

A NATIONAL STUDY OF SELECTED POLICY CHANGES
IMPLEMENTED BY SCHOOL BOARDS
(1982-1984)/

by

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife, , for her prayers, encouragement, love, and support to complete this endeavor.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Public school boards of education across the country are faced with an increasingly complex job as they shape policy for their school systems and students. "Prestigious commissions and task forces have published more national studies on what is wrong with American public education than in any prior era in our history."¹ These commissions and task forces have recommended many changes in the way public schools are presently operating. In May 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) stirred the most concern when it reported that the United States was "at risk" from "a rising tide of mediocrity."² In A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future, by John I. Goodlad, the response was also extreme in its view of schooling in the United States:

American schools are in trouble. In fact, the problems are of such crippling proportions that many schools may not survive. It is possible that our entire public education system is nearing collapse.³

This crescendo of criticism has been received by boards of education and by professional educators with

varying degrees of concern. In the January 1, 1984, issue of Parade Magazine, former United States Education Commissioner Harold Howe II said, "I think American education has a cold. Most people think it has the flu. It certainly doesn't have the pneumonia that the commission suggested."⁴ Goodlad, as noted earlier, sees the problem as more serious. Some see it as important but think a crisis approach unwise. In October of 1983, the Forum of Education Leaders, in response to the several national commission reports, developed a position paper to answer some of the concerns raised by the various reports and task forces. They welcomed the renewed interest in the public schools of America. However, the Forum cautioned,

Because the debate will continue and become more complicated, the nation in general and the states specifically should not seize upon 'quick fix' solutions. Neither tests, tax credits, tuition vouchers, nor prayer will make our schools sufficiently great. The problems are complex and so are the solutions.⁵

The National School Boards Association has also responded to the commissions and task forces. Writing in the September 1983 American School Board Journal, Thomas A. Shannon, Executive Director of the National School Boards Association, had this to say,

NSBA believes that our country's 95,000 local school board members are the natural leaders to cause reformation and renewal of the instructional programs of the public elementary and secondary schools in the nation's 16,000 local school dis-

tricts. We are in the dusk of a new era for the public schools. But whether it precedes dawn or nightfall is up to the school board in each local community.⁶

The national reports are only one of the forces brought to bear on school boards. Others include teacher unions and parent and other special interest groups. School boards must sort through these forces, deciding which problems are real problems and which of the real problems require action on their part. Having decided on the agenda, school boards must then decide what action, if any, to take. For this they need information: What are the potential remedies? Where are the pressures coming from? What actions are other boards taking? Those who seek a broader understanding of the decision-making processes used by school board members might ask not only these questions, but how are values or decisions related to individual characteristics. This study attempts to answer some of these questions.

Although school boards and administrators are accustomed to a degree of uncertainty and change, recent political and economic pressures have resulted in close scrutiny of educational efforts and expenditures. Among the topics that are issues in many school systems across the country are graduation requirements,

merit pay for teachers, and amount of instructional time.

The accountability movement of the 1970s has resulted in thirty-nine states having some form of minimum competency tests for students.⁷ Many local school boards have adjusted the curriculum in an attempt to better prepare their students for the testing programs mandated.

The responsibility for the development of policy to implement change in the local school district remains with the school board. Toward this end, it is important to identify and examine the areas that local boards of education have changed and to identify, if possible, the forces that have influenced the decision-making process. This information will add to the growing body of knowledge about school board members and their response to the wide range of issues they are called upon to address.

Need for the Study

A central problem for school boards today is that many students leave school without adequate skills for today's jobs; and others, with skills enough for today, have too little skill for tomorrow's (high-tech) jobs. The proposed solutions fall primarily into four groups: (1) exposure of students to new content in critical

areas; (2) increased requirements for graduation; (3) provision of more hours of instruction; and (4) provision of better instruction by providing incentives for outstanding teachers. In forming their own positions, many school board members would like more information about the actions other boards have taken on these issues and the forces acting upon them.

Local school board members must be prepared to accept the challenge for change presented in the many reports and studies recently published. Effective decision making, though, requires sound information; one form of information is knowledge of the actions recently taken by other school boards.

The results of this study will provide useful information to local board members and school administrators pertaining to various changes that public schools are undergoing. It will provide new data for board members and other interested parties.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to investigate the policy changes approved by local school board members over the past two years related to selected subject areas, instructional time, homework, and personnel

practices and to study the patterns of these changes in relationship to selected demographic and personal data of school board members.

Research Questions

More specifically, the research questions to be addressed were:

1. What policy changes have been made by local boards of education in the past two years in graduation requirements for high school students?
2. What personnel policy changes have been made by local school boards in the past two years in the area of financial incentives for teachers?
3. What policy changes have been made by local boards of education in the past two years in the required amount of instructional time?
4. What subjects or programs, if any, have been reduced or eliminated?
5. Where did the impetus for the change(s) originate?
6. If the change(s) cost money to implement, what was the major revenue source?
7. Do the decisions regarding change made by local boards of education differ significantly

as a consequence of (a) size of districts,
(b) location, or (c) region of the country?

Assumptions of the Study

This study is based on two assumptions. They are:

1. That significant policy changes have occurred which required local board of education action in the past two years in the areas being researched, and
2. That the respondents are able and willing to provide the requested data.

Limitations

There are two limitations of this study. They are:

1. A follow-up survey cannot be conducted in an effort to improve the response rate. The American School Board Journal requires anonymity in conducting surveys.
2. That the population from which the sample was drawn was that of subscribers to the American School Board Journal and was not that of the total school board member population serving as school board members in the United States.

Definitions

Several terms have special connotations in this study. These terms have been defined according to their application in this study.

Demographic characteristics refer to socially relevant variables such as age, sex, socio-economic status, race, and marital status of the school board member's environment and personal status as noted by the individual school board member.

Merit pay: (1) differentiated pay for outstanding performance; (2) financial reward or incentive above base salary.

School board member refers to a citizen who is a member of a group of people, elected or appointed, who establish policy in the local public schools.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I contains introduction, statement of need, statement of the problem, research questions, assumptions of the study, limitations of the study, and definitions of the study.

Chapter II contains a review of the literature relevant to reform movements in education and to school board roles and relationships as they relate to reform.

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

Chapter IV is a description of the response data, descriptive data relative to variables, and analysis of data concerning research questions.

Chapter V contains the summary, results, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The origins of public education in the United States have been traced by historians to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. The involvement of the local citizenry in overseeing the operation of the local schools has been a cornerstone of public school education since the colonial days.

Thus the colonial legislatures of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire enacted laws requiring parents to see to it that their children learned to read, learned the capital laws, knew the orthodox catechism, and became skilled in a trade. In addition, they soon required towns to appoint teachers and even pay them out of local taxes if the townspeople so voted; naturally, such public teachers would be under the 'vigilant eye' of town authorities.

As the educational systems began to expand and the complexity of the enterprise increased, the town authorities realized that there were many factors involved in operating the public schools; and, as Goldhammer noted,

there was a tendency to separate the educational function from other responsibilities of the local community and create it as a completely independent, or in some instances, an almost completely independent branch of government.

Originating with legislative actions, the American school board firmly established its position as the

governing agency of the public schools. Across the United States, over 15,500 school boards established policies that influenced the direction of public school education for over 44 million students. Goldhammer stated, "The board is recognized by the courts as a quasi-corporation, functioning with general characteristics of an incorporated local governmental body."¹⁰ Like most elected officials, school board members have and will continue to be faced with the responsibility and role of establishing the educational direction of their local district with the input of the administration and the local citizenry, including many special interest groups. This role, historically, has not been without its controversies.

There arose, in the late 1890s, a controversial dispute over who should control the public schools. On the one side were the professional educators led by the superintendents. Opposing them were the school boards led by William George Bruce, a board member. "Bruce agreed that the superintendent was the educational expert but firmly believed that boards were to administer as well as legislate."¹¹ "In too many communities, school boards have become battlegrounds for special interest groups and platforms for politicians."¹² "Teachers and principals said school boards were distant and unresponsive. Board members and district

office people seemed to feel the local schools were out of touch."¹³ Also, the political nature of the local school board has added another wrinkle to the tenuous relationship between the administration and the school board. This blurring of responsibilities continues today.

For almost two hundred years, "boards of education have been forced to share some of the great power over the control and management of the public schools."¹⁴ It is within this context that the role of the board of education will be examined as it pertains to establishing policies which set the direction for the public schools.

A Closer Look at the American Public High School

The struggle to establish curricula priorities is not a new issue; it has been around since the first public high school was established in Boston, Massachusetts in 1821.

