PERCEPTIONS OF IOWA SUPERINTENDENTS REGARDING THE
APPROPRIATENESS OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

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A Dissertation
Presented to
The School of Graduate Studies
Drake University

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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by
Robert D. Hartzler
May 1983
c 1983

Robert D. Hartzler

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PERCEPTIONS OF IOWA SUPERINTENDENTS REGARDING THE
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PERCEPTIONS OF IOWA SUPERINTENDENTS REGARDING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

An abstract of a Dissertation by
Robert D. Hartzler
May 1983
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Advisor: Dr. Charles D. Rowley

The problem. The study was designed to determine the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils and to determine whether differences existed between superintendents regarding selected school issues.

Procedure. A random sample of 112 Iowa superintendents responded to a questionnaire designed by the researcher. Twenty school issues were rated on a Likert type scale for input and participatory decision making. A two-way classification analysis of variance and t-test were used on the independent variables, school district size and administrative experience.

Findings. Differences existed among superintendents for input and school district enrollment on five issues. No differences existed among superintendents for participatory decision making and school district size on all selected issues. Differences existed among superintendents for input and administrative experience on three issues. Differences also existed among superintendents for participatory decision making and administrative experience on two issues. There were differences among superintendents for the interactive effects of both input and participatory decision making on school district size and administrative experience for one issue. Differences also existed among superintendents for twenty issues when considering the appropriateness of input and participatory decision making.

Conclusions. Six of the seven hypotheses were rejected. It was generally concluded that input was more appropriate for parent advisory councils than participatory decision making.

Recommendations. It was recommended that: (1) parent advisory councils should be considered as an effective avenue for providing input on school issues, (2) parent advisory councils should be utilized to provide input rather than participatory decision making, (3) a nationwide study involving a larger sample should be conducted to determine the appropriateness of school issues for parent advisory councils, and (4) a study regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils should be conducted to determine whether differences exist in the perceptions of superintendents utilizing parent advisory councils and those not utilizing parent advisory councils.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There is probably no such thing as citizen apathy regarding Schools. There are only lack of ways for them to participate in school affairs.  

Parental involvement in education is among the oldest American tradition. Early educational theories and philosophies were strongly influenced by the church while parents were given the responsibility of developing the character of their children.  

During the middle 1900's, however, social and political changes occurred that isolated the educational decision makers from parents of school children. Perhaps the most dramatic change during this era was the reorganization of school districts. The number of school districts decreased proportionately with the number of school board members while student populations in school districts increased rapidly. 

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2Gail Bjorklund, Historical Perspectives on Parent Education in America (ERIC ED 143 432), p. 2.

3Nyquist, p. 1.
Federal and state guidelines forced board members to become more dependent upon the opinions of educational authorities. Educators demanded more money for classroom instruction and salaries. As a result, parents believed that they were being used by educators only for acceptance of policies and opinions designed by school personnel.\(^1\)

The concepts that parents could support but not question and assist but not initiate, have changed rapidly during the past decade. A 1980 Gallup Poll indicated that 90 percent of the respondents expressed a desire to serve in an advisory capacity to their schools.\(^2\)

In an effort to provide parents with a vehicle that encourages parental input and decision making, some school districts are establishing parent advisory councils. Designed to provide a more representative basis of parental opinion, parent advisory councils are being established on either the building or district levels for utilization by school superintendents.

An examination of the literature concerning the utilization of parent advisory councils revealed significant results. The literature indicated parents were better able to motivate children, to increase citizen support and

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\(^1\) Nyquist, p. 1.

commitment, and to create a more positive public opinion of schools.\textsuperscript{1}

Few studies have been found which relate to the appropriateness of parent advisory councils. A study, therefore, relating the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making should assist all school administrators and may result in more positive attitudes toward increased parental involvement in schools.

\textbf{Statement of the Problem}

A review of the literature indicated that the establishment of a parent advisory council is an effective vehicle for providing parental input and participatory decision making. It was apparent, moreover, that some school superintendents were reluctant to utilize this method of parental involvement.

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences existed in the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making. Differences in the study were based upon school district

size in which the superintendent administers and the years of experience as a superintendent.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

The following seven hypotheses were tested regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making as perceived by Iowa superintendents.

1. Perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input will vary according to school district enrollment.

2. Perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making will vary according to school district enrollment.

3. Perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input will vary according to administrative experience.

4. Perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making will vary according to administrative experience.

5. Interaction between school district size and administrative experience will differ when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents in regard to the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input.
6. Interaction between school district size and administrative experience will differ when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents in regard to the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making.

7. Input will be perceived by Iowa superintendents as being more appropriate than participatory decision making in regard to the twenty selected issues which were identified for the study.

The hypotheses are stated in null form in Chapter 3.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms may have special significance for the study:

1. **Input.** Each group member will share his or her belief(s), opinion(s), concern(s), as well as any information from other sources; i.e., constituents or other professionals.\(^1\) Group consensus is not required.

2. **Parent Advisory Council.** A group of school parents, who by application or appointment, meet at prescribed times to discuss school issues.

3. **Participatory Decision Making.** Group members strive to reach agreement or consensus based upon available information so that group members support the implementation of

\(^1\) Joseph A. Young and Jerry Strum, "A Model for Participatory Decision Making," *NASSP Bulletin*, 64 (January 1980), 64.
decisions.¹

Limitations

Findings of the study are only applicable to the sample selected. Although the study was limited to Iowa superintendents, the instrumentation and research process may be replicated with another population.

Organization of the Study

The study was designed to determine if differences existed in the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making. Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertaining to the historical influence of parents on public education, parental involvement in education, and the utilization of parent advisory councils. Chapter 3 describes the designs of the study including population, selection of sample, and method of testing. Chapter 4 contains the statistical analysis of the data of the study and Chapter 5 presents the results of the study and recommendations regarding future studies.

¹Nyquist, p. 2.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

The cries heard in public schools during the late 1960's and early 1970's were from students protesting war, government control, and diminished human rights. The sound of the 1980's is coming from parents, not students. Parents are advocating back-to-basics, competency based testing, and zero based budgeting. More simply, parents want to be heard by school officials before decisions are made affecting the daily operation of neighborhood schools.

The democratic expression of educational concerns by school patrons is an admirable objective which is not easily attained. This dilemma is expressed by Dewey as quoted by Nyquist:

We have every reason to think that whatever changes may take place in existing democratic machinery, they will be of a sort to make the interest of the public a more supreme guide and criterion for governmental activity, and to enable the public to form and manifest its purposes still more authoritatively....The prime difficulty, as we have seen, is that of discovering the means by which a scattered, mobile and manifold public may so recognize itself as to define and express its interests.¹

¹Nyquist, p. 2.
In order to understand the need for parental involvement in public schools through parent advisory councils, attention must be directed toward some apparent contradictions of our democratic process. Consider the following:

American schools are highly decentralized in formal structures of control—we have fifty states and about 15,000 separate local districts—yet classrooms from Maine to Hawaii show remarkable similarities.

In theory, the public school is to be public in control, equitable in support, and socially comprehensive. Yet in practice public control is hard to define and even harder to accomplish, financing of schools often reflects grossly unequal tax bases, and pupils are frequently segregated by ethnicity and social class.

Schooling supposedly provides equality of opportunity to all children and access to the best jobs, but the people who make it to the top of the educational and occupational systems are mostly the children of those who already occupy favored positions in the society.

Political scientists often describe the governance of schools as a closed system in which educators make the crucial decisions that lay board members merely rubber-stamp, but educational leaders often complain that they are highly vulnerable and constantly have to worry about public opinion.¹

It is apparent, therefore, that an examination of the literature concerning parental influence on the historical development of public education would be helpful in understanding the development of parent advisory councils in the 1980's. The review of literature was structured into the

following areas:

1. A history of parental influence on public education.
2. Parental involvement in public schools.
3. Utilizing parent advisory councils.
4. Summary.

A History of Parental Influence on Public Education

Public Schools Prior to 1850

Prior to 1850, the practices relating to the education of a child were primarily based upon the theories and philosophies in the Calvinist-Evangelical Church.\(^1\) A spiritual, moral, and political atmosphere prevailed about children and strong pressures were placed upon parents to see that the Calvinist-Evangelical doctrines were achieved. Parental influence was described as:

...inspired by a concern with the religious and moral improvement of children. Mothers were dependent on the wisdom that might come from discussion, the inspiration of their leaders, and the strength they might get from prayer.\(^2\)

Concerns about health were considerable among parents prior to 1850 since children were valuable economic assets to the family. As a result, a doctrine of strong bodies and

\(^1\)Bjorklund, p. 2.

intelligent minds was welcomed by parents in an environment of high infant mortality.¹

Three forms of educational experiences were available to children prior to 1850. One common form was the proprietary school. Teachers operated these schools like a business and either satisfied customers and made money or went out of business. The trustee model was funded by students paying tuition and were sometimes subsidized by wealthy individuals so that deserving youth could gain an education. A charity school was a third model that was financed by religious and benevolent groups. Regardless of the educational format, schools reflected a plural society which was distinguished by class, race, occupation, and religious differences.²

Public Schools Between 1850-1900

The time period between 1850-1900 brought reformers such as Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, and John Pierce who supported one form of educational setting; the public school. These crusaders were successful in establishing free public schools, financed by state and local governments and were controlled by lay boards of education. These public schools offered a unique curriculum and placed all social classes in

