UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN NOVA SCOTIA AND EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

by

MICHAEL HAMILTON PHILLIPS ©

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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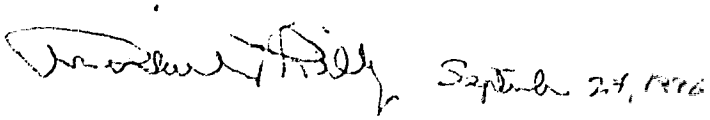

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN NOVA SCOTIA AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY submitted by Michael Hamilton Phillips in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

The consolidation of school districts into larger jurisdictions has been viewed by many politicians and professional educators throughout North America as an effective method to improve educational opportunities for students in the public schools. In 1982 the Nova Scotia government implemented a province wide consolidation of school districts with the aim to enhance the equality of educational opportunities. Equal educational opportunity is conceptualized as having access to a substantive programme, the provision of compensatory intervention, and the fostering of lifelong learning. With a focus on programme and on the development of professional staff, this study examines all the secondary schools in one newly-formed school district for a ten year period to see what educational opportunities a larger organization provides .

Data were gathered by interview and by questionnaire from school board members, central office administrators, school administrators, and graduating students. Data were also provided by documents from the Department of Education and school board minutes and reports.

At first the larger organization was responsive to its constituent parts as attempts were made to level out inherited inequities. Essential inequalities in programme and professional staff were related to school size. In the district's smaller schools, teachers taught more subjects and students had fewer course options. The district was able to maintain a substantive programme in all schools by the disproportionate allocation of resources and by supporting school initiated changes such as semestering. The district centralized and coordinated efforts to compensate students with special needs to a greater effect. A comprehensive county-wide continuing education programme

expanded services to reach new constituencies. Central office administrators initiated and encouraged the professional development of teachers and school administrators. In specific areas, such as encouraging female students to participate more fully in mathematics and in the pure sciences, the district had little influence. With respect to access, compensation, and lifelong education, the larger school district generally enhanced educational opportunities for secondary students across the county.

In the fall of 1996 the school district under study will be further consolidated with five other county-wide districts. Ultimately responsibility for providing educational opportunities will be decentralized to each individual school.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In September of 1996 there were 22 school districts in Nova Scotia. When efforts were first made to consolidate rural Nova Scotia schools in 1903, there were approximately 1800 districts, many of which consisted of single schools (Ricker, 1986). Permissive legislation for the further consolidation of these school districts was enacted at various times, largely as a response to financial problems at the local level. The reason for encouraging the formation of larger administrative units in Nova Scotia has consistently been economy of scale and equality of educational opportunity (Journal of Education, 1970). Since the 1960s the Nova Scotia Department of Education has held the belief that the consolidation of smaller school districts would benefit public education by better utilizing educational resources and by expanding educational opportunity (Nason, 1969). Operationally, improved educational opportunity has meant the provision of appropriate kinds of educational programmes that would meet the needs, interests, and capabilities of all types of students. In addition, enhanced opportunities meant that better qualified teachers would be distributed more equally throughout the province.

A comprehensive school programme was implemented in 1966, and was directly linked to the reorganization of school districts by permissive legislation and financial incentives. H. M. Nason, the Deputy Minister of Education, declared that the Nova Scotia Comprehensive School Programme "should accompany (in fact it may help to accelerate) the current development and diversification of Nova Scotia's economy" (1966, p.17).

Regardless of the timing and the location, the general trend in North America has been towards the creation of the larger administrative unit. The development of larger and more complex school districts began in the late 1800s in the United States and in the early 1900s in Canada. Mitchell and Encarnation (1984) suggested that the three concerns of efficiency, equity, and quality were at one time or another the rationale behind moves towards consolidation. The trend of district reorganization to larger administrative units, which first occurred in the United States, has for the most part been similarly prevalent in all the provinces of Canada (Bergen, 1967 and Collins, 1961).

In Nova Scotia the largest province-wide reorganization occurred in 1982, which directly affected 71 of the 74 public school board jurisdictions existing at that time. Following a series of government initiated inquiries dating back to the 1960s and countless submissions from the public, a change in organization was deemed necessary. The Department of Education felt that a major school district reorganization would solve a chronic financial malaise and increase educational opportunity for all Nova Scotians (Nason, 1966, 1969; Report of the Commission on Public Education Finance, 1981; Ricker, 1986).

Need for the Study

Education in Nova Scotia is currently facing major problems. In the spring of 1990, hundreds of teachers across the province were notified that their contracts would not be renewed, and some school districts announced the cancellation of programmes. Owing to public pressure, intervention by the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, and emergency provincial funding, all affected teachers with tenure were rehired.

