determine how school boards may adjust their way of doing business to facilitate change.

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## APPENDIX A

THE AMERICAN  
**SCHOOL  
BOARD**

JOURNAL

1680 DUKE STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314  
(703) 838-6722

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Dear Subscriber,

Please take a minute to help your magazine, The American SCHOOL BOARD Journal, promote a greater understanding and deeper appreciation of school board service. Help us by completing the enclosed survey. At the same time, you'll be making your views count among other school leaders across North America.

For the last 15 years, SCHOOL BOARD and Virginia Tech have questioned school board members about their concerns and the special challenges they face.

Here's your chance to stand up and be counted, too.

The survey results, which will be featured in our January 1994 issue, traditionally are publicized from coast to coast by the national wire services and local news media. This exposure helps promote the importance of board service and calls attention to the achievements and concerns of local school leaders such as yourself.

Your participation is crucial for the survey to be valid. Only a select number of board members were chosen to receive this survey, so it's essential that you take a minute now to complete it.

A postage-paid, self addressed envelope is included for your convenience. All individual responses will be kept confidential.

I know you're busy, so I'm especially grateful for your time and cooperation.

Cordially,



Gregg W. Downey  
Editor-in-Chief

P.S. To be eligible to win a five-book treasury of ideas and advice, affix your mailing label to the postage-paid envelope when you mail your survey back. After the surveys are removed, we'll pick five envelopes at random. The lucky winners will receive the following value packed books: *Becoming a Better Board Member*, *School Boards and the Ballot Box*, *Board Member Planner*, *Time For Curriculum*, and *School Board Success: Right From The Start*.

## 1993 NATIONAL SURVEY OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. In what state is your school system located?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Describe the approximate size of your school system's enrollment by checking one of the following:
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Fewer than 1,000
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_ 1,000 to 4,999
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_ 5,000 to 9,999
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_ 10,000 to 24,999
  - (e) \_\_\_\_\_ 25,000 or more
  
3. Describe the community your school district serves by checking one of the following:
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Urban
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_ Rural
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_ Small town
  - (e) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)
  
4. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ male \_\_\_\_\_ female
  
5. Are you:
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Black
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_ White
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian
  - (e) \_\_\_\_\_ Asian
  - (f) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)
  
6. Age:

(a) _____ 25 or under	(d) _____ 41-50
(b) _____ 26-35	(e) _____ 51-60
(c) _____ 36-40	(f) _____ Over 60
  
7. What is your current occupation? (Check one.)
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Professional/managerial
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_ Business owner
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_ Clerical

- (d) \_\_\_\_\_ Sales
  - (e) \_\_\_\_\_ Skilled trade
  - (f) \_\_\_\_\_ Laborer
  - (g) \_\_\_\_\_ Retired
  - (h) \_\_\_\_\_ Homemaker
  - (i) \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)
- 

8. What level of education did you complete?
- (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Less than high school graduate
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_ High school graduate
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_ Post high school training
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_ Four-year college degree
  - (e) \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced college degree

9. What is your family income?
- (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Less than \$20,000
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_ \$20,000 to \$29,999
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_ \$30,000 to \$39,999
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_ \$40,000 to \$49,999
  - (e) \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 to \$59,999
  - (f) \_\_\_\_\_ \$60,000 to \$69,999
  - (g) \_\_\_\_\_ \$70,000 to \$79,999
  - (h) \_\_\_\_\_ \$80,000 to \$89,999
  - (i) \_\_\_\_\_ \$90,000 to \$99,999
  - (j) \_\_\_\_\_ \$100,000 to \$149,999
  - (k) \_\_\_\_\_ \$150,000 or more

10. Are you married? (a) \_\_\_ yes (b) \_\_\_ no

11. Do you have children currently attending public school (K-12)? (a) \_\_\_ yes  
(b) \_\_\_ no

12. Do you rent or own your home?  
(a) \_\_\_ rent (b) \_\_\_ own

### SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION

13. Years served on the school board? \_\_\_\_\_

14. How many terms have you served on the school board?  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one term  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_ One term

- (c) \_\_\_\_\_ Two terms
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_ Three terms
- (e) \_\_\_\_\_ More than three terms

15. How many members of your board are  
 (a) \_\_\_\_\_ male      (b) \_\_\_\_\_ female

16. How would you categorize your school board's involvement in reform and restructuring initiatives over the past four years? (Check one.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ none      \_\_\_\_\_ little      \_\_\_\_\_ moderate      \_\_\_\_\_ great

17. How would you categorize your school district's involvement in reform or restructuring initiatives over the past four years? (Check one.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ none      \_\_\_\_\_ little      \_\_\_\_\_ moderate      \_\_\_\_\_ great

18. Where do you think the major impetus for implementing reform and restructuring programs originated in your district?

	Local School Board	State Dept. of Education	Federal Dept. of Education	Superintendent and admin.	Teacher assoc. or union	Community interest groups	Professional reports and literature	Not happening here
Site-based management	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Schools of choice (district)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Schools of choice (between districts)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Schools of choice (public/private)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Curriculum reform programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Magnet school(s)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Restructuring the school day/year	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

19. Listed are reforms that might have caused basic changes in the way your schools educate students. Check the appropriate column to indicate whether the effect has been generally negative, slightly negative, slightly positive, generally positive, or no impact. If the reform is not being implemented in your district, check Not Happening Here.