¹Bjorklund, p. 3.
the same school building. Suddenly, private schools could no longer compete with public schools.\footnote{Tyack, pp. 14-15.} According to Fishlow, funds spent on public schools in 1850 comprised 47 percent of all expenditures for education and increased to 80 percent of all expenditures by 1900.\footnote{Albert Fishlow, "Levels of Nineteenth Century Investment in Education," Journal of Economic History, 26 (December 1966), 418-436.}

The Westward movement in the United States during the late 1800's also contributed to the monopolistic efforts of public education. The Eastern United States was experiencing problems with increasing industrialization, urbanization, and immigration which produced increasing amounts of crime, poverty, and other forms of human suffering. The public school, it was thought, would be the solution for mending social unrest and renewing stability.\footnote{Tyack, p. 15.} As the Eastern population moved West, so too did the new concept of public education. Teachers from Eastern states were often recruited to teach in the frontier settlements, which were described by Gordon:

\begin{quote}
The law abiding citizens of the community--the parents, decided they needed a school. They sent East for a teacher, usually a spinster whose professional qualifications were not too closely scrutinized. The community not only hired her but decided what she should teach and even supervised
\end{quote}
her personal conduct. She lived in one of the homes and often would circuit ride for her meals.¹

By 1900, there was general agreement among the population that a uniform standard of literacy, knowledge, and citizenship was necessary from East to West and that uniformly established public schools was the way to achieve the goal of mass literacy. State departments of education were established and superintendents were appointed. The impact of these new positions upon public education was questionable since one superintendent was appointed for each 100,000 students. Although some states set educational standards, local lay boards of education did as they pleased and at times, hired a trusted school employee to oversee the operation of the school.²

As cities grew and industry prospered, some lay board members became fascinated with process organization in the work place. The division between labor and supervision produced predictable and desirable results which were modified and implemented in public schools. Terms such as planning, information flow, communication, achievement testing, and curriculum were commonplace by 1870. Critics


also began to complain that urban schools were no longer sensitive to community needs.¹

Time limitations on local boards of education forced lay members to entrust more responsibility with supervisors or superintendents who were hired to enforce rules and regulations. By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States Commissioner of Education found:

70 percent of persons aged 5 to 18 years were enrolled in some kind of school; the absolute number of pupils in public education had grown to 15,000,000; and of every 100 students in all kinds of educational institutions, 95 were in elementary schools, 4 in secondary, and 1 in a postsecondary school. A typical young American of 1898 had 5 years of schooling.²

Public Schools Between 1900-1950

From 1900 through 1950, public schools fell into political and professional alliances that centralized the operation of the neighborhood schools in the name of "taking schools out of politics," which is explained by Tyack:

Education was a matter for experts to direct. The job of the board of education was mainly to select a good superintendent and then to delegate most decisions to him. But not just any board would do: the members should be successful men, professionals, businessmen, folks who knew that a school system should be run in a business-like fashion like a corporation.³

¹Tyack, p. 17.


³Tyack, pp. 19-20.
Another movement which centralized the control of public schools during this period of time was the consolidation of small, usually rural schools. Rural patrons, however, resisted reorganization fervently because the neighborhood school was a source of community pride. The need to consolidate schools in the early 1900's prevailed following this logic:

Because the rural school is today in a state of arrested development, burdened by educational traditions lacking in effective supervision, controlled largely by rural people, who, too often, do not realize either their own needs or the possibilities of rural education...the task of reorganizing and redirecting rural education is difficult, and will necessarily be slow.\(^1\)

State mandates also gained leverage over local school districts by linking financial aid to a variety of compliance laws. In the name of efficiency, therefore, the number of school districts was reduced from 110,000 in 1900 to 16,000 in 1974. Furthermore, student population increased while the number of school boards decreased. A school board member represented 138 people in 1900 while the board member of 1974 represented 2,470 people.\(^2\)

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Public Schools Between 1950-1980

This period of time might best be described as a time of reformulation. The 1960's, which produced many changes, is described by Sandquist:

In the nineteen-sixties the American federal system entered a new phase. Through a series of dramatic enactments, the Congress asserted the national interest and authority in a wide range of governmental functions that until then had been the province, exclusively or predominantly, of state and local governments. The new legislation not only established federal-state-local relations in entirely new fields of activity and on a vast scale but it established new patterns of relationships as well.... The massive federal intervention in community affairs came in some of the most sacrosanct of all the traditional preserves of state and local authority--notably education...

The furious rate of social and economic changes tied to education only further separated local boards of education from their communities. Bailey stated:

...by the time the Federal government, state education departments, local professional staffs, militant teacher organizations, John Birch societies, textbook and hardware salesmen, black parents and Panthers, and the local media have completed their macabre Whirling-Dervish dance, local school boards appeared to be nothing but awkward wallflowers perversely held responsible for the success of the party.

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Much of the thrust for federal intervention occurred after such landmarks as the Civil Rights movement, the Brown desegregation decision, the Great Society legislation, the Economic Opportunity Act, the Vocational Education Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.\(^1\) As federal intervention grew, so too did the bureaucracies and the power of school administrators. One comprehensive study concluded that there was little competition for school board membership and that open conflict between school administrators and boards of education usually ended favoring administration. The same study also found that administrative bureaucracies in large school districts were in control of policy and that administrators sometimes sabotaged local board policy if they were in disagreement.\(^2\)

The movement for parental involvement intensified during the 1970's when groups such as the National Committee for Citizens in Education, the Institute for Responsive Education, and School Management Study Groups urged parents to become active in school decision making and defending

\(^1\)Barbara L. Jackson, "Federal Intervention and New Governance Structures," in Communities and Their Schools, pp. 148-149.

parental rights.1 Ziegler and Tucker used pointed language to describe participation in decision making during the 1970's:

Different actors are eligible to participate at different steps; and the process is least insulated, in theory, from those outside the school district establishment at the proposal development and legislative action steps. However, few outsiders do participate directly. Furthermore, at each step in the policy-making process, administrators—especially superintendents—dominate school board members. Empirical data support neither a traditional model of governance from democratic theory, nor a democratic model of administrative representation. The answer to the question, "Who governs public schools?" is "Superintendents and their professional staffs."2

Not all authors, however, are in agreement with Ziegler. A study conducted by Boyd found that public educational institutions were more responsive to community needs than other public agencies.3

The debate over who is in control of public schools in the 1980's is endless. Whether intentional or not, it is apparent that school patrons now have fewer avenues to affect school decision making than at the inception of public


education. Issues such as collective bargaining, judicial litigation, and identifying sources of school revenue, none-theless, are also important variables for parental participation in public schools. Davies characterized the opportunity for public education in the 1980's:

The times are hard. The need for changes in school finance and governance is clear. And, inevitably, there will be conflict over competing policy proposals to bring about such changes. This decade offers an opportunity for social inventiveness that can help create new and more satisfying forms and styles of community-school relationships. Capitalizing on this opportunity requires fashioning a variety of workable ways for parents and citizens to participate, with educators in the governance of schools.¹

Parental Involvement in Public Schools

Response to the question of parental involvement in the school is predictable, whether the response comes from teachers or school administrators: "Their place is in the home!" or "Give us clean healthy kids and we'll teach them all they need to know," and "I'm in charge of this school and no one is going to tell me what to do!" Such examples of responses have not been uncommon in recent years because parents are often viewed by school administrators and teachers as a necessary evil; someone to pay taxes and support the policies of the public school.

¹Don Davies, "Citizen Participation in Decision Making in the Public Schools," in Communities and Their Schools, p. 85.
Kroth and Scholl listed six reasons why school patrons have not been active participants in public schools:

1. Many parents feel alienated from the regular school program. Teachers and other school personnel frequently use unfamiliar language in describing activities in the classroom; parents then view what goes on in the classroom as mysterious and something they cannot understand.

2. Many educators fear involvement of parents in the school program. Often school staff members do not know how to work with parents even though they may recognize the value of parent participation.

3. Some parents have attempted to get involved but become disillusioned when their involvement makes no apparent difference or their efforts are largely ignored by educators.

4. Schools, especially at the secondary level, are often viewed as large, bureaucratic organizations, and parents fear reprisals from the top if they do become involved in school policy making and recommend decisions that are contrary to the wishes of the school administration.

5. Lines of communication between the school and parents are frequently not clear, and parents are confused about where to go for help or assistance.

6. School hours are the same as the usual work hours of parents and prevent active participation and involvement of parents during the day; teachers are not available when parents are.

Koerner stated that 95 percent of public school parents did not become involved in schools because they were intimidated by the mystique of school administrators' expertise in

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(1) Roger L. Kroth and Geraldine T. Scholl, Getting Schools Involved with Parents (ERIC ED 155 831), pp. 9-10.
education. In addition, parents who decided to challenge the authority of school administrators were not likely to be successful.\(^1\)

A study regarding the effectiveness of the mandated Florida school advisory council (SAC) law found that school administrators perceived the SAC efforts as ineffective when dealing with administrative functions or matters relating to teaching. The study also revealed that most principals viewed lay participation in the schools as a direct threat to their authority and autonomy and, therefore, resisted the concept of increasing the authority of the council in the decision making process.\(^2\)

A study of the San Diego Citizen Advisory Committee Program indicated that the advisory committees were unable to successfully challenge the professional domination of decision making. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, educators viewed community involvement with resentment. The study also indicated that most effective advisory committees were those with strong leadership from the principal and


\(^2\)Marion Edith Hennebury, "Perceptions of Areas and Sources of School Advisory Committee Effectiveness in Palm Beach County, Florida," *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 39 (1978), 2653-54A (University of Southern California).
the respective chairpersons.¹

Another study by Croshier found that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of the role of advisory councils. Specifically, the principals perceived the council as having a "far greater participation" than did the members of the council. Although council members desired more meaningful input in decision making, they did not indicate a desire to usurp the authority of the principal.²

Coletta stated that parents bring basic needs to schools that must be satisfied before the parents can be concerned with school involvement. Coletta elaborated on Maslow's hierarchy of needs as follows:

Level 1 - Physical. Needs for sustaining life: nourishment, protection from the elements, and sexual activity.