In 1994 it appeared that the Department of Education in Nova Scotia would again be forced to make decisions concerning the financing of public education. In 1982 the consolidation of school districts appeared to be the solution to the problem of how to finance the equalization educational opportunity. Eight years earlier in 1974, the Graham Commission had recommended radical reform in the administrative structure of education. Fundamental to the recommendations of this commission was the creation of autonomous school councils which were to have almost complete responsibility for the operation of each school (Atherton, 1975). The province would also assume full financial responsibility for education. School boards and the central office staffs would be replaced by 11 regional offices of the Department of Education that would provide support services as requested by individual schools.

If these recommendations had been implemented, the administrative structure of education in Nova Scotia would have been unique in Canada; however, the changes proposed by the Graham Commission were shelved by a newly elected Conservative provincial government. The new government was quick to establish its own commission and as a consequence implemented the recommendations of its Report of the Commission on Public Education Finance (The Walker Report), which created the present 22 school districts.

The present financial crisis in education, has directly questioned the viability of this district structure that has been in place for the last 14 years. Many of the 22 school districts can no longer support themselves at the current level of provincial financial support. The Department of Education was reluctant to provide financial support at the current levels and

announced in October of 1993 that it would reduce funding by 10% over the next four years. It was indicated at that time that additional cuts might be required in the near future.

The district structure that was established in 1982 is being dismantled. In the summer of 1996 the present district structure will be changed. A further amalgamation of the 22 school districts and their respective governing boards will be implemented in August, 1996. The total number of jurisdictions will be reduced to nine. These changes are being made by the leadership of a Liberal government, which was swept into power in 1994. The pattern of these changes closely follows the plan proposed by the Liberal government in the 1970s in the Graham Commission Report.

The vital aspect of this further consolidation is the emphasis on site-based management at the school level. School advisory councils are currently being organized in each school across the province. It is believed that educational opportunities can best be dealt with at the local level (Establishing School Advisory Councils, 1995). It is anticipated that the advisory capacity of these councils will evolve over time into a governing capacity. Educational responsibilities such as staffing and programme will come under the auspices of the council. At first the funding of each school will be budgeted by the central office staff of the newly consolidated "super board." The Department of Education has indicated that it is their intention to replace the governing school boards, which are elected at the county level, with the school councils. The funding of each school will eventually be determined by the school council. How funds will be generated, and how they will be distributed through site-based management has not yet been made clear.

Purpose of the Study

Chalmer (1978) said that "equality of educational opportunity is, and has been, used by all provincial governments in Canada as a philosophical justification for any desired change in their educational systems" (p. 259). This assertion supported by Collins (1961) applied to the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia. The reduction of inequalities depends upon three crucial elements. The provision of a basic educational programme and the even distribution of a quality professional staff are two of the essential factors. The third and pivotal factor is the provision of adequate financial resources that compensate for the inequities in programme and personnel within a jurisdiction and among jurisdictions.

Prior to the 1982 reorganization of school districts, certain inequalities of educational opportunity were recognized to exist in many areas of Nova Scotia. These inequalities were access to a suitable, minimum programme of study, the lack of provision of compensatory programmes for students with special needs, and the unequal availability of local, adult educational services for those who were no longer able to attend public school or those who voluntarily chose to leave the public school system.

Given that there is a fundamental and essential link between programme and instruction, equality of educational opportunity means access to schools that offer at least a basic programme, and access to schools that are staffed by teachers and administrators who are qualified and interested professionals with a high degree of expertise in the field. Educational opportunity would also have to include access to educational services designed and scheduled

for those who cannot or will not attend daily public schools. The primary purpose of this research study was to examine and describe the evolution of one reorganized school district and to analyse its efforts to equalize educational opportunity. The major research question for this study was:

With respect to educational programme and staff development, what has occurred in one Nova Scotia school district in the pursuit of equalization of educational opportunity since consolidation in 1982? More specifically the purpose of this study was to seek answers to questions such as the following:

1. What variations of educational programme offerings have existed amongst the district's secondary schools?
2. What are the perceptions of central office administrators, school administrators, school board members, and students concerning the availability and suitability of the educational programme in the secondary schools for purposes of entry to post-secondary institutions and employment opportunities?
3. What have been the district's goals and practices related to continuing education and the educational programme for adults?
4. How have qualified, experienced administrators and teachers been distributed throughout all the secondary schools in the district?
5. What have been the goals and practices in the district related to the professional development of administrators and teachers at the secondary level?
6. What are the perceptions of central office administrators, school administrators, and school board members concerning the achievement of staff development goals and the successful implementation of staff development practices?