<u>REFORM PROGRAM</u>	<u>Generally Negative</u>	<u>Slightly Negative</u>	<u>No Impact</u>	<u>Slightly Positive</u>	<u>Generally Positive</u>	<u>Not Happening Here</u>
<b>SITE-BASED MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES:</b>						
Funding at local school site	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Autonomy at school site for personnel decisions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Autonomy at school site for educational program design and development	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Accountability at the school site for results	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Teacher empowerment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Local advisory group empowerment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Autonomy at school site for maintenance	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
School site control of transportation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
School site control of cafeteria services	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

<u>SCHOOL CHOICE</u>	<u>Generally Negative</u>	<u>Slightly Negative</u>	<u>No Impact</u>	<u>Slightly Positive</u>	<u>Generally Positive</u>	<u>Not Happening Here</u>
Students and parents choose schools within the district	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Students and parents choose schools in or out of the district	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Students may use vouchers or tax incentives to attend school of choice (public or private).	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Students have access to magnet schools	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Students have access to charter schools	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM**

Whole language	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ungraded schools	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pass/fail options	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Alternative assessments	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Stiffer course requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Stiffer graduation requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Outcome-based curriculum	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Adoption of a core curriculum	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Computer instruction	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Preschool programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Dropout prevention programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Apprenticeship programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Adult education programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Parent training and support to help prepare preschool children	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Nutrition and health care programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Foreign language programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Multicultural programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Minority achievement programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Programs for at-risk students	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**RESTRUCTURING SCHOOL TIME**

Length of school day	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Length of school year	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Year-round schools	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Flexible/block scheduling designs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tutorials	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Summer school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**20. What’s happening to your board’s power and authority? Check any of the following people or groups that gained or lost power or authority in relation to your board during the last four years.**

	<u>Gained</u>	<u>No Change</u>	<u>Lost</u>
Local advisory councils	_____	_____	_____
Teachers	_____	_____	_____
Parent groups	_____	_____	_____
Superintendent	_____	_____	_____
State Department of Education	_____	_____	_____
Governor	_____	_____	_____
U.S. Department of Education	_____	_____	_____
U.S. President	_____	_____	_____
Local bargaining units	_____	_____	_____

State teacher associations	_____	_____	_____
State school boards associations	_____	_____	_____
Community interest groups	_____	_____	_____
City council	_____	_____	_____
Mayor	_____	_____	_____
County council	_____	_____	_____

**21. Listed below are four areas of reform that might have been introduced into your district. Indicate whether these programs affected your board's authority or power. Check if your board's power or authority has increased, decreased or not changed. (If the program does not exist in your district, check Not Happening Here.)**

	<u>Increased</u>	<u>Not Changed</u>	<u>Decreased</u>	<u>Not Happening Here</u>
Site-based management	_____	_____	_____	_____
School choice	_____	_____	_____	_____
Curriculum and instructional reform	_____	_____	_____	_____
Restructuring school time	_____	_____	_____	_____

**22. In your opinion, implementing reform and restructuring in your district has: (Check one.)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ broadened the power of the school board
- \_\_\_\_\_ not affected the power of the school board
- \_\_\_\_\_ curtailed the power of the school board

**23. In your opinion, implementing reform or restructuring programs in your district has: (Check one)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ raised the quality of education
- \_\_\_\_\_ not changed the quality of education
- \_\_\_\_\_ lowered the quality of education

**24. In your district, the major obstacle to reform and restructuring has been: (Check one)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Superintendent
- \_\_\_\_\_ Local citizens
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parent councils
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teachers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board members
- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget concerns

\_\_\_\_\_ The teachers union

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

Regions of the United States According to the National School Board Membership

---

Northeast Region

Connecticut	Maryland	Pennsylvania
Delaware	Massachusetts	Rhode Island
District of Columbia	New Hampshire	Vermont
Maine	New Jersey	Virgin Islands