True, the very earliest attempt in Boston to establish an English Classical School in 1821 did propose to omit the classics and foreign language in favor of English and a great deal of applied as well as theoretical mathematics, along with some history, geography, science, and philosophy. By 1827, when a high school law was passed in Massachusetts, the schoolmaster in towns of 4,000 population was expected to teach Latin, Greek, history, bookkeeping, geometry, surveying, and algebra.¹⁵

During the next forty years, there was little increase in the population of the public high school. Academics, during this period, dominated secondary education. "By 1860 there were well over 6,000 private academies enrolling more than a quarter of a million young people."¹⁶ In contrast, "there were only 300 high schools in the entire country, and 100 of these were in Massachusetts."¹⁷ The direction that the public high school would take would not be totally resolved in the 1800s any more than it will be totally resolved in this century. Michael Katz has written extensively about the opposition to the public school by a group of working men in Beverly, Massachusetts, in the mid-1800s.

Katz points out that those in the least prestigious occupations (fishermen, farmers, shoemakers, and laborers) were solidly opposed to the high school. The vote of the artisans and businessmen was split, largely on the basis of whether or not they had children who would benefit. By and large, those of wealth and prestige were in favor of the high school.¹⁸

This qualified and quantified support resulted in a very erratic pattern of public secondary education across the United States. It took the Supreme Court of Michigan to firmly establish the high school as a natural part of the education program and, therefore, eligible for financial support as levied by taxing authority of the school board.

The decision written in 1874 held that the whole history of education in Michigan--from its beginnings in the ordinance of 1787 to its Constitution of 1850--pointed to the conclusion that the state did have the right to furnish a liberal education to the youth in schools brought within the reach of all classes.¹⁹

With the beginning of urbanization in the latter part of the 1800s came the significant increase of high schools. "By the turn of the century, the number of high schools had grown to 6,000."²⁰ However, the program that was offered in the high schools varied so much that the presidents of many of the leading higher education institutions began to plead for a more universal high school curriculum.

In response, the National Education Association, in 1893, appointed a group of educators, dominated by university professors, to clarify the goals of secondary education, and smooth the transition from school to college.²¹

This august group became known as the Committee of Ten. The major thrust of the committee's work was to develop "mental discipline."

While admitting that the high school had become a terminal institution for most of its students, the committee argued that four years of strong and effective mental training would be the best preparation for both those going on to college and those going directly into practical life.²²

In 1899, the Committee on College Entrance Requirements issued a report containing the same general outlook as the Committee of Ten's.

These reports did have a standardizing effect and thus were fairly effective means of achieving coherence, albeit with relatively little regard for the impact of modernization upon the value claims of the political community or the growing pluralism of United States society.²³

As would be expected, the Committee of Ten and the Committee on College Entrance Requirements were to find themselves inundated by high school students.

Between 1890 and 1930, the secondary enrollment leaped from 360,000 to nearly 5 million--from 7 percent of the group aged 14 to 17 years to more than 50 percent of that age group.²⁴

Since educational needs of these students varied significantly, the purely academic and disciplinary emphasis stressed in the high schools was seen lacking by a growing number of educators and lay people. Thus, the pendulum began to move toward making high school more relevant to everyday life. For several decades, the emphasis swung away from the pure academic subjects and toward a broader high school curriculum offering choices for the students. This movement was referred to as social efficiency or social control.

The primary purpose of education for social control was not to acquire knowledge as such or simply to develop academic power; it was to prepare the individual for his role in an urban, industrializing, and capitalist society as it really exists. This often assumed that since people differ in talents, abilities, interests, and aptitudes, they should be prepared for the different social roles for which they seem fitted.²⁵

Out of this movement grew the belief that the curriculum should be differentiated, and students need to be classified according to their presumed futures.

In 1918, still another report was issued under the sponsorship of the NEA's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. The influence of this report, Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, has prevailed for over a half century. The commission expanded school purposes to include health, citizenship, and worthy home membership.

What the Cardinal Principles did was to shift the emphasis in schooling away from preoccupation with the academic and intellectual disciplines and to broaden the social role of education almost beyond recognition.²⁶

During this era the direction of secondary schools was also influenced by the work of John Dewey.

Dewey, the father of the progressive movement, was alarmed at the extent to which industrialization and urbanization were eroding the traditional American institutions, the home, the community, and the church.²⁷

Dewey called for the schools to educate the "whole child." The mission of the school was greatly expanded with this philosophy. Once again, as Dewey's ideas were misapplied and his critics brought attention to the worst excesses of his philosophy, the pendulum again started to move toward a philosophy which called for more academics.

The Essentialist Committee for the Advancement of American Education presented its platform in 1938.

"The aim: to return school 'to the exact and exciting studies,' to support the 'mental disciplines,' and to save such courses as Latin, algebra and geometry."²⁸

During the late '40s and through the late '50s, the country was experiencing a boom economy accompanied by a very tranquil political climate. There was a spate of critics of the public schools during this period, but there were no major reform movements until the country was galvanized by the Russians' launching of the first unmanned satellite. Sputnik was to push education to the top of the national agenda. "The National Defense Education Act of 1958 provided funds for the improvement of science, mathematics and foreign languages."²⁹ Academics and mental discipline again were in vogue. On the heels of Sputnik came the release of James Bryant Conant's The American High School. Conant called for high schools to strengthen their curriculum in mathematics, science, and foreign languages. As school systems across the country were gearing up for this new push, they were soon asked to look in yet another direction. "Racial balance and compensatory education became urgent new priorities. Schools became the battleground for social justice."³⁰ The unsettled years during the Vietnam War produced a

new group of reformers calling for relevance in the curriculum. In 1973, T. W. Bell wrote in his foreword to a committee studying high school reform, "Secondary schools stand in the center of the storm that swirls around the education of our 12- to 18-year-olds."³¹

The panel concluded that we have drifted into an excessive reliance on the high school as the instrument for "educating" teenagers and preparing them to enter adulthood; that this burden must be reduced; and that we must examine anew what can be done to strengthen the educational role of the family, the church, the media, and other institutions that play vital roles in the education of our youth.³²

The recommendations of the Commission were:

1. Definition of secondary school expectations
2. Community participation in determining secondary school expectations
3. Curricula revision
4. Improved teacher training
5. Revision of textbooks to insure an accurate portrayal of ethnic groups and the role of women
6. Improved counseling
7. Establishment of an affirmative action committee by every high school
8. Revision of curricula to provide students with a range of experiences and activities broad enough to see a comprehensive picture
9. Emphasis of career awareness at an early age
10. Job placement
11. Global education
12. Alternative paths to high school completion

13. Availability of funding for alternative programs
14. Awarding of high school credit for outside experience
15. Increased testing³³

Presently, study after study has put education on the front burner, calling for more "rigor" in the school curriculum. The major focus is again directed at the high school with very little attention given to the elementary program. As in the past, boards, legislators, and educators have clamored for part of the credit for "getting or bringing" attention to the educational system. Time will tell if the recommendations of the various reports reap the abundant harvest their authors prophesy.

Also, educators need to remind their constituencies that local support is critical for sustained progress. Citizens' interest must be constantly cultivated in order to keep public education as a top priority.

Today, there is renewed interest in rewarding qualified teachers beyond their customary salary schedule. These reward systems have taken a variety of forms, but the underlying assumption of the various plans is to provide salary or other financial benefits based on a person's performance. "More than any other issue in education today, merit pay commands the

attention of professional educators, politicians, and lay people alike."³⁴

The debate about performance-based pay is not new; the renewed interest has resurrected the issue after a few decades of relative inactivity. The recent spate of reports lamenting the state of public education has emphasized the need to develop alternatives to the standard salary schedule for teachers. Consequently, these recommendations for breaking out of the traditional salary schedule have drawn attention from many quarters.

We find governors, legislators, school board members, business leaders, concerned citizens, the press, and even the President of the United States all urging some form of increased efficiency and productivity in our schools. Many of these persons are proposing various types of merit pay or incentive plans for teachers as a means of achieving these goals.³⁵

The National commission on Excellence in Education called for "performance-based pay"³⁶ in its report, "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform." This report, which received the most publicity of all the studies, recommended the following in the area of financial incentives for merit pay for teachers:

1. Salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based. Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an

effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated.

2. School boards should adopt an 11-month contract for teachers. This would ensure time for curriculum and professional development, programs for students with special needs, and a more adequate level of teacher compensation.
3. School boards, administrators, and teachers should cooperate to develop career ladders for teachers that distinguish above the beginning instructor, the experienced teacher, and the master teacher.

In the past two years, there has been considerable activity at the state level to promote merit pay or other incentive plans for teachers. "Twenty-four states are examining master teacher or career ladder programs, and six have begun statewide or pilot programs."³⁸

Although the terminology in the merit pay issue can and does cause confusion, there is no denying its popularity with the general public. In the 1984 Gallup Poll, 76 percent of the people surveyed favored merit pay.

Discussion and debate over merit pay has been going on for over seventy-five years.

The first recorded merit pay plan for teachers was that of the Newton (Massachusetts) School District in 1908. Since that time, especially in the 1920s when use of merit pay soared, hundreds of school systems have tried some sort of merit pay plan. In the 1960s, approximately 10₃₉ percent of all school systems used merit pay.