The data collection for this study was guided by four primary assumptions. First, there exists an overall desire on the part of professional educators, government officials, and the general public for a greater equalization of educational opportunities. Second, equal educational opportunities are expanded when all the constituents of a school district have access to a minimum educational programme that meets their needs, abilities, and interests. Third, educational opportunity is provided when a school district follows a policy and practice of hiring, developing and maintaining teachers and administrators of quality. Even though quality is a nebulous term, the quality of professional staff can be based on accreditation and experience. Thus an administrator or teacher with more education and specialized training would possess more expertise on average than one who has had less education and training. Bidwell and Kasarda (1975) referred to this "potent resource" as a forgotten truism (p. 69). Large numbers of well-qualified professional staff in a given district is better than large numbers of poorly or inappropriately qualified professional staff. Corwin (1975) found that the innovativeness of a school increased with the principals' and teachers' education and experience. Fuller (1986) found that teachers who possessed superior verbal communicating skills influenced student achievement. With respect to student performance on standardized tests, the quality of teaching was positively related to the educational level of the teacher in Coleman (1966). This positive relationship was also reported in Hawkridge, Tallmadge, and Larsen (1968) and in McDill, McDill, and Spreche (1969) in cases of successful compensatory educational endeavors with disadvantaged children in the United States. However, it is recognized that variables such as individual motivation, adaptability, and

personality are factors that can enhance or detract from such a judgement.

Educational opportunity is more than educational programme and quality of staff. It is also related to financial resources and the environmental differences of the constituents. The financing of education will not play a major role in the description of this school district. Fluctuations in funding can certainly influence events. However, what the district has been able to do with the resources that have been made available is what is important. What the district could have done if funding had been increased or if funding had not been decreased is speculation not within the range of this research. For the purpose of this study, the inquiry was delimited to educational programme and staff development.

Fourth, it was assumed that the consolidation of smaller school jurisdictions into larger county-sized districts was viewed by government officials as a solution to the problem of providing a greater equality of educational opportunity within a given geographical boundary. Two government investigations, the Graham Commission (1974) and the Walker Report (1981) recommended further consolidation as a solution to the problem of inequalities of educational opportunities in the province.

The district, which was selected for this study, is comprised of five smaller school boards that were consolidated under one county-wide jurisdiction in 1982. Thus this district fulfills the definition of a reorganized school district.

Secondary assumptions were concerned with the collection of data: first, that the diversity of collection approaches provided an appropriate means of exploring the areas of inquiry; second, that respondents were able to understand the items in the questionnaires and the interviews to the extent

that was intended; and finally, that all respondents responded with sincerity.

Definition of Terms

Some of the terms used have a specific meaning and relevance to the province of Nova Scotia and to this study. In addition, some of the government commission reports, which are mentioned, are sometimes referred to in conjunction with the surname of the individual who acted as chairperson to the commission. The terms and their meanings are outlined below:

Amalgamated School Board refers to three school districts that were consolidated in 1970 following a government pilot study to examine the feasibility of larger administrative units that would be co-terminous with county boundaries.

Central Office Administrators refers to the superintendent, assistant superintendents, and to special consultants who work out of the central office.

Comprehensive School Programme refers to the school programme initiative of the Department of Education in 1966 to provide equal opportunities and to meet individual needs.

Consolidation refers to the joining of two or more schools or two or more school districts into larger administrative units.

Graham Report refers to the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Education, Public Services, and Provincial Municipal Relations (1974), which recommended the decentralization of government services and virtual school autonomy.

New Amalgamation refers to the proposed consolidation of the 22 school

districts, which were established in 1982, into nine larger jurisdictions in 1996.

School Administrators refers to principals, vice-principals, and department heads.

School Board refers to either the governing body of a school district. It has only been since October of 1992 that school boards have been fully-elected

School Board Member refers to an individual who sits on the governing body of a school district.

School Trustee refers to someone who represents the community as a liaison to an individual school. Trustees are elected by the community serviced by a school. The number of trustees varies from school to school, and they have no official power. Trustees sometimes act on behalf of parents to petition the school or school board on important matters. Trustees are empowered by the school board if and when they are required. As a consequence, not all school districts have trustees.