---

Central Region

Illinois	Kentucky	Missouri
Indiana	Michigan	Ohio
Iowa	Minnesota	Wisconsin

---

Southern Region

Alabama	Louisiana	Tennessee
Arkansas	Mississippi	Texas
Florida	North Carolina	Virginia
Georgia	South Carolina	West Virginia

---

Western Region

Colorado	Kansas	North Dakota
Oklahoma	Montana	South Dakota
Nebraska	Wyoming	New Mexico

---

Pacific

Alaska	Nevada	Arizona
Oregon	California	Utah
Hawaii		

## APPENDIX C

Distribution of Personal Characteristics Identified by Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency N=1347	Percent
1. <b>Gender</b>		
Male	737	54.7
Female	537	39.9
Missing Data	73	5.0
2. <b>Ethnic Designation</b>		
Afro American	32	2.4
White	1264	93.8
Hispanic	18	1.3
American Indian	10	.7
Asian	12	.9
Other	6	.4
Missing Data	7	.5
3. <b>Age</b>		
25 or under	2	.1
26-35	51	3.5
36-40	162	12.0
41-50	636	47.2
51-60	281	20.9
Over 60	208	15.4
Missing Data	7	.5
4. <b>Education Attainment</b>		
High School non-graduate	3	.2
High School graduate	114	8.5
Post-High School training	265	19.7
Four-year college degree	404	30.0
Advanced college degree	553	41.1
Missing Data	42	3.1
5. <b>Income</b>		
Less than \$40,000	245	18.2
\$40,000-79,999	652	48.3
\$80,000-+	316	23.5
Missing Data	42	3.1
6. <b>Married</b>		
Yes	1231	91.4
No	109	8.1
Missing Data	7	.5

7.	<b>Children in public school</b>		
	Yes	749	55.6
	No	590	43.8
	Missing Data	8	.6

APPENDIX D

Cross Tabulation of Reform By Region (Summary of Significance)

Reform	Region	Impact	Significance %
<b>Site-Based</b>			
teacher empow.:	North	Happening	23
funding at local:	North	Happening	28
	North	Not Happening	25
	Pacific	Happening	24
	Pacific	Not Happening	24
	South	Happening	29
	South	Not Happening	29
	West	Happening	21
	West	Not Happening	21
personnel:	North	Happening	27
	North	Not Happening	28
education programs:	North	Happening	27
	North	Not Happening	28
school cafe.:	North	Happening	22
	West	Happening	22
school trans:	North	Happening	26
<b>School Choice</b>			
district (outside):	North	Happening	82
<b>Curriculum and Instruction</b>			
whole language:	North	Happening	20
adult education:	Pacific	Happening	30
parent training:	South	Happening	46
	North	Happening	24
pass/fail opt.:	North	Happening	16
alter. assess:	Pacific	Happening	34
	North	Happening	31
dropout for at-rk:	Central	Happening	21
preschool programs:	North	Not Happening	26
	North	Happening	40
<b>Restructuring School Time</b>			
school yr. length:	North	Not Happening	59
	South	Happening	47
	West	Happening	50
	North	Happening	80