Level 2 - Psychological. Feeling secure in our person. Knowing our future is predictable. Suspicious of change; needing to reduce conflict and uncertainty.

Level 3 - Emotional. Love and belonging. The need to feel a part of an enduring group where one is accepted, wanted, loved, and respected. Needs not met at this level lead to self-defeating, attention getting behavior (suspicion, aggression).


Level 4 - Self-Esteem. To be regarded as valuable and competent by others. Growth is awareness of self-worth leads to less dependence upon others' judgment of one's worth. The key to find ways to help parents see themselves as worthwhile.

Level 5 - Fulfillment. Self-actualization occurs when four lower level needs are satisfied. A striving for self-development and risk taking.¹

In spite of these problems, public school personnel are changing their attitudes concerning parental involvement. Current trends of student individualization, teacher militancy, programs for handicapped students, and limited budgets resulting in reduced educational services are but a few of the reasons for attitudinal change.²

Just as children come in assorted varieties, so do parents. Some parents are supportive, friendly, concerned, and want to be of service. Some parents, on the other hand, are hostile, apathetic, uncooperative, and delight in creating conflict. All parents, however, have a commonality: they want their children to receive a quality education from the public schools.³

Kaplan made the following observation of involved


²James W. Keefe, "Principals and Parents: Partners or Partisans?" Momentum, 21 (December 1976), 21.

³Margaret Fletcher Grant, "Parents can be Your Greatest Ally," Instructor, 90 (December 1980), 40.
parents:

I am continually impressed by the intelligence of parents of our children. They are quick to recognize the problems of the school and in many instances are ready to take on those who impede what they believe to be progress...and are ready to enthusiastically support excellent teachers.¹

The adjustment of hostile and apathetic attitudes displayed by parents should be a source of major concern for school administrators and teachers and points to the need for reforms of parent involvement. First, programs for parental involvement must be well planned. Second, programs must be responsive to the needs of parents, not just educators. Third, parental involvement must begin at an early age for students and continue through the secondary levels. And fourth, programs must be designed to increase the knowledge base which parents already possess.²

In 1970, Gordon identified five types of parental involvement in public schools. The most common role of involvement was as an audience. That is, parents are informed by their school of its activities and may or may not be asked to participate. Activities may include Back-To-School Night, PTA meetings, and Open House.³


²Kroth and Scholl, pp. 24-25.

³Gordon and Breivogel, p. 6.
Secondly, parents were involved as teachers in the home. This concept, which has been only fully developed during the past decade, recognizes that parents are not only the first teachers of the child but also recognizes that parents benefit by learning new methods of working with their children. This home-school relationship, if developed properly, provides a positive two-way communication network.\footnote{Gordon and Breivogel, p. 7.}

An aide or volunteer in the neighborhood school was another type of parental involvement. Such an active role within the school helped professional staff members to do a more effective job, not only by increasing the adult-child ratio but by also informing and helping parents feel more comfortable about the operation of the school.\footnote{Gordon and Breivogel, pp. 7-8.}

The parent as a paid employee of the public school was a nontraditional type of parent involvement. Parents have worked for many years as teachers, cooks, aides, and custodians. This new technique, however, paid parents to attend school so that new techniques could be learned about the management or teaching of their children.\footnote{Gordon and Breivogel, p. 8.}

The final type of parental involvement described by Gordon was decision making. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, public education's inception was formulated by
people in the community who made all decisions. Federal legislation has mandated parent involvement in recent years for specialized programs while states such as Florida, have mandated parent advisory committees in each school district.¹

What then, are some of the benefits of involving parents in the public schools? Stanfill suggested the following advantages: parents will actively defend the school against erroneous reports; continued parental involvement demands more effort from the professional staff; a positive relationship between parents and professional staff creates student enthusiasm; and enthusiasm is reflected in a feeling of school pride.²

Several studies were found which addressed the topic of parental involvement in public schools. A study by Thornburg was comprised of 202 principals, teachers, parents, and students in a metropolitan school district. Surprisingly, Thornburg found that principals and teachers wanted more parental involvement in their schools than did parents and students. More specifically, Thornburg found that principals preferred parents to be involved as decision makers in schools while teachers preferred more support and volunteering

¹Gordon and Breivogel, p. 8.

from parents. Students, however, preferred less parent involvement than did any of the groups.¹

A study by Lowery concluded:

1. That citizen participation in community goal setting has a significant input on elected and appointed planners.

2. That citizens will become involved before a crisis situation develops; and

3. That citizen participation offers a potential for improved citizenship in American communities.²

Another study concerning parent involvement in a Head Start Program found favorable results in parent attitudes. The study, which included 428 parents, found that 95 percent of the respondents increased the awareness of their children's needs and also enhanced parent relationships with teachers. Ninety-seven percent of the parents indicated their involvement with the program enhanced the parent-child relationship while an additional 96 percent believed that parental involvement was beneficial to parents, teachers,


and students.¹

Another study involving six school districts in the
greater St. Louis metropolitan area interviewed parents who
were actively involved in public schools. Ninety-two
percent of the respondents believed they had acquired more
information concerning their school as a direct result of
their school involvement. Another 57 percent replied that
their involvement had altered their thinking about schools
while a total of 38 percent of the participants stated they
had a different opinion of their school after becoming
actively involved in their school.²

Several authors, however, suggested that the utiliza-
tion of parental involvement activities have negative
effects on public schools. Wolf stated:

Once aroused, the public behaves like lemmings,
mindlessly charging into the surf of the great
sea. Constructive participation is unlikely
during such times...today's typical community
members will not become meaningfully involved in
most educational planning and review endeavors, and
citizens who do participate are usually not repre-
sentative of most members of a given community.³

A study was conducted by Forrest to determine the

¹Pearl Andrews, "Parent Involvement: A Key to Success,"
Children Today, 10 (January-February 1981), 22.

²Robert Salisbury, Citizen Participation in the Public

³W.C. Wolf, Jr., "Community Involvement: An Unattain-
able Aspiration?" National Elementary Principal, 55 (March
1976), 31.
satisfaction of parent advisory councils (PAC) as judged by its members and community members it served. Forrest found the establishment of a PAC resulted in its members being satisfied with their school but that the general parent population was dissatisfied with their school. The study indicated, furthermore, that parents who were involved with their school often expressed satisfaction with neighborhood schools.¹

Stanfill also acknowledged possible problems which surfaced as a result of parent involvement. Confusion relating to authority, responsibility, lack of group process skills, and a general lack of interest were cited as examples which lead to failure of parent involvement.²

Steinberg found that although established community organizations provided a vehicle to gain support and/or opposition to school board decisions, organizations were not effective in mobilizing support for specific goals relating to educational services.³

Nelson and Bloom expressed an additional concern. The


²Stanfill, p. 13.

³Lois S. Steinberg, Developing Parent Participation Programs in Schools (ERIC ED 105 592), p. 5.
public schools are facing more and more legal suits which are brought against the school by its patrons. As a result, Nelson and Bloom believed the legal responsibility of the school should be carefully monitored by the administration when parents are involved in the decision making process.\textsuperscript{1}

Parent activism will produce a more dramatic change in the governance of public schools than any previous educational movement.\textsuperscript{2} School administrators and teachers will be required to develop new skills to deal with their defensive attitudes and to cope with parents who execute their power irresponsibly. In the final analysis, therefore, a new concept of unification will be developed between public schools and their communities which will lead to active parental involvement which in turn will promote a higher degree of education for the youth of America.\textsuperscript{3} The utilization of parent advisory councils is one technique that will promote active parental participation.

\underline{Utilizing Parent Advisory Councils}

Three realities characterize the necessity for opening school governance to school patrons and forming parent


\textsuperscript{2}Thomas, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{3}Thomas, p. 2.
advisory councils. Public schools are facing a time of austerity in educational programs often creating friction between taxpayers and educational decision makers. Secondly, an increasing amount of school financing is supplied by state and federal policies. Thirdly, finance and policy making processes in public education are dominated by special interest groups through our political process.¹

As a result, public school officials are recognizing the need to deal with diverse forms of pressure and are looking for effective ways to involve parents.

Before the adoption of a policy for advisory councils involving parents in school affairs, six criteria should be studied and answered:

1. Does the policy or activity contribute to maintaining a healthy, viable, publicly controlled system of education for children from the widest of backgrounds?

2. Does the policy or activity contribute to increasing access to power for those now least powerful; the working class, the poor, and members of... minority groups?

3. Does the policy or activity contribute to improved communications and working relationships between professionals in the schools and those they serve?

4. Does the policy or activity take into account the political, cultural and traditions in a particular setting and the organizational characteristics of schools?

5. Does the policy or activity contribute to achieving a reasonable balance between diversity and cohesion in the society and the educational system?