Walker Report refers to the Commission on Public Education Finance (1981), which recommended in the formation of 21 large county-wide school districts. 10

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this dissertation has been organized into five chapters in the following manner. Chapter 2 will review the literature which discusses equal educational opportunity. Chapter 3 will examine the organization of schooling, educational programme, and professional development within the context of the province of Nova Scotia. Chapter 4 will discuss the methodology used in the research in terms of data collection, data analysis, and rationale. Within this context, Chapter 5 will present the case of one

newly formed school district and describe its endeavors since 1982 to provide a greater equalization of educational opportunities for its students with respect to the development of the professional staff and to the delivery of programme. Chapter 6 will discuss and summarize the findings.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The Department of Education in Nova Scotia had expressed the view that the consolidation of smaller school districts would facilitate and equalize the funding of education across the province (Report of the Commission on Public Finance, 1981, pp. 21-22). Similarly, educational opportunities would be equalized across the province because larger districts would be able to provide a minimum programme for all students. In addition, provisions for educational programmes in excess of the minimum including special education would be facilitated. Educational opportunity is a complex concept, nevertheless; it was strongly held that larger school districts would increase educational opportunities for all students in the province.

Closely linked to the delivery of a minimum programme, is the concern for the quality of the professional staff in schools. The Graham Commission (1974, Vol. III), which examined all aspects of education, summarized the submissions made to them concerning education. They found the "view most often expressed or implied in all discussions of education was that the key to developing good schools and school programs is the provision of good teachers" (p. 15). The responsibility for professional development had been placed squarely on the shoulders of the school district administrators. At present the Department of Education provides leadership and coordination, but it is up to each district to initiate and implement policy with regard to the development of its professional staff. Adding further significance to this activity is the general decline in student enrolment since

the early 1970s. The decline in student enrolment has had a strong influence on the hiring and transfer of teachers in Nova Scotia. The need for fewer teachers has meant that school districts desiring improvement in their staffs and programmes have had to work with existing human resources rather than hiring new staff on the basis of specific district or school requirements. Fewer teaching opportunities also created a reluctance on the part of teachers and school administrators to seek alternative teaching and administrative assignments. Job security based upon years of experience has restrained and reduced the mobility of teachers and administrators considerably.

This chapter will review the literature on equal educational opportunity. It will also examine the literature that deals with school and school district size as a variable for the delivery of good education. Chapter 3 will follow by putting this subject into the context of Nova Scotia with respect to school district reorganization, educational programme, and professional development.

Equal Educational Opportunity

The way in which people conceptualize equality and equality of opportunity shapes the meaning of equal educational opportunity. R. S. Peters (1967) asserted that in almost every respect people are not equal. If all people were treated equally in the same way, the inherent differences of people would make equal treatment inequitable. Through the principle of distributive justice, Peters suggested that all those people within a given category be treated equally, and those in different categories could be treated unequally. This may be practical from a philosophical perspective, but highly impractical for a system of education unless the relevant factors that make

people unequal can be clearly defined and recognized.

Plato conceived of a society in which every person's potentiality was to be identified and then developed to fit the individual for the role of ruler, soldier, or worker. Aristotle linked equality to justice and an that an individual's right to a share of things depended upon the merits of that person (Ulich, 1950). This view did not apply to women or to slaves. The idea of equality was basic to the liberal mind. Equality before the law was announced by the authors of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and again in Paris in 1789 in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.

The ideas of prerevolutionary reformers in France, such as La Chalotais, recognized the value of the influence that a widely based state educational system would have in terms of state cohesiveness and social harmony (Vignery, 1965). The idea that people were a resource to be developed and utilized was concomitant with industrialization. The state's pursuit of efficiency and expansion implies the need to ensure that people receive maximum benefit from educational opportunities.

The approach to dealing with inequalities in educational opportunity has influenced how schools and school systems should be organized and operated. The OECD (1971) reported that in the United States the consolidation movement made a major contribution to the equality of opportunity and has been regarded as "the single most important organizational policy change. . . in this century" (p. 73).

Imber (1990) outlined a typology of discrimination in education that warned of the paradoxical nature in a conceptualization of the egalitarian principle where it is impossible to deny equality of educational opportunity

by treating a student differently from other students, but it is also possible to deny equality of educational opportunity by treating everyone the same (p. 388). Active discrimination occurs when students are discriminated against on the basis of characteristics not related to their educational needs such as race or socio-economic status. Passive discrimination occurs when students are not offered programmes required by a special need. Systemic discrimination was judged by Imber (1990, p. 394) to be the "most insidious type" and is the by-product of a poor system of school organization. For example, funding policy may benefit one school system over another, or within a single school system transfer policy or geography may result in an inferior instructional staff at one school. Jencks (1972) believed it was more difficult to justify inequality between schools in the same district than between schools from different districts. This outlook could be justified on the grounds that the administration and governors of a school district have an obligation and the authority within its jurisdiction to attempt to equalize disparity. It may not be desirable to redistribute resources in a more equitable fashion for political reasons, but from an ethical point-of-view it is difficult to justify the disparity.