+,- = 20% variation in significance  
 collapsed category table

APPENDIX E

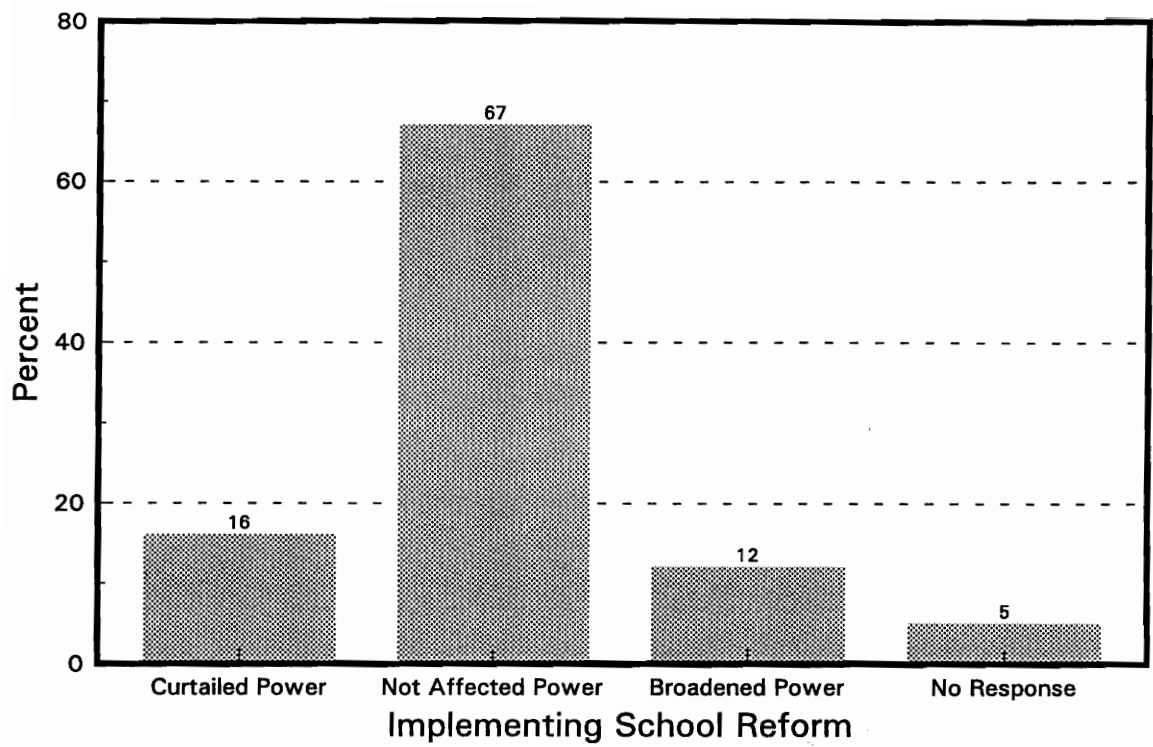


Figure 1: Effect of Reform on School Board Power

APPENDIX F

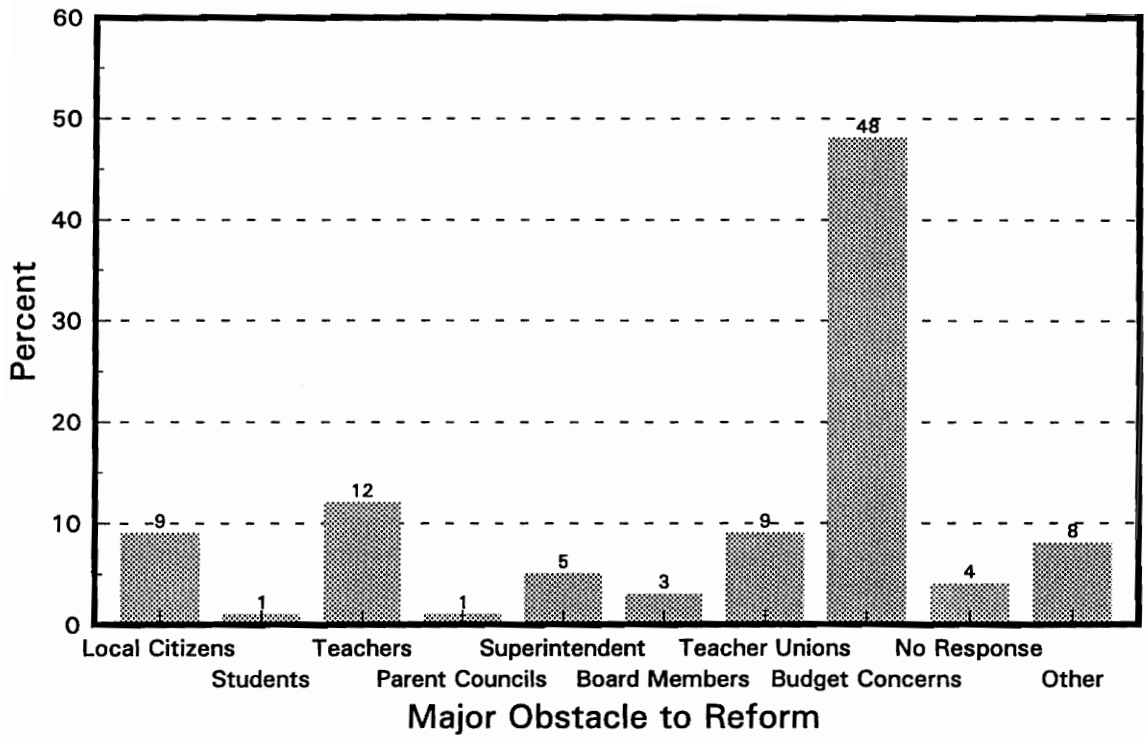


Figure 6: Obstacles to Reform

## VITA

Thomas H. Gaul is currently associate superintendent for Prince William County Public Schools where he has served in this capacity for the past two years. Previously, Mr. Gaul was principal in Prince William and Henrico Counties in Virginia. Recently, Mr. Gaul accepted a position as superintendent in Dinwiddie County, Virginia.

Mr. Gaul earned his B.A. degree at Millersville State College in Pennsylvania and his M.Ed. in reading and administration at the University of Delaware in Newark. He began his career in education as a fifth grade teacher in Westtown, Pennsylvania, and continued to teach in Wilmington, Delaware.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas H. Gaul". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Thomas A. Gaul