¹Davies, "Citizen Participation," p. 85.
6. Does the proposed policy or activity allow citizen participation in problems and issues of significance to them and to have a real-world impact?1

Federally Mandated Advisory Councils

The formation of parent advisory councils (PAC's) was one of the most significant trends in education during the past decade.2 In the mid-1960's, the original Title I legislation recommended the establishment of parent advisory councils. In 1970, however, Public Law 91-230 amended federal guidelines and required the establishment of PAC's in all school districts receiving Title I funding. In 1974, the Education Amendments again amended Title I and required the establishment of a PAC in each school building. The 1974 legislation also required the PAC to have a majority of parents whose children were being served by Title I and that PAC members be selected by participating parents.3

But federally mandated PAC's contain their own inconsistencies. One study indicated three particular problems. First, school administrators often interpreted mandates as a negative indication of their performance and would not

1Davies, "Citizen Participation," pp. 87-93.


3Hightower, pp. 3-5.
develop ownership into the policy. Second, the PAC was neglected, either consciously or unconsciously. Third, the mandated PAC suffered from an ambiguous stance in responsibility, authority, and function. ¹

In 1978, Davies surveyed parent participation in Title I programs across the United States. Davies concluded that although there were 60,000 Title I parent advisory councils with 900,000 members representing the largest group of organized parents in the United States, parent advisory councils had little power or impact on educational programs. ²

A Stanford research report on parental involvement also indicated that Title I advisory councils were too broad in scope, had vague or meaningless guidelines, and had no provision for parents to learn how to be effective participants. ³

Another study by McLaughlin indicated that PAC members for Title I programs were hand-picked by school officials for their past cooperation or employed by the school district or never told of their selection. McLaughlin also indicated he was unable to locate one advisory council which

¹Davies, "School Administrators," pp. 64-65.


was made up of parents which was operating as the law had intended.\(^1\)

**State Mandated Advisory Councils**

Legislation on the state level has followed the lead taken by the federal government in establishing a variety of mandates requiring the utilization of advisory councils. State mandated councils were developed, in many cases, as an attempt to overcome the credibility gap between state departments of education and local school districts.\(^2\)

In 1973, Florida legislated a law requiring all school districts to establish either building advisory councils or district advisory councils. The Florida law required school advisory councils to be composed of not only parents, but students as well. During the school year, each advisory council is required to submit an annual report to the Florida Department of Education. The annual report must contain the following information:

1. Population data relevant to the school.
2. Results of school assessment programs.

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\(^1\)Milbrey McLaughlin et al., *The Effects of Title I ESEA: An Exploratory Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Howard University, 1975), pp. 22-41.

3. Fiscal and cost accounting information, including budget.

4. A summary of the attitudes toward school held by students, teachers, administrators, and parents.

5. Results of the school's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

6. Plans and programs for school-level professional improvement.

7. Effectiveness of school advisory committees, where they exist, or other parent-school organizations.

8. Use of the school for community purposes, and use of community facilities for school purposes.

9. Recommendations for school improvements for the following year.¹

In addition, the state assessment of the school advisory committee (SAC) must be published and all collective bargaining sessions must be opened to the public.²

The effects of the Florida law after one year yielded some impressive results. Eight percent of the SAC's assisted in faculty selection, 29 percent assisted in textbook selection, 34 percent assisted administration with desegregation issues, 45 percent suggested ways of dealing with student problems, and 60 percent advised the school staff on school district aspirations and goals.³


²Ibid.

In 1980, a Texas study revealed significant findings resulting from a 1977 state mandate on parent participation. Orman found that direct lay citizen participation resulted in few ill effects and that a majority of those surveyed saw the participation as "significantly beneficial to the school establishment."\(^1\)

A survey of 136 elementary school principals in South Carolina was conducted in 1979 to assess the compliance of state mandated school advisory councils. The survey revealed "most schools" were in compliance with the mandated requirements but that only 66 percent of the South Carolina schools surveyed were in total compliance.\(^2\)

Another study also indicated that mandated school advisory committees in Florida were not functioning at an expected level of effectiveness. The study revealed that advisory groups were not participating in budget procedures and the evaluation of teachers and administrators. Furthermore, the study indicated school authorities treated the advisory bodies with indifference and generally were of the opinion that educational decision making was only for

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educators.¹

The Florida legislation of 1973 was followed by a variety of legislative decisions in other states to involve parents in an advisory capacity. The following is a list of states which require parent advisory councils or committees to operate at the district or building level and a brief summary of each law:

Colorado: propose goals and objectives for bilingual-bicultural and career education programs.

Hawaii: identify school needs and planning improvement.

Indiana: recommend textbook adoption to the superintendent.

Kansas: citizen participation in teacher evaluation.

Louisiana: input on educational goals and needs for child development programs.

Maine: postsecondary students give input at collective bargaining at their universities.

Massachusetts: school board must meet with student advisory council each month.

Michigan: parent advisory councils are established for special education programs.

Minnesota: set goals and objectives for its educational program.

Montana: design and review special education programs for their children.

Ohio: redesign and renew teacher education programs at state institutions.

¹Allen Fisher, "Advisory Committees--Does Anyone Want Their Advice?" Educational Leadership, 37 (December 1979), 254-255.
Oregon: same as Maine.

Pennsylvania: responsible for long-range planning.

South Carolina: help prepare the annual report for local districts on student needs and priorities.

Texas: goal setting activities.

Utah: determine the role that the school plays in solving individual and community problems.

Wyoming: long-range planning and needs assessment.¹

**District and Local Advisory Councils**

While some states have mandated the establishment of advisory councils, it is also becoming clear that advisory council effectiveness cannot be legislated.² Decisions which affect public education can best serve school patrons if decisions are made at the local level. As a result, there has been a slow but steady growth of parent advisory councils on the local level.³

Some public schools establish the PAC on a district level while others use PAC's at the building level. Some school districts utilize both district and building level PAC's. It is apparent that the PAC is taking the place of

¹NSPRA, Linking Schools, pp. 76-79.


³Kroth and Scholl, p. 58.
ad hoc committees on the local level but, unfortunately, there are no model procedures for organizing, implementing, maintaining, or dissolving PAC's.¹

A study of seventy-five Texas school districts was conducted to assess the role of an advisory council in educational decision making. The results revealed that a local advisory council did not influence the educational decision making process, especially in the areas of policy making, budget, personnel, and curriculum. The study concluded, however, that local advisory councils were generally viewed as being accepted by the community at large.²

Many educators, therefore, have expressed dismay at the suggestion of a formal PAC in their school districts because the implementation of a PAC sometimes results in controversy, confusion, low staff morale, and mistrust.³ Furthermore, school administrators frequently utilize an advisory council as a solution for an explosive problem which sometimes leads to the exploitation of the PAC in the

¹NSPRA, Citizens Advisory Committees, p. 7.


following ways:

1. The committee as a rubber stamp.
2. The committee as a shock absorber.
3. The committee as a front-man promoter.
4. The committee as a bailer-out. ¹

A study conducted by Mandell found boards of education established advisory committees for the following reasons:

1. To obtain an anticipated result.
2. To assuage and co-opt dissident and other citizens.
3. To assist in the public relations efforts of the school district.
4. As a reaction to perceived, actual, or potential community pressure or demands.
5. To gain community support for the policies and programs of the school district. ²

According to the literature, the success or failure of the parent advisory council was dependent upon a variety of facilitating conditions. These conditions included the purpose of the advisory council, selection of council membership, a provision for inservicing council members, the attitude of the principal, utilization of an evaluation system, and the role of the superintendent.

¹NSPRA, Linking Schools, p. 9.
Purpose of the council. The first factor facilitating a successful PAC was the clarity given to the purpose of the council. That is, defining the task associated with the position as well as defining the authority of advising.

A survey conducted by the NSPRA showed general agreement among school officials concerning the definition of advisory to mean only to offer advice. The research, unfortunately, did not indicate whether parents were in agreement with school officials.¹

The Institute for Responsive Education further limited the term advisory by listing five types of advising at the local level:

1. **Inquiring**—asking about, searching into.
2. **Informing**—making known, giving information.
3. **Suggesting**—proposing, offering for consideration.
4. **Recommending**—formally stating suggestions.
5. **Evaluating**—judging, rating.²

A wide variety of topics were discussed by advisory councils at the local level. Curriculum considerations and school finance dominated many PAC discussions which also

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¹NSPRA, Citizens Advisory Committees, p. 9.

included items such as transportation, integration, lunch programs, use of school facilities, and purchasing equipment.¹ Other topics for discussion by PAC's included individualized instruction, student problems, counseling, grading policies, playground areas, gifted and talented programs, and student drop-out rates.² Still other PAC's were involved in establishing priorities for use of federal funds, interviewed and recommended selections of school staff for employment, and evaluated entire school staffs.³

Selection of membership. The second facilitating condition was the selection of membership for the PAC. A study of twenty-five elementary school parent advisory councils found most members of the PAC were appointed by the principal because the members were supportive of past school programs. The study found, furthermore, that critics were not allowed to become involved in determining or providing input for school programs.⁴

The State of Georgia recommended that prospective

¹NSPRA, Linking Schools, p. 15.
²IRE, I.R.E. Clearinghouse, p. 18.
members of a PAC should have the following characteristics:

1. They should be interested in education.
2. Some members should be community leaders.
3. They should be willing and able to devote the necessary time to the council.
4. They should be capable of getting along with other people.\(^1\)

Another consideration concerning the selection of PAC members was composition of the membership to be appointed to the council. Although parent advisory councils might indicate only parental involvement, PAC's sometimes involve students, teachers, and community leaders, with the idea of gaining input from all segments of the community.\(^2\)

The position taken by the NSPRA in regard to the composition of the PAC is as follows:

Membership in the council should be representative of diverse groups and interests in the community, including different racial, cultural and economic backgrounds, and different political or social viewpoints.\(^3\)

Another important variable concerning selection of the PAC was how council members were selected. In Los Angeles, California, representatives of the district PAC were elected

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\(^1\)Georgia State Department of Education, Parent Advisory Council Information Handbook (ERIC ED 153 122), p. 15.