Conditions of inequality of educational opportunity were first recognized as problems of equal access. In the United States and Canada efforts were made to insure that everyone had access to the same education. Horace Mann (1957) saw education as "the great equalizer of the conditions of men- the balancewheel of the social machinery" (p. 87). Evetts (1973) referred to this interpretation as an equal sharing of the available resources. The Coleman Report (1966) in the United States and The Plowden Report (1967) in Great Britain, indicated that the concept of inequality of opportunity was

more complex than mere access to the same education.

The policies that were utilized to equalize opportunity in Western countries were considered by the OECD (1975) and Pike (1978) as a succession of complementary phases. When access appeared to be insufficient on its own, a policy of compensatory education was introduced. Also called "redemptive egalitarianism" by Husen (1975, p. 309) and "positive discrimination" by Evetts (1973, p. 61) and Silver (1973, p. 23), compensatory education emphasized remedial measures for those who were socially disadvantaged and/or ill-prepared for school. It was held that the inequality of condition required that some people be treated more equally than others. Compensatory practices were not implemented in place of access, but rather in addition to it. This increment provided the features of a more comprehensive programme of educational equality. Naturally enough, supplementary practices only act to increase the problematic dimension of access. The greater the diversity in what is being offered, the greater the required endeavor to provide equal access.

Gilbert and McRoberts (1975) discussed two Canadian studies which suggested that educational opportunity was related to social class and that the level of attainment was a reflection of the father's occupational status. Turrittin, Anisef, and MacKinnon (1983) examined whether sex played a role in educational attainment. Using data from a six-year longitudinal study in Ontario, they found that academic programmes, positive self-concept, and high educational aspirations led female high school students to higher education. At the same time schools play a role in creating social inequality by "allowing gender to be reflected in programme selection and post-secondary educational aspirations, creating inequalities which are then

amplified when women enter the labour market" (p. 416). Another Canadian study by Rocher (1975) showed a significant variation amongst provinces in the retention rate of students from grade 2 through to grade 11. For example, for the cohort reaching grade 11 during the 1970-71 school year, the rate of retention in Nova Scotia was about 70%, while the mean Canadian rate was 80%. It should be noted that these figures are being cited to indicate the trends that were prevalent during the period when Department of Education officials in Nova Scotia began to press for school district reorganization for the province as a whole.

Husen (1975) argued that strategies for educational equality were driven by ideology. The conservative view holds that God or chance determines individual differences. Thus it follows that a system of education must be selective to properly cultivate those with high level talent. The liberal view also acknowledges that individuals have a given amount of capacity, but insists that the educational system should be designed to compensate for external barriers such as social class or geography.

In Great Britain and Germany there is a direct relationship between the organizational structure of education and the political party which forms the government. This is an example of political or social ideology shaping educational policy. Crequer (1989) asserts that the Conservative Party has consistently opposed the use of comprehensive schools. They have emphasized the older, traditional separation of children by ability and often socio-economic background. The British Labour Party was instrumental in the growth of comprehensive schools because of the perceived egalitarian nature of having all children under one roof. A similar situation occurred in the former West Germany when the more socialist-oriented Social

Democrats gained power in the 1970s. According to Gellert (1981), they followed the same course as the British Labour Party and attempted to create a system of comprehensive schools throughout the country. Europeans are more conscious of the differences in class than North Americans. The historical patterns of social class are less easy to manage when they have been entrenched by time and custom. However, it is interesting to note that in nine of the most recent reports on the status of education in the United States, examined by Stevens and Wood (1987), only three focus on equal opportunity.

Jencks (1972) felt that the equality of opportunity in America was dependent upon equality of condition. He believed "everything else-the school budget, its policies, the characteristics of the teachers-is either secondary or completely irrelevant" (p. 256). The reduction of inequalities within a school system would not reduce the inequalities outside the sphere of education. Jencks argued for the establishment of socialism in America which would ultimately redistribute resources and presumably result in the leveling of condition.

Measures such as those suggested by the social criticism of Jencks have been part of the Canadian experience in equalizing opportunities in education. During the 1960s and 1970s the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development moved thousands of aboriginal school children from their homes and placed them in southern communities so that they could attend schools that offered greater educational opportunities than the settlement schools. In a great many cases the educational opportunities that were provided were offset by the cultural and social problems of relocation. In addition after several years in the south many of these young people

could not readjust to life in the north.