The fact that only 10 percent of the approximately 15,500 school districts adopted merit pay plans is not surprising. Several reasons have been cited to explain the limited enthusiasm for such plans. Two of the major obstacles are:

Teacher opposition--merit pay awards according to teacher groups have been based on subjective, meaningless evaluations that have been arbitrary and capricious.

Inadequate funding--Many merit plans have failed because they were adopted in school districts with insufficient base salaries for teachers or the merit stipend⁴⁰ was not large enough to be worth any extra effort.

Will these obstacles continue to be major hurdles in the latest thrust toward merit pay? Boards of education throughout the country seem to sense the political reality of embracing the latest trend toward merit pay; only time will tell if the latest plans meet the same fate as earlier efforts. As Dallas Independent School District Board President Leonard Clegg said recently, "If we ever hope to get public support for a tax increase for salaries, we're going to have to come up with a system that rewards good work."⁴¹ Mr. Clegg's practical analysis is shared by many fellow board members and a number of politicians. Governor Alexander of Tennessee points out, "If you want the best results, you hire the best people. In this day and time, you can't hire the best people with a pay

scale that rewards mediocrity."⁴² Even the major teachers unions, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, are at least willing to discuss the idea. A few years ago, this posture would have been unheard of.

A recent Harris poll revealed enthusiastic support among teachers for several concepts that their unions have only guardedly endorsed. Eighty-seven percent of those surveyed favored career ladders to provide more pay and more responsibility to practicing⁴³ teachers and to attract better recruits.

It is encouraging to note that as the debate over merit pay and other financial incentives for teachers continues, state and local initiatives are being taken to address the more formidable question involving inadequate teacher pay. Local and state boards of education have been vocal in supporting overall salary increases for teachers while still leaving the door open for creative ways to reward outstanding teachers.

In A Place Called School, John Goodlad writes about schools having a common set of characteristics. He observes that "school to school differences result from the sum total of how these characteristics manifest themselves in each school."⁴⁴

One of the common characteristics of schooling is time. During the last two years, the renewed interest in the condition of public education in the United States has brought forth many recommendations per-

taining to increasing the amount of instructional time. A number of the national studies have compared the amount of classroom time in other developed countries with that commonly found in the United States. The following are some of the findings:

* In most industrialized nations, the amount of classroom time devoted to core academic subjects is several⁴⁵ times greater than the time spent in our schools.

* The average length of the school day in the United States is 5 1/2 hours, whereas it ranges⁴⁶ from 6 to 8 hours in the other countries.

* In England and other industrialized countries, it is not unusual for academic high schools to spend 8 hours a day at school, 220 days per year. In the U.S., by contrast, the typical school⁴⁷ lasts 6 hours and the school year is 180 days.

A look at our present school year calendar produces a relic of our agrarian society. At the turn of the century, when the school year was standardized by the Carnegie Unit, it was deemed "that the length of the school year is from thirty-six to forty weeks."⁴⁸ Eighty-four years later, we see a school calendar that varies little from its early 1900 counterpart. "Today, the typical school year is 178 days long."⁴⁹

However, in the last few years, state boards of education, legislatures, and local boards of education have implemented changes to increase the amount of instructional time. "Eight states have approved lengthening the school day, seven lengthening the

school year, and 18 have mandates affecting the amount of time for instruction."⁵⁰

The reformers have cited the differences in the amount of instructional time in other developed countries and have implied that unless more time is devoted to schooling by American youth, the United States could suffer negative economic consequences in the global economic picture. They view the increase of instructional time as a crucial component for improving student achievement. With achievement comes economic advantage, so they (the reformers) conclude. A closer look at the issue of amount of time engaged in learning reaps various approaches to the problem.

For example, one can increase overall exposure to schooling through a longer school year, school day, and improved attendance patterns. One can increase time on particular subjects and/or particular topics within subject areas.⁵¹

It is obvious from the recommendations of the various studies that they have taken a strict quantifiable approach to this issue without much consideration to the qualitative aspects of the issue. If students are schooled for longer periods of time without a serious analysis of what and how they are taught, we may be making a substantial investment for a minimal return.

What is most striking in the current debate is the relationship that is being drawn between the state

of the U.S. economy, with its lagging domestic performance, and the failure of the schools to educate students to meet the economic needs of the dominant society. These and other voices share a discourse that defines economic rationality as the model of public reason.⁵²

Fortunately, there has not been a stampede to move to a seven day school or any other extreme action. As much as the reformers tout the merits of their various recommendations, the local citizenry will have to finance the major cost of any increased school calendar. Also, even though the agrarian needs of our society have been vastly reduced so as to allow summer school time, most people still oppose a longer school year. "Public opinion in America has not been enthusiastic about the idea of schooling in the summer even though children are no longer needed to tend the crops."⁵³

It should be obvious to critics that policies created for and adapted by a \$100 billion enterprise--elementary and secondary education spending in the U.S. approximates the gross national product of India and Sweden--cannot develop in a pristine environment. It should be just as obvious that the semi-autonomy of 16,000 governing boards will result in national education policies that undergo metamorphosis between the Potomac and Main Street.⁵⁴

Educational researcher Eleanor Farrar has said,

Any change in education policy is subject to multiform pressures; innumerable classroom variations; and human passions, prejudices, errors, and follies. The educational process cannot be fully systematized.⁵⁵

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology of this study, explain the sampling technique, describe the procedures used in devising the data gathering instrument and the administration of the questionnaire, and provide an explanation of the statistical procedures used to analyze the data.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research methodology was utilized in this study. The data described were obtained through a survey.

No category of educational research is more widely used than the type variously known as the survey, the normative survey, or descriptive research. This is a broad classification comprising a variety of specific techniques and procedures, all similar from the standpoint of purpose--namely to establish the status of the phenomenon under investigation.⁵⁶

In this case the survey was endorsed by the editor of the American School Board Journal, the key professional organization for school board members. This enhanced the likelihood that targeted subjects would

Another advantage claimed for the questionnaire is that each respondent receives the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way, as they are on standardized tests. Questionnaires are, then, supposed to yield more comparable data than do interviews.⁶³

For the above reasons, the researcher selected descriptive-survey procedures to determine the actions of local school board members regarding change and to study relationships between these changes and selected demographic and personal variables stated in the research questions.

Sample

For this study, regions of the United States, as identified by the American School Board Journal, were utilized (see Table 1). The researcher selected the technique of stratified random sampling because of the wide variance in the number of school board members from region to region.

Gay stated, "Stratified sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that identified subgroups in the population are represented."⁶⁴ Stratified random sampling has several advantages over simple random samples.

In the first place, stratification takes advantage of whatever information is known concerning the characteristics of the population.

. . . Second, it can be demonstrated that sampling errors arise only within strata, not between strata.

respond and that they would expect the group results to be shared widely with other members of that organization.

Good stated that the purposes of descriptive survey investigation are as follows:

1. To secure evidence concerning an existing situation or current condition.
2. To identify standards or norms with which to compare present conditions, in order to take the next step.
3. To determine how to make the next step.⁵⁷

Survey research deals with the incidence, distribution, and inter-relations of psychological and sociological variables.⁵⁸ Psychological variables include opinions and attitudes, on the one hand, and behavior on the other.⁵⁹ Sociological variables are attributes of individuals that spring from their membership in social groups: sex, income, political, and religious affiliation, socio-economic status, education, age, living expenses, occupation, race, and so on.⁶⁰

Kerlinger states clearly, "survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, and attitudes."⁶¹ In this study, a nationwide stratified sample by means of a mailed questionnaire was utilized.

"Among the major advantages of the questionnaire is that it permits wide coverage at a minimum expense both in money and effort."⁶² According to Sax,

TABLE 1

REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES ACCORDING
TO NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Northeast Region (Membership: 5,776)		
Connecticut	Maryland	Pennsylvania
Delaware	Massachusetts	Rhode Island
District of Columbia	New Hampshire	Vermont
Maine	New Jersey	Virgin Islands

Central Region (Membership: 8,582)		
Illinois	Kentucky	Missouri
Indiana	Michigan	Ohio
Iowa	Minnesota	Wisconsin

Southern Region (Membership: 4,124)		
Alabama	Louisiana	Tennessee
Arkansas	Mississippi	Texas
Florida	North Carolina	Virginia
Georgia	South Carolina	West Virginia

Western Region (Membership: 3,112)		
Colorado	Nebraska	Oklahoma
Kansas	New Mexico	South Dakota
Montana	North Dakota	Wyoming

Pacific Region (Membership: 3,171)		
Alaska	Hawaii	Oregon
Arizona	Idaho	Utah
California	Nevada	Washington

. . . Third, stratified sampling allows selection of cases within each stratum in different ways and in different proportions.⁶⁵

The stratified random sample (see Table 2) was prepared from the list of subscribers of the American School Board Journal. Superintendents, professors of education, librarians, etc., were deleted from the list of subscribers so that only local school board members would be surveyed.