\(^2\)IRE, I.R.E. Clearinghouse, pp. 14-16.

\(^3\)NSPRA, Linking Schools, p. 18.
by popular vote on the fourth Wednesday in October.\textsuperscript{1} Other school districts utilized a combination of appointments by the PAC, principal, or board of education.\textsuperscript{2}

The size of the PAC was a final variable in the selection of PAC members. As similar to other characteristics of PAC's, size varied from one community to another. A survey completed by the NSPRA found that councils were as small as six while others exceeded 300. The majority of councils, however, ranged from twelve to fifteen members.\textsuperscript{3}

Inservice opportunities for council members. A third factor which was found to facilitate the success of the PAC was a provision for inservice education for council members. This concern was addressed by Kaplan:

Council members who are not educators cannot be expected to possess the same knowledge base as school officials concerning educational matters. This means that the orientation provided for these members must be carefully designed.\textsuperscript{4}

Stanton and Zerchykov found a variety of resources were available to inservice PAC's. These resources included:

\textsuperscript{1}NSPRA, Citizens Advisory Committees, pp. 40-41.

\textsuperscript{2}IRE, I.R.E. Clearinghouse, pp. 14-17.

\textsuperscript{3}NSPRA, Linking Schools, p. 15.

Empowering Resources. These contribute to the organization's ability to take action and include such necessary means as money, staff, a parent resource center at the local school, and a communications capability.

Organizational Maintenance. Typically, these resources consist of training and skills development for council members. Their goal is to enable councils to engage in constituency building, group problem solving, conflict-resolution, and decision making.

Information Resources. These help councils to focus clearly on school issues and problems and then gather the most relevant information, analyze it and make subsequent recommendations.

The NSPRA found schools which provided advisory councils with some type of inservice training made the councils more effective and resulted in even more inservice training to be offered.

Apparently it is important that an excessive amount of time not be devoted to the training of PAC members. One parent responded to a NSPRA survey by stating:

Too much time is spent educating us, instead of addressing major issues. By the time we are considered well informed enough to form an opinion, the year is over, frustrations are heightened, and a feeling of futility has set in.

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2 NSPRA, Citizens Advisory Committees, p. 31.

3 NSPRA, Linking Schools, p. 54.
The role of the principal. The role of the building principal was a fourth factor which facilitated a successful PAC. The principal is usually looked to for guidance and leadership more than any other educator because of the active relationships maintained between parents and the school programs. 1

One of the roles which a principal was found to play was that of a mediator. The school principal was often thrust into an atmosphere of mistrust between community and professional staff. Some PAC members may have had negative experiences with the school previously and the principal was responsible for mending negative attitudes resulting in a positive group process. 2

The building principal was also responsible for the majority of PAC training and dispersion of information to the council. As a result, the principal was expected to be the primary provider in making budgetary resources available which initiate parent learning as well as providing accurate information. 3


2M. Hayes Mizell, "Maintaining Parent Interest in Title I Advisory Councils," The Urban Review, 11 (Summer 1979), 82.

Another consideration which has been thrust upon the principal was to maintain the sometimes delicate balance of authority between parents and central office administration. In spite of the recent rush for parent involvement, the concept is difficult to define in operational terms. It is the principal, therefore, who is expected to maintain the balance between parent involvement and parent domination.

The role of the principal may have best been stated by Carpenter:

Your task is to make sure everyone knows what is going on. You will find it necessary to use persuasion, to exercise patience and understanding, and to employ your skills as a mediator to keep everyone pulling in a positive direction.

Utilization of an evaluation system. Another facilitator found for a successful PAC was the incorporation of an evaluation system or tool to measure the growth and effectiveness of the council. According to Kaplan, a final accounting of PAC effectiveness must be derived from a consensus among the following sources:

1. The district's educators;
2. Members of the advisory council;

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3. Representative members of parents, citizens, and the community-at-large.¹

A group of researchers headed by Greenwood cautioned that an evaluation tool should evolve from the direction the advisory council has chosen and that the council's direction should not be dictated by the evaluation procedure. In addition, the collection of data should not be burdensome to advisory council members.²

The literature failed to reveal a variety of evaluation tools for the PAC. Stanton and Zerchikov found evaluations were completed by administering questionnaires, observing council meetings, and reviewing agendas and written communications.³ NSPRA found that San Diego, California City Schools interviewed participants, administered questionnaires, and studied agendas and minutes from advisory council meetings.⁴

The literature also failed to recommend the person responsible for evaluation of the PAC. One group of researchers, however, suggested that an independent resource be employed for evaluative purposes. The researchers found, moreover, that external evaluation may involve a "disproportionately large sum of money" if utilized in the public

¹Kaplan, Are Citizen/Parent, p. 16.
²Greenwood et al., p. 15.
³Stanton and Zerchikov, p. 41.
⁴NSPRA, Citizens Advisory Committees, p. 36.
school setting.\textsuperscript{1}

The role of the superintendent. A final facilitating factor for a successful PAC was the involvement of the school superintendent in the implementation and the support exhibited for the PAC. As executive officer of the local school district, the superintendent often delegates the primary responsibility for operating the PAC to the building principal. A study by Ross of local PAC's, however, concluded superintendents should serve as an active advisor to the PAC and should attend all meetings.\textsuperscript{2}

A study concerning citizen participation in the Boston Public Schools added support to the thesis of direct involvement by school superintendents. Glenn found superintendents of schools were the key persons in shaping consensus and compromise decisions resulting from the participatory process.\textsuperscript{3} Ross also concluded that superintendents should not


only accept advice from a PAC but should consistently point out how and where PAC advice is to be incorporated into the educational structure.¹

A single study by Cubit-Swoyer focused on the perceptions of superintendents concerning advisory councils. The random sample of 100 New Jersey school superintendents indicated advisory council level of involvement was highest in student policy and personnel matters. The study also revealed superintendents who had achieved tenure had more positive perceptions toward advisory councils but in actuality had fewer locally initiated advisory councils than nontenured superintendents.²

Summary

The roots of American education were indicative of diverse populations in the United States. Based upon religious and political doctrines, each community established its own rules and procedures for governing the school until educational crusaders successfully campaigned for tax supported public schools. The free public school resulted in uniform standards for mass literacy which in turn forced

¹Ross, p. 1333A.

smaller school districts to reorganize into larger units so that literacy standards could become a reality.

A complex set of compliance laws were also established by federal and state governments to decentralize control of the neighborhood school. Parent groups were established in an effort to regain control of neighborhood schools through participatory decision making, but the parental involvement was met with indifference by many school administrators and boards of education.

The parent advisory council, which evolved from federal and state legislation, was utilized by some school superintendents at the local level as a means of dealing with parental pressure and to provide meaningful parental involvement in neighborhood schools. A review of the literature indicated the success of a parent advisory council on the local level was dependent upon the following conditions:

1. The purpose of the council; defining the task to be performed.
2. Selection of council members; how members were selected, the composition of the council, and its size.
3. Availability of inservice training for council members.
4. The ability of the principal to mediate conflict and maintain a balance of power.
5. Utilization of an evaluation system which monitors the effectiveness of the council.
6. The role of the superintendent in shaping consensus as a result of participatory decision making.
Only one study was found which surveyed the perceptions of superintendents regarding parent advisory councils. The study indicated that although tenured superintendents had a more positive attitude toward parent advisory councils than nontenured superintendents, the tenured superintendents had fewer parent councils than nontenured superintendents.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

As school patrons demand more involvement in the decision making process regarding educational programs in public schools, superintendents must continually strive to find new avenues to involve the citizenry. The parent advisory council is one method utilized by superintendents on the local level which allows parents to participate in the decision making process.

The purpose of the study was to determine if differences exist in the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making. This chapter presents the methodology used for the study which includes: method of data collection, instrumentation, sample and population, and analysis of data.

Data Collection

The survey method of research was used to collect the responses of Iowa superintendents for the study. The survey method was selected because of its wide acceptance as a data collection technique in education and the behavioral sciences. The survey is also characteristically systematic,
representative, objective, and quantifiable. As a result, surveys are the most cost-effective, efficient, and credible means of collecting data because respondents can speak for themselves without fear of identification or reprisal.\footnote{1}

The recognized limitations of survey research include over-rater or under-rater bias, acquiescence, artificial or slanted responses, and the cooperative or uncooperative nature of respondents.\footnote{2} These limitations were taken into account during the development of the instrument.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument was developed specifically for the study because few, if any, measurement devices had been developed for determining the perceptions of superintendents regarding the utilization of parent advisory councils. The instrument, a questionnaire combined with a Likert-type scale, was designed for subjects to respond with varying degrees of intensity for each of twenty items included on the questionnaire. Response positions on the scale, with a numerical value of one to four, included: Almost Never Appropriate, Not Usually Appropriate, Usually Appropriate, and Almost Always Appropriate. Four response positions were

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\footnote{2}{Ibid.}
used to avoid having respondents selecting a "middle of the road" position.¹

The instrument was developed as a cooperative effort among students in a graduate research class at Drake University, professors at Drake University, and school administrators in central Iowa. A variety of individuals were utilized to avoid possible bias in the construction of the questionnaire and to help establish the content validity.²

Twenty school issues were selected to be included on the questionnaire for the study from a list of school issues gathered from the parent advisory council at Parkview School in Ankeny, Iowa; opinions from central Iowa school administrators; and the 13th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward Schools. The school issues, which were finalized by the graduate research class at Drake University, were as follows:

1. Student discipline.
2. Student attendance.
3. Student rights.
4. Extra-curricular activities.
5. School lunch menus.
6. School transportation.