The conservative conception of educational equality has prevailed in the industrialized nations into the early part of this century. This view holds that abilities are gifts distributed throughout the population. This distribution is natural and thus unequal. The individual is responsible for the development of what nature has bestowed. Husen (1979) indicated that problems arose with this conception when it was discovered that abilities were disproportionately distributed within the dominant social classes. Even though school systems have become more egalitarian, this conservative tenet still prevails today. The modern version proclaims open doors to all those who wish to participate. If motivation is lacking then society is absolved of any responsibility.

The liberal conception of equality holds that the development of an individual's capacities in public schools should not be denied because of social or economic barriers. The implication is that extra resources ought to be provided for those who are disadvantaged. Thus an unequal start will be compensated for and children from all backgrounds will have an equal chance attain performance levels.

A critical conception holds that most children can succeed in public school systems. Responsibility for this success rests in the schools themselves. Experience has shown that in general school systems do not adapt their services to meet the learning styles of individual students. Thus from a critical point of view, equality of educational opportunity cannot be attained until all schools become more differentiated and diversified in what they can offer.

Husen (1979) discussed a dilemma that rests in the relationship between

equality and meritocracy. There is he said " an intrinsic element of meritocracy in the social fabric of advanced industrialization. . . connected with a strong demand for expertise, with advanced training in such fields as administration, technology, science, and communication" (p. 90). There is a disjuncture in what public schooling has defined as its aims or goals. The confusion arises out of the effort to have the school act as an agent that equalizes opportunities and at the same time an institution that establishes and reinforces distinctions. This problem is directly linked to the values we have placed upon the collective goal of economic growth. This goal has been equated to progress and the quality of life. There is a direct link between equal educational opportunity and equal occupational opportunity.

Whether it be in the job market or in the schools, the claim to equal treatment on the basis of human equality is valid if everyone were equal, or had the potential to be equal, or could maintain all those features upon which we judge equality. As was said earlier, all people are not equal with respect to appearance, intelligence, creativity, sensitivity, or other discernible attributes. It follows then that equal treatment cannot always be the same treatment because the same or even similar treatment of unequals results in inequity. For example, if two people were ill to varying degrees, the same medical treatment would not be appropriate to both cases.

What aspects of the human condition, which are shared by everyone, can be used to judge equality among people? Kavka (1976) suggests three criteria: vulnerability, the capacity for happiness, and a moral capacity. Every person is vulnerable. We have some capacity to be hurt, feel pain, and ultimately die. We all share a capacity for happiness. We can experience enjoyment and satisfaction by planning and realizing goals. It is debatable

whether everyone has a moral capacity, although it is possible that even the most heinous of villains has at some point acted in an unselfish manner for the common good. It is certainly part of the Christian tradition to believe in the reformation of bad to good. It is not readily apparent, however; how these criteria can be applied to decisions about the equality of educational treatment.

If we accept in principle the same treatment among equals, then any difference in treatment among unequals must be based on relevant differences between these persons or relevant differences in their situations. At first it seems impossible to state what differences between people are relevant reasons for treating them differently. It is reasonable to suggest that the relevance of a difference would depend upon the nature of the treatment and the specific context in which the question of treatment arises.

Some difficulty is brought into question at this point because what we consider to be a relevant difference may depend upon established rules or a given social practice. In some segments of society is it common practice to discriminate among people on the basis of race, religion, or sex. In most cases common sense should judge these criteria as not being relevant differences to the given situation.

The question of equal opportunity in education is closely linked to occupational opportunity. Occupational opportunity does not mean that everyone has an equal probability of getting a high-level job and income. It is clear that unskilled ineffective workers do not have as good a chance to get desirable occupations as do highly skilled effective workers. What occupational opportunity does mean is that the competition for desirable positions ought to be fair. It requires that any given position be assigned to

those who are the best qualified. A difficulty does rest in the definition of the exact nature of a job and the nature of the qualifications that are most appropriate among prospective employees.

The concept of fair competition is problematic in much the same way the concept of equality is when applied to all people. Different members of society do not have equal opportunities to attain occupational qualifications. There are barriers to success. Some of them are economic, cultural, psychological, and legal. Lack of success can be attributed to bad luck, diminished natural ability, poor performance or motivation for reasons other than natural ability, and the inequality of opportunity. In most cases the acquisition of qualifications is through public education.