The researcher chose a 17 percent random sample of the population, the same random sample size as that chosen by Meyer in his 1982 study.⁶⁶

Instrumentation

The survey form in this study was designed to accomplish two purposes (see Appendix A). One purpose was to collect selected attitudinal, personal, and demographic information about the school board members surveyed in this study. The survey form also collected data which was requested by the American School Board Journal but was not utilized in this study.

The survey instrument was divided into three parts. Part I (Questions 1-6) requested demographic information about the school board member's school district and the pressing management concerns of the same district. Part II (Questions 7-19) provided personal information about school board member sub-

TABLE 2
POPULATION AND SAMPLE BY REGION

Region	School Board Member Subscribers	17% Sample
Northeast	5,674	961
Central	7,939	1,350
Southern	4,560	775
Western	3,020	513
Pacific	3,148	535
TOTAL	24,321	4,134

scribers to the American School Board Journal. Part III sought information about policy changes.

Question 20 of the survey measured the extent of policy changes in graduation requirements in selected subject areas.

Question 21 of the survey ranked the major influences in changing the graduation requirements.

Question 22 of the survey was designed to determine the major source of funding for implementing the changes.

Question 23 of the survey ranked the reductions, if any, in selected course offerings.

Question 24 of the survey measured the extent of policy change in the area of financial incentives for teachers.

Question 25 ranked the major impetuses in changes in the area of financial incentives for teachers.

Question 26 was designed to determine the major source of funding for the financial incentives.

Question 27 measured the extent of policy changes in the area of instructional time.

Question 28 ranked the major impetuses in policy changes in the area of instructional time.

Question 29 was designed to determine the major source of funding for policy changes in the area of instructional time.

Question 30 reported the opinions of local board members toward policy changes in selected areas.

In order to validate the questionnaire, eight school board members not included in the study sample were asked to review the questionnaire using the following criteria:

1. Were the directions to the questionnaire stated and explained clearly?
2. Were the questions of sufficient interest and appeal to insure the respondent would be inclined to respond and complete it?
3. Were the questions relevant to current problems so as to elicit an accurate and realistic response?
4. Were the questions asked in a way that would be embarrassing to the individual?
5. Were the questions too restrictive, limited, or narrow in scope?
6. Were the questions designed in a manner which would, when taken as a whole, answer the basic philosophy of the study?

Responses from board members were gathered and analyzed for possible misinterpretation of any items. The questionnaires were also extensively reviewed by the researcher with editors from the American School Board Journal.

Collection of Data

A total of approximately 4,200 local school board members within the United States were identified and requested to participate in this study. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter, and a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope was mailed to each school board member selected for the sample.

No attempt was made to perform a follow-up to respondents who did not participate. The American School Board Journal requires anonymity in studies involving its subscribers, and anonymity was maintained.

Method of Analysis

The returned questionnaires were examined for completeness and accuracy in following directions. Any questionnaire with incomplete responses or responses not accurately recorded was discarded.

All data was coded and placed on a computer terminal utilizing the packaged computer routines of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Questions 1-5 and 7-19 were analyzed according to frequency distributions, and Questions 20-30 were analyzed according to cross-tabulation procedures. Only Question 6 on the questionnaire (board members' concerns) was analyzed according to multi-response

techniques. The computer facility at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at Telestar was utilized to process data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a description of the response data and the applied statistical techniques. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the demographic and personal variables of the respondents involved in the survey. The second section presents the findings with respect to each research question, and the third section presents a summary of the chapter.

Description of the Population Sample

The total population of school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal was 24,321. From this population, a stratified random sample of 17 percent (4,134) was chosen from five regions of the United States as specified by the Journal. After eight weeks, 1,027 or 24.8 percent of the survey forms were returned. The distribution of returned surveys by region is reported in Table 3, with a range of 18.9 percent from the Southern Region to 28.7 percent from the Central Region. From this table, it is apparent that the percentage of returns from each region was very similar except for the Southern Region.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNED SURVEYS
BY REGIONS

Region	Population	Number Mailed	Number Ret'd	Percent Ret'd	Percent/ Total
Central	7,939	1,350	388	28.7	37.8
Northeast	5,654	961	238	23.3	23.1
Pacific	3,148	535	122	24.4	11.9
Southern	4,580	775	147	18.9	14.3
Western	3,020	513	125	23.3	12.1
No Response	---	---	7	---	0.7
TOTALS	24,321	4,134	1,027	24.0	100.0

Demographic and Personal Data
Relative to Respondents

Classification

According to the 1,027 local school board member respondents, 30.3 percent reported that their school district was suburban; 30.4 percent reported theirs as small town; and 25.9 percent classified their district as rural. As shown in Table 4, respondents from suburban, rural, and small town classifications were nearly equal, whereas urban district returns came from only 88 or 8.6 percent of the respondents.

Enrollment

Over 50 percent of the respondents (532 or 51.8 percent) reported a student enrollment of between 1,000 and 4,999 students, and 188 or 18.3 percent reported a student enrollment of less than 1,000 students. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics show that nationally there are 8,379 school districts or 52.4 percent with enrollment less than 1,000 pupils (see Table 5). When comparing the percentage of all returns with the percentage of all systems, all categories are well represented except that of less than 1,000 pupils; however, this representation is not proportional. Therefore, there may be a proportional bias when comparing districts with a student enrollment of less than 1,000 because respondents are heavily loaded

TABLE 4
CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
BY RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Urban	88	8.6
Suburban	311	30.3
Rural	266	25.9
Small Town	313	30.5
Other	40	3.9
No Response	8	0.8
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 5
 DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNED SURVEYS
 BY ENROLLMENT WITH NATIONAL
 INDICATORS*

Enrollment	Surveys Returned	Percent of All Returns	School Systems National	Percent of All Systems
Fewer than 1,000	188	18.3	8,421	53.1
1,000-4,999	532	51.8	5,501	34.6
5,000-9,999	153	14.9	1,012	6.4
10,000-24,000	107	10.4	457	2.8
Greater than 25,000	44	4.3	163	1.2
No Response	3	0.3	Other 304	1.9
TOTAL	1,027	100.0	15,858	100.0

*National School Systems data/figures were obtained from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Directory, Public School Systems, 1983-84.

to larger schools than the National Profile. As stated by Dodge, "the reason for this bias may be that larger systems may devote more financial resources toward membership in national organizations and journals from which this sample was drawn."⁶⁷

Sex of Respondents

Males comprised 628 or 61.1 percent of the total local school board member respondents, whereas females comprised 390 or 38 percent (see Table 6). These figures show an increase of 7.3 percent female respondents from those reported by Meyer of 68.2 percent males and 31.7 percent females in 1982.⁶⁸

Method of Selection

Of the total number of respondents, 946 or 92.1 percent reported that they were elected to serve on local school boards while 59 or 5.7 percent were appointed to their positions (see Table 7). These results are also very similar to those reported in 1982 by Meyer, 94.4 percent and 5.2 percent respectively.⁶⁹

Age of School Board Member

According to respondents, 438 or 42.6 percent of school board members were in the 41-50 years of age range. Respondents in the age range of 36-60 comprised 81.4 percent of the total. Only 0.5 percent reported

TABLE 6
SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male	628	61.1
Female	390	38.0
No Response	9	0.9
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 7
METHOD OF SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Elected	946	92.1
Appointed	59	5.7
No Response	22	2.1
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

being in the category "Under 25," and 7.9 percent reported being in the category "Over 60" (see Table 8). These results are also very similar to those reported by Meyer in his 1982 study.⁷⁰

Education Attainment of Respondents

Of the total respondents, 668 or 66.2 percent reported having at least a four-year college education. Only 0.5 percent reported having less than a high school diploma (see Table 9). Meyer reported similar results in his 1982 study with 62.3 percent having completed at least a four-year college education and 1.2 percent with less than a high school diploma.⁷¹

Family Income of Respondents

The largest percentage of respondents, 214 or 20.8 percent, reported having an income range of \$30,000 - \$39,999. Of the total respondents, 589 or 59.7 percent reported having an income over \$40,000, which represents an 11.2 percent increase over the same combined income categories cited by Meyer in his 1982 study.⁷² Also, the combined income categories of \$50,000 - \$100,000 comprised 38.1 percent of the respondents (see Table 10). Meyer, in his 1982 study, stated that 28.4 percent of the respondents reported having an income over \$50,000.⁷³ A new income bracket was added this

TABLE 8
AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Under 25	5	0.5
26-35	89	8.7
36-40	189	18.4
41-50	438	42.6
51-60	210	20.4
Over 60	80	7.8
No Response	16	1.6
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 9
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Less than High School	5	0.5
High School Graduates	116	11.3
Post High School	220	21.4
Four-Year College	341	33.2
Advanced College Degree	327	31.8
No Response	18	1.8
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 10
FAMILY INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Less than \$20,000	39	3.7
\$20,000 - \$29,999	185	18.0
\$30,000 - \$39,999	214	20.8
\$40,000 - \$49,999	169	16.5
\$50,000 - \$59,999	129	12.6
\$60,000 - \$69,999	86	8.4
\$70,000 - \$79,999	57	5.6
\$80,000 - \$89,999	33	3.2
\$90,000 - \$99,999	15	1.5
\$100,000 and over	70	6.8
No Response	30	2.9
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

year (\$100,000 and up), and 6.8 percent of the respondents were in this category.