¹Issac and Michael, p. 142.

7. Staff reduction.
8. Staff inservice.
10. Curriculum content.
11. Special programs policy.
12. Multicultural, nonsexist policy.
13. Student textbook selection.
14. Student achievement tests.
15. Bond issue proposals.
16. School communication publications.
17. Closing school buildings.
18. District goal-setting.
20. District needs assessment.

The questionnaire and a letter of transmittal was administered by random selection to three urban and three rural school superintendents throughout Iowa as a pretest to identify misinterpretations, ambiguities, duplications, and simultaneous issues.¹ The six superintendents were not included in the sample selected for the study. Minor modifications were completed on the questionnaire resulting in an instrument (Appendix A) designed to measure the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils and for the collection of

¹Issac and Michael, p. 136.
reliable data for the study.

Sample and Population

According to the Iowa Department of Public Instruction, there are 441 school districts in Iowa. Thirty superintendents from each of four enrollment categories, for a total of 120 superintendents, were selected for the study by a computer generated sample by the Department of Public Instruction. The enrollment categories for the study, determined by the K-12 enrollment of the school district, were (1) 0-499, (2) 500-749, (3) 750-1499, and (4) 1500 and larger. The enrollment categories were selected on the basis of information obtained from the Department of Public Instruction regarding previous studies utilizing K-12 enrollment in Iowa.¹

The questionnaires, which were numbered consecutively, were printed on four different colors of paper, according to K-12 enrollment, and mailed with a letter of transmittal (Appendix B) and a self-addressed stamped envelope. The mailing technique was selected because it is the single most widely used method of data collection in education and has the ability to insure anonymity.² A telephone follow-up

¹Telephone interview with Evelyn Nielsen, Research Consultant, Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, Iowa, April 27, 1982.

was conducted seven days after the mailing of the instruments.

A total of 112 of the original 120 questionnaires were returned representing a 93 percent return which is well within the acceptable limits of nonresponding subjects.\(^1\) Upon return of the questionnaires, number codes were deleted and all questionnaires were divided into two equal groups according to the years of superintendency experience. This procedure insured a sufficient number of respondents in each group for a two-way classification analysis of variance.

**Analysis of Data**

The purpose of the study was to determine if differences exist in the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making. The following null hypotheses were selected for the study:

1. There is no difference between school district enrollment and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input.

2. There is no difference between school district enrollment and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making.

3. There is no difference between administrative experience and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input.

\(^1\) Issac and Michael, p. 135.
4. There is no difference between administrative experience and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making.

5. There is no difference between the interactive effects of school district size and administrative experience when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input.

6. There is no difference between the interactive effects of school district size and administrative experience when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making.

7. There is no difference between input and participatory decision making among Iowa superintendents regarding the twenty selected school issues identified for the study.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to compute a two-way classification analysis of variance. The use of the two-way classification analysis of variance, which produced an F value for each hypothesis, allows the consideration of more than one variable at a time as well as allowing for the subtle interactions between variables.

The two-way classification analysis of variance was

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utilized to test the relationships between the dependent variables, input and participatory decision making, and the independent variables, school district enrollment and administrative experience, in Hypotheses One through Four. The two-way classification was also used for Hypotheses Five and Six to determine the variation that could be attributed to the combined interaction of the independent variables, school district enrollment and administrative experience, and each dependent variable, input and participatory decision making. The t-test was utilized to collectively test the differences between the means for input and participatory decision making for each of the twenty selected school issues in Hypothesis Seven. The .05 level of significance was utilized for each of the seven hypotheses.

Summary

The utilization of parent advisory councils by school superintendents may be one of the effective avenues to involve school patrons in the decision making process in public schools. The methodology presented in this chapter was used for the statistical analysis of the data in Chapter 4 in regard to the appropriateness of utilizing parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making by Iowa school superintendents.
CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of the Data

The purpose of the study was to determine if differences existed in the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making. Seven hypotheses were designed to identify specific superintendent perceptions.

This chapter utilized tables and figures to illustrate the data collected and analyzed. The data collected were examined by statistical means, two-way classification analysis of variance, and when required, a least squares difference test. Significance was set at the .05 level of probability.

Hypothesis One

There is no difference between school district enrollment and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input.

Hypothesis One was concerned with the dependent variable, input and the independent variable, school district enrollment. As illustrated in Table 1, the mean responses of Iowa superintendents indicated five school issues as
Table 1
Means, Analysis of Variance, and Group Differences Among Iowa Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of Parent Advisory Councils for Providing Input on Selected Schools Issues by School District Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issue in Priority Order from High to Low</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>0-499 (A)</th>
<th>500-749 (B)</th>
<th>750-1499 (C)</th>
<th>1500-Over (D)</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>Individual Group Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issue Proposals</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.445</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Needs Assessments</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.396*</td>
<td>D&gt;A, C&gt;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing School Buildings</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.415</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Goal-setting</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>2.425</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Offerings</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.209</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.624*</td>
<td>D&gt;A, D&gt;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural, Nonsexist</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communication Pub.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.644</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Discipline</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.722*</td>
<td>D&gt;A, D&gt;C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rights</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.280</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Programs</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.211*</td>
<td>D&gt;A, D&gt;B</td>
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<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.192</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Transportation</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.265</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Budgeting</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.412</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Lunch Menus</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>3.222*</td>
<td>C&gt;A, D&gt;B, C&gt;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Textbook Selection</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.666</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Inservice</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2.512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Reduction</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>2.518</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement Tests</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.715</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
1.00 = Almost Never Appropriate; 2.00 = Not Usually Appropriate; 3.00 = Usually Appropriate; 4.00 = Almost Always Appropriate
"Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Always Appropriate." The five school issues included the following: bond issue proposals, district needs assessments, closing school buildings, district goal-setting, and curriculum offerings. The remaining school issues were perceived by superintendents as being "Not Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Never Appropriate."

The two-way classification analysis of variance for Hypothesis One was rejected for the following issues: district needs assessments, student attendance policy, school discipline policy, special programs policy, and school lunch menus at the .05 level.

A least squares difference test was applied to each of the five school issues rejected in Hypothesis One to determine the location of the individual group differences related to input and school district enrollment. The LSD procedure concluded: district needs assessments had greater group differences in D than A, and greater in C than A; student attendance policy had greater group differences in D than A, and greater in D than B; school discipline policy had greater group differences in D than A, and greater in D than C; special programs had greater group differences in D than A, and greater in D than B; and school lunch menus had greater group differences in C than A, greater in D than A, and greater in C than B.
Hypothesis Two

There is no difference between school district enrollment and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making.

Hypothesis Two was concerned with the dependent variable, participatory decision making and the independent variable, school district enrollment. As illustrated in Table 2, the mean responses of Iowa superintendents indicated one school issue, bond issue proposals, as "Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Always Appropriate." The remaining nineteen school issues were perceived by superintendents as being "Not Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Never Appropriate."

The two-way classification analysis of variance for Hypothesis Two was held tenable for each of the twenty school issues. As a result, the LSD procedure was not required.

Hypothesis Three

There is no difference between administrative experience and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input.

Hypothesis Three was concerned with the dependent variable, input and the independent variable, administrative experience. As illustrated in Table 3, the mean responses of Iowa superintendents indicated five school issues as "Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Always Appropriate."
Table 2

Means, Analysis of Variance, and Group Differences Among Iowa Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of Parent Advisory Councils for Providing Participatory Decision Making on Selected School Issues by School District Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issue in Priority Order from High to Low</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>School District Enrollment</th>
<th>Individual Group Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issue Proposals</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.14  3.11  3.21  3.14</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Needs Assessments</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.89  2.86  3.07  2.82</td>
<td>0.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Goal-setting</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.68  2.29  2.75  2.43</td>
<td>1.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing School Buildings</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.71  2.32  2.79  2.18</td>
<td>1.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural, Nonsexist</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.21  2.18  2.43  2.21</td>
<td>0.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communication Pub.</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.21  2.04  2.61  2.14</td>
<td>1.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Offerings</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.21  2.00  2.39  2.07</td>
<td>1.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.89  1.86  2.21  1.89</td>
<td>0.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Programs</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.89  1.71  2.18  2.00</td>
<td>1.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rights</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.79  1.79  2.00  1.79</td>
<td>0.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Discipline</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.82  1.79  1.86  1.79</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.75  1.79  1.93  1.75</td>
<td>0.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.96  1.54  1.75  1.61</td>
<td>2.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Budgeting</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.86  1.39  1.71  1.75</td>
<td>1.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Lunch Menus</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.71  1.32  1.82  1.57</td>
<td>1.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Textbook Selection</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.61  1.36  1.64  1.71</td>
<td>1.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Transportation</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.50  1.39  1.86  1.54</td>
<td>2.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Inservice</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.29  1.46  1.57  1.46</td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement Tests</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.39  1.11  1.46  1.21</td>
<td>2.906</td>
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<td>Staff Reduction</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.32  1.14  1.29  1.32</td>
<td>0.405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
1.00 = Almost Never Appropriate; 2.00 = Not Usually Appropriate; 3.00 = Usually Appropriate; 4.00 = Almost Always Appropriate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issue in Priority Order from High to Low</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>Administrative Experience</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>Individual Group Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issue Proposals</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>2.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Needs Assessments</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing School Buildings</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Goal-setting</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>2.061*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Offerings</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>2.288*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural, Nonsexist</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Discipline</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rights</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Programs</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communication Publications</td>
<td>2.62</td>
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<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.122</td>
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<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Transportation</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>3.100*</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Budgeting</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.612</td>
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<td>School Lunch Menus</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Textbook Selection</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Inservice</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.78</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Staff Reduction</td>
<td>1.67</td>
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<td>1.77</td>
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<td>Student Achievement Tests</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
1.00 = Almost Never Appropriate; 2.00 = Not Usually Appropriate; 3.00 = Usually Appropriate; 4.00 = Almost Always Appropriate
five school issues included: bond issue proposals, district needs assessments, closing school buildings, district goal-setting, and curriculum offerings. The remaining fifteen school issues were perceived by superintendents as being "Not Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Never Appropriate."