Equal educational opportunity again is different from the sameness of treatment and involves differences of treatment based on relevant differences. Two obvious relevant differences are the desire to learn and the ability to learn. To give the same educational treatment to those who desire it and to those who do not is unequal treatment. To give the same educational treatment to good students who are able to use it and to poor students who are less able is also unequal treatment. Both of these situations are examples of relevant differences. However, equality would mean the more able students and the more motivated students ought to get more access to the limited resources of the educational system. The desire to learn and the ability to learn are relevant criteria, but one vital element is missing and that is educational need. What constitutes educational need depends upon what is a proper and valid end of the educational system. The general principle of relevant differences within the context of practice or institution depends upon the aims and goals of the institution. A different

aim will lead to a different conception of what constitutes equal treatment.

To offer equal opportunity within an educational system the criteria of fair competition should apply to access to educational resources. The educational system is not the only aspect of a person's environment. There are important, influential factors outside the educational system that determine the nature of the individual. If the educational system is to be used as a means to equalize opportunity as in the case of occupational opportunity then there is a divergence between equal opportunity in education and equal occupational opportunity. It is necessary to offer unequal opportunities in education to compensate for relevant differences. The element of fair competition ought to be put aside for the application of short-run inequalities.

Fair competition and equal educational opportunity requires that the best qualified people attend post-secondary institutions. Equal educational opportunity requires that people with equal natural abilities from different backgrounds have an equal chance to obtain these qualifications. It also means the unequal treatment within the system to compensate for different intellects, abilities, and interests.

Education itself at all levels is seen as a good. Equal educational opportunity is not just an opportunity to compete. There is an intrinsic value that gives to everyone a chance to learn, to develop cognitive abilities, to develop personality, and to pursue inherent talents. This is a developmental conception of education that extends outside any educational system and is linked to the idea of lifelong education. Perhaps this developmental conception can be linked to the three criteria as suggested by Kavka (1976).

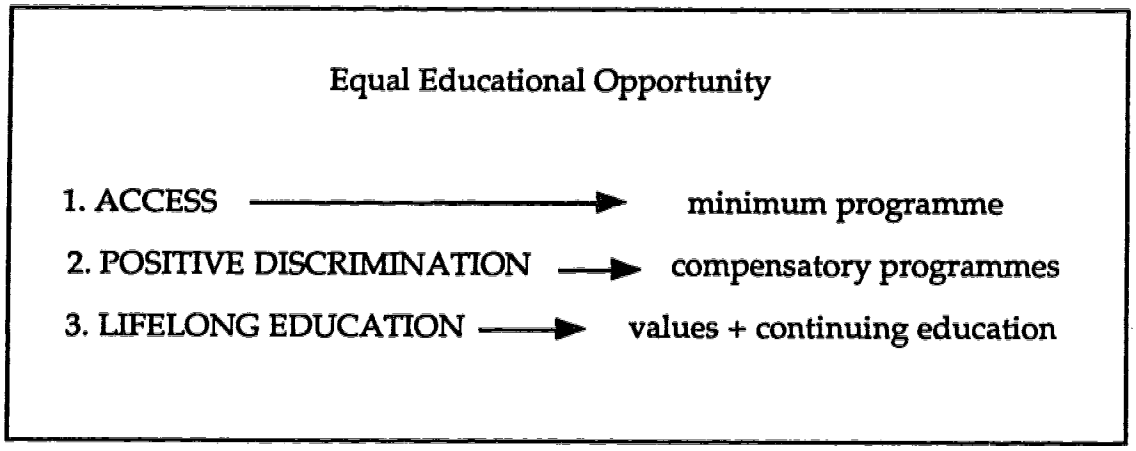
Cuban (1990) traced the conflict between equity in education and excellence in education from an historical perspective. The emphasis on excellence or competency reflects traditional values which manifest themselves in the desire for schools to use a core curriculum. Equity, which represents justice, leads people to seek a differentiated curriculum to meet the needs of everyone. The comprehensive high school has become the predominant educational structure, and it is representative of the compromise between those who want equity and those who emphasize the benefits of excellence. The problem for Americans, according to Cuban (1990, p. 137), is their inability to define what equal education means in a democracy. The lack of a clear conception of what the aims of education ought to be or a conflict in approaches makes it difficult to develop a position from which to establish a policy regarding equality.