Occupation Category of Respondents

Most respondents reported belonging to the managerial category (35 percent). The professional category comprised 24.3 percent of the total responses. The combined managerial and professional categories comprised 59.3 percent of the responses (see Table 11), which is a decrease of 7.3 percent as reported by Meyer (66.6 percent) in his 1982 study.⁷⁴

Years Served by Respondents

Most of the respondents, 368 or 35.8 percent, reported having served as board members from four to seven years. The category of two to three years comprised 27.8 percent, and the category of over seven years comprised 23.3 percent of the respondents. According to respondents, 11.7 percent served for less than or equal to one year (see Table 12). These figures are very similar to those reported by Meyer in his 1982 study.⁷⁵

Race of Respondents

Most of the respondents, 880 or 85.7 percent, reported belonging to the Anglo-American category. The racial categories including Afro-American, Hispanic,

TABLE 11
OCCUPATION CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Professional	250	24.3
Managerial	349	35.0
Clerk, Sales	91	8.9
Skilled	50	4.9
Semi-skilled	7	0.7
Unskilled	0	0.0
Housewife	178	17.3
Retired	60	5.8
No response	32	3.1
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 12
YEARS SERVED BY RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Less than or equal to 1 year	120	11.7
2 - 3 years	286	27.8
4 - 7 years	368	35.8
Over 7 years	239	23.3
No response	14	1.4
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

Indian, and Oriental comprised 5.0 percent (see Table 13). These figures are very similar to the 1982 study by Meyer, which reported 89.8 percent and 4.9 percent respectively.⁷⁶

Marital Status

Of the total number of respondents, 968 or 94.3 percent are married.

Children Attending Public School (K-12)

According to the respondents, 672 or 65.4 percent have at least one child attending public school.

Previous Board Service and Years

Served on Previous Board

Only 67 respondents or 6.5 percent reported serving on more than one board. The most frequently cited number of years of service on a previous board was three.

Service to Present School District

Over 50 percent of the respondents (606 or 59 percent) reported being a member of a parent-teacher organization; 526 or 51.2 percent were involved as school volunteers; 115 or 11.2 percent were employed by the school district in a professional capacity; and 23 or 2.2 percent were employed in a classified position.

TABLE 13
RACE OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Afro-American	23	2.2
Anglo-American	880	85.7
Hispanic	15	1.5
American Indian	8	0.8
Oriental	5	0.5
Other	42	4.1
No response	54	5.3
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

Of the total respondents, 159 or 15.9 percent reported other involvement in the school system (see Table 14).

Current Office(s) Served by Respondents

According to the 1,027 respondents, 226 or 22 percent serve as board president; 92 or 9 percent serve as board secretary; 33 or 3.2 percent serve as board treasurer; and 26 or 2.6 percent serve in other official capacities, primarily vice president.

Committee Involvement

Most of the respondents (722 or 70.3 percent) serve on at least one board committee (see Table 15).

Research Question I: In the past two years, has your district made any policy change(s) in graduation requirements in any of the following areas?

1A. English/Language Arts. According to the 1,027 school board respondents, 41.7 percent reported that their school district had made policy changes to increase graduation requirements in English/Language Arts. Only two respondents reported a decrease in graduation requirements in English/Language Arts (see Table 16). However, it should be noted that the "missing" and "no change" categories need to be viewed as one and the same in the questions so worded.

TABLE 14
SERVICE IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Service	Frequency	Percent
Member of parent- teacher organization	606	59.0
School volunteer	526	51.2
Professional employee	115	11.2
Classified employee	23	2.2
Other	159	15.5

TABLE 15
COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Committee	Frequency	Percent
Curriculum	202	19.7
Budget	248	24.1
Facilities	173	16.8
Personnel	199	19.4
Public/Community Relations	153	14.9
Transportation	87	8.5
Textbook	46	4.5
Computer	70	6.8
Other	345	33.6

TABLE 16
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

Requirements	Frequency	Percent
Increase	428	41.7
Decrease	2	0.2
No change	68	6.6
Missing (no response)	529	51.5
TOTAL	1,027	100.00

1B. Mathematics. Increased graduation requirements in mathematics were reported by 566 or 55.1 percent of the respondents. Less than 1 percent (0.7) reported a decrease in graduation requirements in mathematics (see Table 17).

1C. Science. Of the total respondents, 486 or 47.3 percent reported an increase in the graduation requirements in Science. Only 0.3 percent reported a decrease in the graduation requirements in Science (see Table 18).

1D. Computer Technology. According to the 1,027 respondents, 430 or 41.9 percent reported an increase in the graduation requirements in Computer Technology. Less than 1 percent (0.5) reported a decrease in graduation requirements in this area (see Table 19).

1E. Foreign Language. Of the 1,027 respondents, 171 or 16.7 percent reported an increase in the graduation requirements in Foreign Language. Only 0.9 percent reported a decrease in graduation requirements in this subject (see Table 20).

Research Question 2: Where do you think the major impetus for changing the graduation requirements originated?

TABLE 17
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
MATHEMATICS

Requirements	Frequency	Percent
Increase	566	55.1
Decrease	7	0.7
No change	50	4.9
Missing (no response)	404	39.0
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 18
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
SCIENCE

Requirements	Frequency	Percent
Increase	486	47.3
Decrease	3	0.3
No change	59	5.7
Missing (no response)	479	46.6
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 19
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

Requirements	Frequency	Percent
Increase	430	41.9
Decrease	5	0.5
No change	74	7.2
Missing (no response)	518	50.4
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

TABLE 20
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Requirements	Frequency	Percent
Increase	171	16.7
Decrease	9	0.9
No change	104	10.1
Missing (no response)	743	72.3
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

According to the 1,027 respondents, the major impetus for changing the graduation requirements originated with the local board (35.6 - 31.5 percent). The local superintendent was cited as being an impetus by over twenty percent of the respondents (21.6 - 24.8 percent). Fewer than 7 percent of the respondents indicated that state legislatures, community interest groups, employee associations, and national reports impacted their decisions to change graduation requirements in the areas researched (see Table 21).

Research Question 3: If the change(s) cost money to implement, what was the major source of funding?

Of the districts that reported a cost attributable to the change in the selected subject areas researched, the respondents cited the local jurisdiction as the major source of funding. Federal, private, and student fees were cited the least as a source of funding. It is also noted that a high percentage of respondents did not attribute any cost to the change(s) (see Table 22).

Research Question 4: In the past two years, has your district curtailed or eliminated any course offerings in the following areas?

The most frequently cited areas of curtailment were music (124 or 12.1 percent), driver education (119 or 11.6 percent), art (99 or 9.6 percent), industrial

TABLE 21

ORIGINATION OF MAJOR IMPETUS FOR CHANGING
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Major Impetus	English	Math	Science	Computer Technology	Foreign Language
State Legislature	50 (11.7%)	63 (11.1%)	57 (11.7%)	26 (6.4%)	18 (10.5%)
State Education Department	79 (18.4)	131 (23.1)	106 (21.8)	53 (12.2)	41 (2.4)
Local Board	135 (31.5)	168 (29.7)	142 (29.2)	153 (35.6)	45 (26.4)
Superintendent	106 (24.8)	127 (22.4)	105 (21.6)	103 (24.0)	41 (24.0)
Community	8 (1.9)	10 (1.8)	9 (1.9)	12 (2.8)	8 (4.0)
Employee Associations	1 (0.3)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)	3 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
National Reports	23 (5.4)	30 (5.3)	30 (6.1)	13 (3.0)	7 (0.7)
No Response	26 (6.0)	36 (6.3)	36 (7.4)	67 (15.5)	11 (6.5)
TOTAL	428 (100.0%)	566 (100.0%)	486 (100.0%)	430 (100.0%)	171 (100.0%)
Percentage of Total Survey Respondents Reporting	41.7%	55.1%	47.3%	41.9%	16.7%

TABLE 22

MAJOR SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR CHANGES
IN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Funding Source	English	Math	Science	Computer Technology	Foreign Language
Local	172 (40.1%)	224 (39.6%)	184 (37.8%)	187 (43.4%)	80 (46.8%)
State	79 (18.4)	104 (18.3)	97 (20.0)	77 (18.0)	36 (21.0)
Federal	4 (0.9)	5 (0.9)	5 (1.3)	20 (4.7)	2 (1.2)
Private Sector	9 (2.2)	10 (1.8)	7 (1.4)	18 (4.2)	4 (2.3)
Student Fees	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)
No Cost Attributed	164 (38.4)	223 (39.4)	193 (39.8)	127 (29.4)	49 (28.7)
TOTALS	428 (100.0%)	566 (100.0%)	486 (100.0%)	430 (100.0%)	171 (100.0%)
Percentage of Total Survey Respondents Reporting	41.7%	55.1%	47.3%	41.9%	16.7%

arts (97 or 9.4 percent), and health and physical education (93 or 9.1 percent). Driver education was reported eliminated in 55 or 5.4 percent of the cases by respondents (see Table 23).