The two-way classification analysis of variance for Hypothesis Three was held tenable for eighteen of the twenty school issues. Hypothesis Three was rejected for the following school issues: district goal-setting, student attendance, and school transportation at the .05 level.

A least squares difference test was applied to each of the three school issues rejected in hypothesis three to determine the location of the individual group differences related to input and administrative experience. The LSD procedure concluded: district goal-setting had greater group differences in B than A; student attendance policy had greater group differences in B than A; and school transportation policy had greater group differences in B than A.

**Hypothesis Four**

There is no difference between administrative experience and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making.

Hypothesis Four was concerned with the dependent variable, participatory decision making, and the independent
variable, administrative experience. As illustrated in Table 4, the mean responses of Iowa superintendents indicated only one school issue, bond issue proposals, as "Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Always Appropriate." The remaining nineteen school issues were perceived by school superintendents as being "Not Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Never Appropriate."

The two-way classification analysis of variance for Hypothesis Four was held tenable for eighteen of the twenty school issues. Hypothesis Four was rejected for the following school issues: district goal-setting and staff reduction.

A least squares difference test was applied to each of the two school issues rejected in Hypothesis Four to determine the location of the individual group differences related to participatory decision making and administrative experience. The LSD procedure concluded: district goal-setting had greater group differences in B than A; and staff reduction had greater group differences in B than A.

Hypothesis Five

There is no difference between the interactive effects of school district enrollment and administrative experience when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input.

Hypothesis Five was concerned with the dependent variable, input, and the interactive effects of the independent
Table 4
Means, Analysis of Variance, and Group Differences Among Iowa Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of Parent Advisory Councils for Providing Participatory Decision Making on Selected School Issues by Administrative Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issue in Priority Order from High to Low</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>Administrative Experience</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>Individual Group Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issue Proposals</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.03 (A) 3.29 (B)</td>
<td>1.835</td>
<td>B&gt;A</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.80 (A) 3.04 (B)</td>
<td>1.733</td>
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</tr>
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<td>District Goal-setting</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.33 (A) 2.77 (B)</td>
<td>5.653*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing School Buildings</td>
<td>2.50</td>
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<td>0.080</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural, Nonsexist</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.20 (A) 2.33 (B)</td>
<td>0.345</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communication Publications</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.22 (A) 2.29 (B)</td>
<td>0.048</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Curriculum Offerings</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.13 (A) 2.21 (B)</td>
<td>0.141</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.93 (A) 2.00 (B)</td>
<td>0.089</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Programs</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.88 (A) 2.02 (B)</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rights</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.80 (A) 1.88 (B)</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Discipline</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.75 (A) 1.88 (B)</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.75 (A) 1.87 (B)</td>
<td>0.621</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.70 (A) 1.73 (B)</td>
<td>0.039</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Budgeting</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.60 (A) 1.77 (B)</td>
<td>0.586</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Lunch Menus</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.53 (A) 1.69 (B)</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Transportation</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.50 (A) 1.69 (B)</td>
<td>0.915</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Textbook Selection</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.62 (A) 1.54 (B)</td>
<td>1.110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Inservice</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.50 (A) 1.38 (B)</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement Tests</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.27 (A) 1.33 (B)</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Reduction</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.17 (A) 1.38 (B)</td>
<td>3.858*</td>
<td>B&gt;A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<.05
1.00 = Almost Never Appropriate; 2.00 = Not Usually Appropriate; 3.00 = Usually Appropriate; 4.00 = Almost Always Appropriate
variables, school district enrollment and administrative experience. As illustrated in Table 5, the interactive mean responses of Iowa superintendents indicated none of the school issues as "Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Always Appropriate." All twenty issues, therefore, were perceived by superintendents as being "Not Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Never Appropriate."

The two-way interactive effects of the analysis of variance for Hypothesis Five was held tenable for nineteen of the twenty school issues. Hypothesis Five was rejected for the school issue, student textbook selection, at the .05 level.

Figure 1 illustrates observable differences for selection of student textbooks as being more appropriate by superintendents with ten or fewer years of experience than by superintendents with more than ten years of experience for three of the four enrollment categories. Enrollment Category C, however, was perceived as more appropriate by superintendents with more than ten years of administrative experience.

Hypothesis Six

There is no difference between the interactive effects of school district enrollment and administrative experience when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issue by Rank</th>
<th>Interaction Mean</th>
<th>1-10 Years</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>11-38 Years</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-499</td>
<td>500-749</td>
<td>750-1499</td>
<td>Over 1500-</td>
<td>0-499</td>
<td>500-749</td>
<td>750-1499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Textbook Selection</td>
<td>2.329</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Discipline</td>
<td>1.367</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rights</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Reduction</td>
<td>0.735</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Transportation</td>
<td>0.669</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>0.617</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Programs</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement Tests</td>
<td>0.419</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Inservice</td>
<td>0.349</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Needs Assessments</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Budgeting</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing School Buildings</td>
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<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communication Publications</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Goal-setting</td>
<td>0.186</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Offerings</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issue Proposals</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural, Nonsexist</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Lunch Menus</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
1 = Almost Never Appropriate; 2.00 = Not Usually Appropriate; 3.00 = Usually Appropriate; 4.00 = Almost Always Appropriate
Figure 1

Illustration of Iowa Superintendents' Mean Responses of Input and Significant Two-way Interaction Effect (School District Enrollment x Administrative Experience) Upon the Factor Student Textbook Selection
Hypothesis Six is concerned with the dependent variable, participatory decision making, and the interactive effects of the independent variables, school district enrollment and administrative experience. As illustrated in Table 6, the interactive mean responses of Iowa superintendents indicated none of the school issues as "Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Always Appropriate." All twenty school issues, therefore, were perceived by superintendents as being "Not Usually Appropriate" or "Almost Never Appropriate."

The two-way interactive effects of the analysis of variance for Hypothesis Six was held tenable for nineteen of the twenty school issues. Hypothesis Six was rejected for the school issue, student textbook selection, at the .05 level.

Figure 2 illustrates observable differences for selection of student textbooks as being more appropriate by superintendents with ten or fewer years of experience than by superintendents with more than ten years of experience for three of the four enrollment categories. Enrollment Category C, however, was viewed as more appropriate by superintendents with more than ten years of administrative experience.
Table 6

Means and Two-way Interactions Among Iowa Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of Parent Advisory Councils for Providing Participatory Decision Making on Selected School Issues by School District Enrollment and Administrative Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issue by Rank</th>
<th>Inter-</th>
<th>1-10 Years</th>
<th>11-38 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0- 500-</td>
<td>750-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>499</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing School Buildings</td>
<td>2.424</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Goal-setting</td>
<td>1.898</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Textbook Selection</td>
<td>1.663</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Needs Assessments</td>
<td>1.505</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issue Proposals</td>
<td>1.313</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.90</td>
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<td>Multicultural, Nonexist</td>
<td>1.146</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Offerings</td>
<td>1.923</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Programs</td>
<td>0.877</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Discipline</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rights</td>
<td>0.416</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communication Publications</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Achievement Tests</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Inservice</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Transportation</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Lunch Menus</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Budgeting</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Reduction</td>
<td>0.042</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>0.019</td>
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<td>1.55</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
1.00 = Almost Never Appropriate; 2.00 = Not Usually Appropriate; 3.00 = Usually Appropriate;
4.00 = Almost Always Appropriate
Figure 2

Illustration of Iowa Superintendents' Mean Responses of Participatory Decision Making and Significant Two-way Interaction Effect (School District Enrollment x Administrative Experience) Upon the Factor Student Textbook Selection
Hypothesis Seven

There is no difference between input and participatory decision making among Iowa superintendents regarding the twenty selected school issues identified for the study.