Research Question 5: In the past two years, has your district made any policy change(s) in the following areas?

Policy change(s) in financial incentive plans were reported by 193 or 18.8 percent of the respondents. Master teacher policy changes were reported by 87 or 8.5 percent of the respondents. Merit pay policy changes were reported by 43 or 4.2 percent of the respondents (see Table 24).

Research Question 6: Where do you think the major impetus for changing your policy on financial incentives originated?

According to the respondents, 121 or 37.5 percent reported that the impetus for change originated with the local board of education (see Table 25).

Research Question 7: What was the major source of revenue for the incentive program?

The cost of implementing financial incentive plans for teachers was primarily absorbed by the locality (56.7 percent). State funds supported approximately

TABLE 23
 CURTAILMENT AND/OR ELIMINATION
 OF COURSES

Subject	Curtailed	Eliminated
Music	12.1%	1.5%
Driver Education	11.6	5.4
Art	9.6	1.3
Industrial Arts	9.4	1.9
Health/Physical Education	9.1	0.6
Foreign Language	7.2	2.1
Gifted/Talented	4.8	1.2
English/Language Arts	4.5	0.9

TABLE 24
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS

Incentive	Yes	No
Merit Pay	N 43 (4.2%)	984 (95.8%)
Master Teacher Plan	87 (8.5%)	940 (91.5%)
Other (excluding regularly scheduled increases)	193 (18.8%)	834 (82.2%)
TOTAL	N 323	

TABLE 25
ORIGINATION OF CHANGE OF
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Impetus	Frequency	Percent
State Legislation	N 26	8.1
State Education Department	17	5.2
Local Board of Education	121	37.5
Superintendent/Administrative Staff	51	15.8
Community Interest Group	1	0.3
Employee Associations	32	10.0
National Reports	3	0.9
No response	72	22.2
TOTAL	1,027	100.0

twenty percent (19.8 percent) of the programs implemented by local boards (see Table 26).

Research Question 8: In the past two years, has your district made any policy changes in the following areas?

According to the 1,027 school board respondents, 210 or 20.4 percent made policy changes that increased class time. Policy changes increasing the school day were reported by 182 or 17.7 percent of the respondents. Increases affecting the school year were reported by 90 or 8.8 percent of the respondents. Homework was reported to be increased by 208 or 20.3 percent of the respondents (see Table 27).

Research Question 9: Where do you think the major impetus for change originated?

The respondents cited either the local board (2.4-41.2 percent) or the superintendent (18-37.9 percent) as the major impetus for changing policies related to instructional time (see Table 28).

Research Question 10: If the change(s) cost money to implement, what was the major source of revenue?

The respondents reported that the major source of revenue for increasing instructional time and homework was from the locality with the exception of the school

TABLE 26
MAJOR SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR FINANCIAL
INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Source	Frequency	Percent
Local	184	56.7
State	64	19.8
Federal	1	0.3
Private Sector	4	1.2
No Response	70	21.7

TABLE 27
POLICY CHANGES IN INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Area of Change	Increase	Decrease	No Change
Class Time	N 210 (20.4%)	33 (3.2%)	784 (76.4%)
School Day	182 (17.7%)	18 (1.8%)	827 (80.5%)
School Year	90 (8.8%)	10 (1.0%)	927 (90.2%)
Homework	208 (20.3%)	3 (0.3%)	816 (79.4%)

TABLE 28

ORIGINATION OF MAJOR IMPETUS FOR CHANGE
IN INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND HOMEWORK

Major Impetus	Class Time	School Day	School Year	Homework
State Legislature	31 (12.8%)	35 (17.5%)	29 (29.0%)	6 (2.8%)
State Education Department	23 (9.5)	27 (13.5)	14 (14.0)	4 (1.9)
Local Board of Education	77 (31.6)	56 (28.0)	24 (24.0)	87 (41.2)
Superintendent/ Administrative Staff	92 (37.9)	53 (26.5)	18 (18.0)	61 (29.0)
Community Interest Group	1 (0.4)	3 (1.5)	1 (1.0)	15 (7.1)
Employee Associations	2 (0.8)	2 (1.0)	2 (2.0)	2 (0.9)
National Reports	4 (1.6)	4 (2.0)	4 (4.0)	8 (3.7)
TOTALS	210 (100.0%)	182 (100.0%)	90 (100.0%)	208 (100.0%)
Percentage of Total Survey Respondents Reporting	20.4%	17.7%	8.8%	20.3%

year, where the local and state categories were ranked equally (38.9 percent) (see Table 29).

Research Question 11: If your board of education has not made policy changes in the past two years in the following areas, do you think it should?

Of the 1,027 respondents, an additional 167 or 16.3 percent reported that the graduation requirements should be changed; an additional 387 or 37.3 percent of the respondents thought policies related to financial incentives for teachers should be changed. The need for policy changes in the amount of instructional time was cited by 352 or 34.3 percent of the respondents. The need for policy changes related to homework was cited by 244 or 23.8 percent of the respondents (see Table 30).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present analysis of the data. The respondents were described by region, classification of school district. Respondents were described further by personal and demographic characteristics of sex, age, family income, marital status, children attending public school, occupation, method of appointment, school involvement, board committee involvement, and educational attainment level. Each of the research questions was treated with appro-

TABLE 29

MAJOR SOURCE OF REVENUE FOR INCREASING
INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND HOMEWORK

Major Source	Class Time	School Day	School Year	Homework
Local	82 (39.0%)	63 (34.6%)	35 (38.9%)	46 (22.1%)
State	28 (13.3)	42 (23.0)	35 (38.9)	5 (2.4)
Federal	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Private Sector	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
No Response	100 (47.7)	77 (42.4)	20 (22.2)	157 (75.5)
TOTALS	210 (100.0%)	182 (100.0%)	90 (100.0%)	208 (100.0%)
Percentage of Total Survey Respondents Reporting	20.4%	17.7%	8.8%	20.3%

TABLE 30
POLICY CHANGES DESIRED BY RESPONDENTS

Changes	Yes	No
Graduation Requirements	N 167 (16.3%)	103 (9.9%)
Financial Incentives for Teachers	387 (37.3%)	179 (17.4%)
Amount of Instructional Time	352 (34.3%)	175 (17.0%)
Homework	244 (23.8%)	187 (18.2%)
No Response	199 (19.4%)	268 (26.0%)

priate statistical procedures and results were reported.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, RESULTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview and summary of the study that was conducted. The study will be summarized by reviewing the purpose of the study, restating the research questions, summarizing the related literature, and reporting the results derived from an analysis of the data. In addition, recommendations for further research are made.

Summary

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to report on policy changes implemented by school boards in the past two school years (1982-84) in the areas of graduation requirements, financial incentives for teachers, instructional time and homework. Information regarding program curtailment was also obtained. In addition, the study focused on the relationships between policy changes approved by the local boards and selected personal and demographic variables.

The review of the literature provided information about the historical role of local school boards as the policy setting agency for the public schools. As the policy setting agency, the board's authority and relationship with respect to establishing increased graduation requirements, financial incentives for teachers, additional instructional time, and homework requirements for students were noted.

Present practices of local boards of education with respect to curtailment and/or elimination of selected course offerings were reviewed.

The need for the study was documented to cite the limited amount of current comprehensive information and research directed toward school board members' action in the areas of graduation requirements, financial incentives, instructional time and homework.

The year 1983 was one of unprecedented national attention directed toward education. During this year, several major studies focusing primarily on public secondary schools were published. These studies, most notably, The National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform, concluded in April 1983 that "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."⁷⁷

A Nation at Risk received widespread media coverage and became a major political issue during 1983 and throughout the initial stages of the 1984 presidential elections.

The Government Printing Office reports that over 70,000 copies of A Nation at Risk have been purchased, and private groups have reprinted at least another 500,000 copies for their own constituencies.⁷⁸

Other reports published in the past eighteen months by organizations and prominent educators served as additional impetus for local boards of education to seek support from the local citizenry, State Education Departments, and State Legislatures to enact education changes and to seek additional financial support for education. The scope of the recommendations was primarily quantifiable and easily measured; hence most politicians were comfortable in supporting the reforms.