Hypothesis Seven was concerned with whether or not a difference existed between the means of the dependent variables, input and participatory decision making, for the selected school issues. As illustrated in Table 7, each of the twenty selected school issues indicated differences between the input mean and the participatory decision making mean at the .01 level.
Table 7

`t`-Values of Means Among Iowa Superintendents’ Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of Parent Advisory Councils for Providing Input and Participatory Decision Making by School Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issue by Rank Order from High to Low</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Input Mean</th>
<th>Decision Making Mean</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>1.143</td>
<td>2.946</td>
<td>1.804</td>
<td>13.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Discipline</td>
<td>1.071</td>
<td>2.884</td>
<td>1.813</td>
<td>12.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing School Buildings</td>
<td>0.982</td>
<td>3.482</td>
<td>2.500</td>
<td>10.08**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>0.973</td>
<td>2.938</td>
<td>1.964</td>
<td>11.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rights</td>
<td>0.946</td>
<td>2.786</td>
<td>1.839</td>
<td>11.02**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Offerings</td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td>3.036</td>
<td>2.170</td>
<td>10.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Needs Assessments</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>3.705</td>
<td>2.911</td>
<td>8.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Transportation</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td>2.348</td>
<td>1.571</td>
<td>11.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Goal-setting</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>3.277</td>
<td>2.536</td>
<td>9.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Programs</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td>2.670</td>
<td>1.946</td>
<td>9.48**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>2.402</td>
<td>1.714</td>
<td>9.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural, Nonsexist</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td>2.911</td>
<td>2.259</td>
<td>8.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communication Publications</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td>2.902</td>
<td>2.250</td>
<td>8.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Budgeting</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>2.295</td>
<td>1.679</td>
<td>7.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issue Proposals</td>
<td>0.571</td>
<td>3.723</td>
<td>3.152</td>
<td>6.52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Lunch Menus</td>
<td>0.563</td>
<td>2.170</td>
<td>1.607</td>
<td>8.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Textbook Selection</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>1.580</td>
<td>6.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Reduction</td>
<td>0.393</td>
<td>1.661</td>
<td>1.268</td>
<td>5.82**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Inservice</td>
<td>0.375</td>
<td>1.821</td>
<td>1.446</td>
<td>5.57**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement Tests</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>1.554</td>
<td>1.295</td>
<td>5.14**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01
1.00 = Almost Never Appropriate; 2.00 = Not Usually Appropriate; 3.00 = Usually Appropriate; 4.00 = Almost Always Appropriate
CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The intent of the study was to determine if differences existed in the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for providing input and participatory decision making. Seven hypotheses were developed as the basis for the study.

The survey method of research was used to gather the responses from 120 Iowa superintendents. The population for the study was obtained from a computer generated sample from the Iowa Department of Public Instruction. The data were obtained from a questionnaire which utilized a Likert-type scale allowing superintendents to respond to each of twenty selected school issues with varying degrees of intensity.

Two independent variables, school district enrollment and administrative experience, were selected for the study. The K-12 enrollment categories for the study were (1) 0-499, (2) 500-749, (3) 750-1499, (4) 1500-larger. Years of administrative experience were (1) 1-10 years, and (2) 11-38 years.
The data were statistically treated to determine whether or not differences existed among Iowa superintendents using a two-way classification analysis of variance, a least squares difference test, and a t-test. Significance was set at the .05 level of probability.

Results

The findings concerning the perceptions of superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils for the seven hypotheses were as follows:

1. There were differences among the mean responses of superintendents concerning the school issues, bond issue proposals, district needs assessments, closing school buildings, district goal-setting, and curriculum offerings. The two-way classification analysis of variance revealed the following differences for input and school district enrollment: district needs assessments, student attendance policy, school discipline policy, special programs policy, and school lunch menus. Differences were greater among superintendents in school districts with large enrollments for each of the five school issues. Hypothesis One, therefore, was rejected.

2. There were differences among the mean responses of superintendents concerning the school issue, bond issue proposal. There was no difference, however, among superintendents when tested by the two-way classification analysis
of variance for participatory decision making and school district enrollment. Hypothesis Two, therefore, was not rejected.

3. There were differences among the mean responses of superintendents concerning the school issues bond issue proposals, district needs assessments, closing school buildings, district goal-setting, and curriculum offerings. The two-way classification analysis of variance revealed the following differences among superintendents for input and administrative experience: district goal-setting, student attendance policy, and school transportation policy. Differences were greater among more experienced superintendents for the three school issues. Hypothesis Three, therefore, was rejected.

4. There were differences among the mean responses of superintendents concerning the school issue, bond issue proposals. The two-way classification of analysis of variance revealed the following differences among superintendents for participatory decision making and administrative experience: district goal-setting and staff reduction. Differences were greater among more experienced superintendents for both school issues. Hypothesis Four, therefore, was rejected.

5. There were differences among superintendents concerning student textbook selection, when tested for the interactive effects of input on school district enrollment
and administrative experience. In three of the four enrollment categories, differences for student textbook selection were greater among superintendents with less experience. Hypothesis Five, therefore, was rejected.

6. There were differences among superintendents concerning student textbook selection, when tested for the interactive effects of participatory decision making on school district enrollment and administrative experience. In three of the four enrollment categories, differences for student textbook selection were greater among superintendents with less experience. Hypothesis Six, therefore, was rejected.

7. There were differences among superintendents concerning each of the twenty school issues when tested for the t-values of input and participatory decision making. Input was perceived as more appropriate than participatory decision making for each of the twenty selected school issues. Hypothesis Seven, therefore, was rejected.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were formulated based on the data presented in the study:

1. Hypothesis One—There is no difference between school district enrollment and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input—was rejected.
2. Hypothesis Two--There is no difference between school district enrollment and the perceptions of Iowa superintendent regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making--was held tenable.

3. Hypothesis Three--There is no difference between administrative experience and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input--was rejected.

4. Hypothesis Four--There is no difference between administrative experience and the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making--was rejected.

5. Hypothesis Five--There is no difference between the interactive effects of school district size and administrative experience when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing input--was rejected.

6. Hypothesis Six--There is no difference between the interactive effects of school district size and administrative experience when considering the perceptions of Iowa superintendents regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils in providing participatory decision making--was rejected.

7. Hypothesis Seven--There is no difference between
input and participatory decision making among Iowa superintendents regarding the twenty selected school issues identified for the study--was rejected.

Recommendations

As a result of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Parent advisory councils should be considered as an effective avenue for providing input on critical school issues.

2. Parent advisory councils should be utilized to provide input rather than participatory decision making.

3. A nationwide study, involving a larger sample, should be conducted to determine the appropriateness of school issues for parent advisory councils.

4. A study regarding the appropriateness of parent advisory councils should be conducted to determine whether differences exist in the perceptions among superintendents utilizing parent advisory councils and superintendents not utilizing parent advisory councils.
Periodicals


Grant, Margaret Fletcher. "Principals and Parents: Partners or Partisans?" Momentum, 21 (December 1980), 40.


Keefe, James W. "Principals and Parents: Partners or Partisans?" Momentum, 21 (December 1976), 21.


Murphy, Joseph F. "Making the School Advisory Council Work." Thrust for Educational Leadership, 10 (November 1980), 22-23.


ERIC Documents

Bjorklund, Gail. Historical Perspectives on Parent Education in America. ERIC ED 143 432.


Guthrie, James W. Public Control of Public Schools: Can We Get it Back? ERIC ED 100 025.

Herman, Joan L., and Jennie P. Yeh. Some Effects of Parental Involvement in Schools. ERIC ED 206 963.


Schrafft, Carol M. Developing Parent Participation Programs in Schools. ERIC ED 167 668.

Steinberg, Lois S. Developing Parent Participation Programs in Schools. ERIC ED 105 592.

Personal Contacts


Books and Other Sources


APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
Circle the number which best indicates your perceptions as to the appropriateness of a parent advisory council for superintendents in providing both (1) input and (2) participatory decision making of the school issues below. Membership on the council would be made up of parents whose children represent elementary and/or secondary levels, special programs, minorities, extra-curricular activities, geographical locations within the district, with meetings at prescribed intervals.

1. Almost Never Appropriate
2. Not Usually Appropriate
3. Usually Appropriate
4. Almost Always Appropriate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>For INPUT</th>
<th>For Participatory DECISION MAKING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student discipline policy</td>
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<td>2. Student attendance policy</td>
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<td>3. Student rights policy</td>
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<td>4. Extra-curricular activities policy</td>
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<td>5. School lunch menus</td>
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<td>6. School transportation policy</td>
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<td>7. Staff reduction policy</td>
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<td>8. Staff inservice topics</td>
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<td>9. Curriculum offerings</td>
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<td>10. Curriculum content</td>
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<td>11. Special programs policy</td>
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<td>12. Multicultural, nonexist policy</td>
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<td>13. Selection of student textbooks</td>
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<td>14. Selection of student achievement tests</td>
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<td>15. Selection of bond issue proposals</td>
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<td>16. District-wide communication publications</td>
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<td>17. School building closure policy</td>
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<td>18. District goal-setting policy</td>
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<td>19. School district budget</td>
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<td>20. District needs assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Indicate the number of years you have been a superintendent</td>
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APPENDIX B

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL
May, 1982

Dear Superintendent:

School superintendents are a special group of people because they represent the leadership of educational programs in their community. As a practicing school administrator, I am requesting your assistance in a project that will accomplish two objectives. First, the attached questionnaire seeks to determine the perceptions of school superintendents regarding the utilization of parent advisory councils. Secondly, the questionnaire is the data collection instrument for my doctoral dissertation.

You have been randomly selected by a computer at the Department of Public Instruction to participate in this study. Your response is vital and will remain both confidential and anonymous. I need your help and participation. Please take the few minutes necessary to complete the attached questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. You may have noticed that the questionnaire has been coded for a possible follow-up; however, when your questionnaire is returned, the coded information will be destroyed. This will ensure both confidentiality and anonymity.

Your participation is crucial to the accuracy of the findings of the study and to the future efforts toward improving educational programs. The study has been approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies at Drake University.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me. Please take the time now to complete the enclosed survey.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this endeavor.

Sincerely yours,

Robert D. Hartzler

Robert D. Hartzler
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Home: 515/964-2627

Dr. Charles D. Rowley, Advisor
Phone: Business: 515/271-3120