In the past two years, 35 states have approved changes in graduation requirements, 24 are examining master teacher or career ladder programs, and 6 have begun statewide or pilot programs. In addition, 8 have approved lengthening the school year and 18 have mandates affecting the amount of time for instruction.⁷⁹

Research Questions Restated

1. For each subject area surveyed, what percentage of school board members responded that their district made policy changes in the past two years?

2. For each subject area surveyed, where did the board members think the major impetus for changing the graduation requirements originated?

3. For each subject area surveyed, what was the major source of funding as reported by the board members?

4. In what areas did school board members report course curtailment or elimination?

5. What relationship exists between school board members' personal characteristics and policy changes in the area of financial incentives for teachers?

6. Did board members report different results concerning policy changes in instructional time and homework across selected personal characteristics?

7. Did board members report different results concerning policy changes in course curtailment across selected demographic characteristics?

Summary of Related Literature

The researcher presented a historical perspective on the role of the local school board in the establishment of policies which set the direction for their respective school systems.

The doctrine of local responsibility and community independence can be related to our pioneer history without difficulty. Parish and county autonomy in the South, the seventeenth-century independence of New England church congregations, and suspicion of centralized government are among the factors that

shaped the present political structure of our school systems in many states.⁸⁰

Cook also pointed out that "citizen involvement in the processes of education has been deeply rooted in American history."⁸¹ Krebs has also noted, "the boards of education have the major responsibilities for school policies. Only boards of education can enact school policies."⁸²

A distinct thread emerged from the review of the literature in respect to change in public education. The thread or prevailing theme was that when our country was faced with a crisis, the schools were looked at as contributing to the problem as well as being the means or institution to ameliorate the crisis or problem.

So customary was it to criticize the public schools, whether in the 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s, or the 1970s, that it was easy to forget the ways in which the schools had been amazingly successful. Americans had long ago decided, without too much discussion of the matter, that education would be the best vehicle through which to change society.⁸³

In order to garner public attention and support, politicians at all levels as well as many special interest groups engage in hyperbolic prose and rhetoric to awaken the generally complacent populace. The latest "crisis" has revolved around our country's inability to maintain its economic superiority in a rapidly changing global economy. The staff of the National

Science Foundation concluded in a 1982 report to Congress:

There is, as yet, little evidence that the modern electronics revolution has had much impact on the formal educational system. . . . Realizing the full potential of those technologies in the classroom would necessitate a considerable restructuring . . . of educational strategies and methods.⁸⁴

Local boards of education find themselves attempting to sort out the relevant data from the plethora of reports and commission documents. Their task is not an easy one.

Commissions do have their functions in American politics, but fact-finding, rigorous analysis, and policy development are usually not among them. Commissions are more appropriate for dramatizing an issue, resolving political differences, and reassuring the public that questions are being thoughtfully considered.⁸⁵

Within this context the local boards of education debate the merits of the various proposals and must determine the direction for their respective school systems.

Research Methodology

This study utilized descriptive research methodology and survey technique to gather data from school board members about policy changes enacted in the past two years in selected subject areas, financial incentives for teachers, instructional time, homework, and course curtailment and/or elimination.

The sample was drawn from the population of school board member subscribers to the American School Board Journal. The population was stratified by regions of the United States and a random sample of 17 percent was drawn.

The survey form used to collect the data was divided into three parts. Part I collected demographic information about the respondent's school district and community. Part II collected data relative to the personal characteristics of the school board member, and Part III gathered data about school board policy in selected areas. A return rate of 24.8 percent was achieved.

The method of analysis and statistical treatments applied to the data were identified. Research questions one through seven were analyzed by means of frequency distributions. The researcher analyzed the data for significance between policy changes and the personal variables to determine the relationship that existed.

Results

The following are the salient points coming out of the survey. It deals with the general areas of Graduation Requirements, Financial Incentives for Teachers, and Instructional Time.

During the past two years, local boards of education have made policy changes in Graduation Requirements in the following areas:

Mathematics. More than half (55.1 percent) reported that their districts had increased the number of credits in mathematics needed to graduate (see Table 17).

Science. Almost as many (47.3 percent) reported their districts had increased the number of credits in science needed to graduate (see Table 18).

Computer Technology. Computer courses also received attention during this period. According to the survey, 41.9 percent reported that their districts had increased the number of credits in computer technology (see Table 19).

English/Language Arts. According to the survey, 41.7 percent reported that their districts had increased the number of credits in English/language arts needed to graduate (see Table 16).

Foreign Language. Fewer than 20 percent (16.7 percent) reported that their districts had increased the number of credits in foreign language needed to graduate (see Table 20).

Responses to the question asking the respondents where they thought the major impetus for increasing the graduation requirements in mathematics, science, English/language arts, and foreign language originated showed that the local board was most responsible for the change.

The second most cited impetus was the superintendent of schools with the exception of math and science where the respondents thought the major impetus came from the state education department.

Respondents indicated that state legislatures, community interest groups, employee associations, and national reports were not major influences (see Table 21).

In answer to the question about curtailment or elimination, respondents reported that, with the exception of driver education (5.4%), they would totally eliminate very few course offerings (see Table 23).

In polling on Financial Incentives for Teachers, only 4 percent of the respondents reported that their district had implemented merit pay plans. "Master teacher" plans were implemented in 8.5 percent of the districts according to the respondents. Respondents (18.8 percent) reported "other incentives" were implemented in their districts (see Table 24).

As was the case with the major impetus for changing graduation requirements, the local board was cited as the main impetus for originating the financial incentive programs (see Table 25).

Board members were also questioned on whether they had made policy changes in matters of Instructional

Time and Homework. Class time was reported by 20.4 percent of the board members as having been increased; 17.7 percent reported they had increased the length of their school day. Only 8.8 percent said that their school year had been increased (see Table 27).

The question dealing with Homework showed that 20.3 percent of the respondents enacted policy changes in this area (see Table 27).

In the last research question, respondents who reported "no changes" in any of the four areas were given the opportunity to state whether they felt that changes should be made. The respondents reported that more attention should be directed to financial incentives for teachers (37.3 percent), that policies related to instructional time should be changed (34.3 percent), that more emphasis should be placed on homework (23.8 percent), and that policy changes were warranted in graduation requirements (16.3 percent) (see Table 30).

Recommendations for Further Study

Based upon the results and conclusions of this study of the changes implemented by boards of education and the relationships that exist between these changes and certain personal and demographic variables, the following recommendations are made for further study.

The study was limited to a nationwide sample of school board members who are subscribers to the American School Board Journal. As such, it cannot be assured that the population studied reflects the same characteristics as the population of school board members who have not subscribed to the Journal. A more comprehensive nationwide or a more exhaustive regional sample would result in a more accurate picture about changes implemented by local boards of education.

The fiscal impact of the changes implemented by school boards was only measured by attributing cost to a specific branch of government or other group (student fees, private concern). The long range financial impact would yield vital information to determine budgetary priorities.

Researcher's Commentary

Local boards of education have moved rapidly in the past two years to adopt increased high school graduation requirements. The respondents felt that the movement for increasing high school graduation requirements was a grass-roots effort. Many added, in comments on the survey, that it was difficult to attribute the major impetus for change to any one group. At this time, the fiscal impact of these changes has barely been felt. However, as these changes are implemented more broadly, the financial burden will increase.

Also, in an era of teacher shortages in mathematics, computer technology, and science, school districts may be offering courses to meet new graduation requirements taught by teachers who have limited preparation in the subject area. These potential fiscal and manpower concerns may result in some districts' and/or states' taking a second look at the new requirements and scaling back some of the new initiatives.

In the area of financial incentives for teachers, local boards of education seem to be looking for creative ways to break out of the lock-step salary schedule so common in the public schools across the country. Historically, these incentive plans have not

been well received by teacher unions and were only implemented in less than 10 percent of the approximately 16,000 school districts at the zenith of their popularity. It is reasonable to conclude from the research collected in this study that local boards of education spurred on by national commissions, state legislatures, popular opinion, and their own convictions will once again attempt to initiate teacher incentive plans.

Again, the financial impact of these plans has not been accurately assessed since many of the plans were introduced during this past year. Also, the potential labor unrest that these plans may generate is hard to gauge. Time will tell whether a whole new salary structure for public school teachers will emerge in the next decade. Certainly there are signs in several states that steps have been taken in that direction.

Historically, research in the area of instructional time has basically revolved around time on task analysis and other qualitative measures. In the past two years, there has been a concerted effort on the part of many political leaders and other interested parties to expand the focus of instructional time and to compare the typical school day and year in the United States with other industrialized countries, notably Great Britain and Japan. In strict hours or

days in school, the United States is surpassed by Great Britain and Japan. These comparisons coupled with economic concerns in the late 1970s and into the early 1980s lead many people to conclude that if students spent more time in school, the United States would be better able to compete in a rapidly growing world economy. To this end, eight states have approved lengthening the school day; seven, lengthening the school year; and eighteen have mandates affecting the amount of instructional time. Local boards of education are focusing more attention on using the available instructional time more effectively.

Historically, the local board of education wielded considerable autonomy over the policies involving the operations and curriculum of their schools. This latest round of education reforms has resulted in both state legislatures and state education departments throughout the United States dictating changes in school policies at the local level. In many instances, the state was prompted by local board members to enact changes. However, in some states, political leaders have seized the nationwide interest in education to broaden their control over local boards of education. Barring the motivation of the various groups influencing the course of education reform, it is apparent

that the states' role in local education matters has been enlarged in the past two years.

In summary, education in the past few years has re-emerged as a national concern reminiscent of our post-Sputnik era of the late '50s and early '60s. This reform movement has surfaced from local and state boards' studying the condition of education and encouraging local initiative to seek the vital support for the needed changes. Many of the respondents have already cast their votes in favor of these reforms. The question now is whether education will stay on the front burner or whether it will revert to a matter of secondary importance. Continued vigilance is essential to keep education as a top priority in our country.

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APPENDIX

Cover Letter and Questionnaire

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD

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

Dear Colleague:

Knowledge is our mutual business, and the accompanying questionnaire has been carefully designed to elicit information that will increase the effectiveness of school board members around the U.S.

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey. A self-addressed, postage-paid envelope has been included for your convenience.

The results of this nationwide survey will be published in an early issue of The American School Board Journal. We're grateful for your important help.

Cordially,

The Editors

NATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE
CHANGES IMPLEMENTED BY SCHOOL BOARDS

The purpose of this study is to report school boards' actions regarding changes implemented in their districts in the past two years (1982-1984). The survey has three parts: (1) demographic information, (2) personal information, and (3) changes implemented in the past two years. This survey will require no more than ten or fifteen minutes to complete. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

PART I - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE RESPOND WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

1. In what state is your school system? _____
2. Describe your school district's student population by checking ONE appropriate category:
 fewer than 1,000 1,000 - 4,999 5,000 - 9,999
 10,000 - 24,999 more than 25,000
3. Describe the community your school district serves by checking ONE appropriate category:
 urban suburban rural small town other
4. How many members of your board are _____ men, _____ women?
5. Are members of your board _____ elected, _____ appointed?
6. From the following list, please RANK THE FIRST THREE most pressing concerns in your school district:

DIRECTIONS: PLACE A 1 NEXT TO YOUR MOST PRESSING CONCERN, A 2 NEXT TO YOUR SECOND MOST PRESSING CONCERN AND A 3 NEXT TO YOUR THIRD MOST PRESSING CONCERN.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integration/busing | <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil's lack of interest/truancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor curriculum/poor standards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declining enrollment | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty of getting good teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large schools/overcrowding | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents' lack of interest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers' lack of interest | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of respect for other students/teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of proper financial support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime/vandalism | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ | |

PART II - PERSONAL INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE RESPOND WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

7. Are you male, female?
8. Are you Afro-American, Anglo-American, Hispanic
 American Indian, Oriental, Other? (Please specify)

9. Age: under 25 26-35 36-40 41-50 51-60
 over 60

10. What is your highest educational attainment?
 less than high school graduate high school graduate
 post high school training four-year college degree
 advanced college degree

11. How many years have you served on your present school board? _____

12. Have you served on any other school board? Yes No
 If yes, how many years did you serve? _____

13. In what other ways have you served your present school district?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ALL CATEGORIES THAT APPLY.

- Member of parent-teacher organization
 School volunteer
 Employed by school district in professional capacity
 Employed by school district in classified position
 Other (Please specify) _____

14. Do you currently serve as board president, board secretary,
 board treasurer, other (please specify)

15. Do you currently serve on a board committee? Yes No

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ALL CATEGORIES THAT APPLY.

- Curriculum committee
- Budget committee
- Facilities committee
- Personnel committee
- Public/community relations committee
- Other (Please specify) _____
- Transportation committee
- Textbook selection committee
- Computer technology committee

16. What is your current occupation? _____

17. Are you married? Yes No

18. Do you have children in public school (K-12) at this time? Yes No

19. What is your family income?

- less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 and up

PART III - CHANGES

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY IS TO REPORT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' ACTIONS REGARDING CHANGES IMPLEMENTED IN THEIR DISTRICTS DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS.

20. Question: In the past two years, has your district made any policy change(s) in graduation requirements in any of the following areas?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE PER CATEGORY.

	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>No Change</u>
A. English/Language Arts	()	()	()
B. Mathematics	()	()	()
C. Science	()	()	()
D. Computer Technology	()	()	()
E. Foreign Language	()	()	()

22. Question: If the change(s) cost money to implement, what was the major revenue source?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE PER CATEGORY.

	<u>Local</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>	<u>Student Fees</u>
A. English/Language Arts	()	()	()	()	()
B. Mathematics	()	()	()	()	()
C. Science	()	()	()	()	()
D. Computer Technology	()	()	()	()	()
E. Foreign Language	()	()	()	()	()
OTHER: PLEASE SPECIFY					
F. _____	()	()	()	()	()
G. _____	()	()	()	()	()
H. _____	()	()	()	()	()

23. Question: In the past two years, has your district curtailed or eliminated any course offerings in the following areas?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE PER CATEGORY, IF APPLICABLE.

	<u>Curtailed</u>	<u>Eliminated</u>
A. English/Language Arts	A. ()	A. ()
B. Mathematics	B. ()	B. ()
C. Science	C. ()	C. ()
D. Computer Technology	D. ()	D. ()
E. Foreign Language	E. ()	E. ()
F. Social Studies	F. ()	F. ()
G. Music	G. ()	G. ()
H. Art	H. ()	H. ()
I. Health/Physical Education	I. ()	I. ()
J. Driver Education	J. ()	J. ()
K. Industrial Arts/Job Skills	K. ()	K. ()
L. Gifted/Talented	L. ()	L. ()
M. Remedial Reading	M. ()	M. ()
N. Special Education	N. ()	N. ()
O. Distributive Education	O. ()	O. ()

26. Question: What was the major source of revenue for the incentive program?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE.

	<u>Local</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>
A. Financial Incentives	()	()	()	()

27. Question: In the past two years, has your district made any policy changes in the following areas?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE PER CATEGORY.

	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>No Change</u>
A. Class time	()	()	()
B. School day	()	()	()
C. School year	()	()	()
D. Homework	()	()	()

*COMPLETE QUESTIONS 28 AND 29 ONLY IF YOUR DISTRICT MADE CHANGES IN ANY OF THE AREAS LISTED ABOVE.

28. Question: Where do you think the major impetus for change originated?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE PER CATEGORY.

	<u>State Legis- lature</u>	<u>State Educa- tion Depart- ment</u>	<u>Local Board of Educa- tion</u>	<u>Superin- tendent/ Adminis- trative Staff</u>	<u>Community Interest Group</u>	<u>Employee Associa- tions</u>	<u>National Reports</u>
A. Class time	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
B. School day	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
C. School year	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
D. Homework	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

29. Question: If the change(s) cost money to implement, what was the major source of revenue?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE PER CATEGORY.

	<u>Local</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>
A. Class time	()	()	()	()
B. School day	()	()	()	()
C. School year	()	()	()	()
D. Homework	()	()	()	()

30. Question: If your board of education has not made policy changes in the past two years in the following areas, do you think it should?

DIRECTIONS: CHECK ONE RESPONSE PER CATEGORY

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
A. Graduation requirements	()	()
B. Financial incentives for teachers	()	()
C. Amount of instructional time	()	()
D. homework		

COMMENTS:

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A NATIONAL STUDY OF SELECTED POLICY CHANGES
IMPLEMENTED BY SCHOOL BOARDS
(1982-1984)

by

Frank J. Cleary

(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to report on policy changes implemented by school boards in the past two school years (1982-1984) in the areas of graduation requirements, financial incentives for teachers, instructional time, and homework. The survey also obtained information on program curtailment and/or elimination.

A stratified random sample (4,134) of 17 percent was drawn from the population of subscribers to the American School Board Journal who are local school board members. A return rate of 24.8 percent (1,027) was realized.

The survey used in this study was designed to accomplish two purposes. One was to collect demographic and personal data to be treated in the study. The data employed concerned state, region, and school district population; school district classification; family income; marital status; occupation; race; age; educational attainment; and years served as a board member.

The second purpose of the survey was to gather data involving changes implemented by school boards in the last two years in the selected areas.

Respondents reported significant increases in graduation requirements in mathematics, language arts, computer technology, and science.

In the area of course curtailment, music, driver education, art, industrial arts, and health/physical education were most frequently cited as being reduced. Secondary driver education was most frequently cited by the respondents as being eliminated.

In the category of instructional time, the respondents' first choice for policy changes was increasing class time. Second most often cited was lengthening the school day. Increasing the school year was the area least cited by the respondents.

Suggestions for further research include (1) the further exploration of the long range fiscal impact of the changes and (2) the investigation of a more comprehensive sample of demographic and personal variables that might be related to policy changes implemented by school boards.