Husen (1975, p. 336) referred to a "value climate" as a third condition, and Pike (1978, p. 31) spoke of a "third phase" to equalize educational opportunity beyond access and compensatory measures. The concept is one of education as a lifelong and recurrent activity. The principles of lifelong education rest on a belief that education does not end at any specific point in one's life. In conjunction with this value orientation is the creation of programmes and programme delivery systems that facilitate the re-entry of former students into educational pursuits. Schaie and Willis (1978) suggested that the primary aim of education was and ought to be "the optimization of individual development across the life span" (p. 120). School systems, then, besides insuring equal access to all people and compensatory programs to the disadvantaged, should attempt to instill an appreciation for the intrinsic values of education in its students, and at the

same time provide a re-entry vehicle for those who are unable or incapable of utilizing that very system between the ages of 6 and 16.

The pursuit of educational opportunity was viewed as a developmental process within three possible phases. The first is access for everyone to a minimum programme. The second consists of compensation for those individuals who need and require special attention. The last phase suggests a subjective recognition of learning wherein it is viewed as a personal-growth mechanism. Figure 2-1 displays this conceptualization of equal educational opportunity.

Figure 2-1 Equal Educational Opportunity



The complete elimination of inequalities in ability and inequalities of condition are not reasonably within our grasp. True human inequality is the condition determined by fate; social inequality is largely the product of human institutions. At the very least, a school system should be so organized that all its students have access to the same minimum educational programme. A school system can also provide compensatory programmes for those who need them so long as the expense does not exceed the point whereby the disadvantaged themselves would be worse off

for the effort. A school system can also implement programmes targeted for those people who have left school for employment or other reasons. Continuing education programmes can be run at many academic levels using existing facilities. Programmes designed for young adults and adults can operate at off-hours and in some cases during the regular school schedule.

To instill in all children, from varying backgrounds, values or beliefs about education that are positive and meaningful may not be impossible, however; Fenstermacher (1978) wrote that, "generating knowledge, and getting people to use it appropriately and well, are two different activities. The former is an outcome of good research. The latter is an outcome of good education" (p. 180).

Guppy, Mikicich, and Pendakur (1984) studied the patterns of educational inequality in Canada by examining educational attainment of Canadians from different social backgrounds. Using data that spanned a 40-year period from 1913 to 1952, they concluded that social origins as a cause of disparity in high school completion rates, which was significant in the first decades, had decreased. Reforms introduced in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s have been an important factor. However, they did point to a change in this equalizing trend in the 1980s:

> Many of the reforms are now being withdrawn or sharply curtailed as governments react to the social and economic climate of the early 1980s. Should this process continue, the long term result of such retrenchment could be a return to the levels of educational inequality witnessed earlier in this century. (p. 329)

The Size of School Organizations and Equality

In Nova Scotia the enabling legislation that created the county-sized school districts in 1982 was conceived of rationally as a solution to problems of economy and the equalization of opportunity. The enabling legislation was coercive in the sense that it provided financial incentives, which were irresistible to school boards with dire financial needs. At that time only one very small school district resisted consolidation with neighbouring districts and for almost ten years remained on its own. The various constituencies within this school district did not believe that there was anything to be gained by being part of a larger jurisdiction. However, for the other school districts the perception was that there was much to be gained through the consolidation process. The concept of a larger jurisdiction appealed to most of the decision-makers. The idea that size, quality of education, and efficiency of operation were interrelated in a positive way was a belief held by many politicians, school board members, and school administrators. As a consequence they took the opportunity and linked themselves to adjacent districts within county boundaries in the pursuit of a better, more equitable education for their constituencies.

The larger district with its newly appointed central office staff would be responsible for the professional development of its teachers, school administrators and ultimately for the professional development of itself. The School Board membership of the original districts was realigned to represent and be responsible for the entire county. Local representation was reduced in number in some outlying areas because of a low population. All students within the new jurisdiction were to have access to equal educational opportunities, which meant access to the same, or if needed,

extra programme offerings. The equalization of opportunity also implied access to teachers who were experienced and well-trained. What follows is a summary of the relevant literature that deals with the size of school districts and schools and the relationship of size to good education. It is assumed that the better the quality of education, the greater the educational opportunity.

Districts

School district consolidation in Canada has been promoted by the belief that inefficiency, inequality and smallness are related (Fleming, 1974). That belief has in turn influenced the reorganization of school districts into larger organizations encompassing more schools and more students. Small school districts and more directly small schools were perceived as being incapable of providing an adequate education for everyone .

Writers who have suggested criteria for the establishment of effective school districts, have also related the criteria to minimum enrolment figures. Faber (1966, pp. 33-35) surveyed the literature and synthesized the criteria and their relationship to school district size. What follows is a recapitulation of his findings:

1. The scope or comprehensiveness of educational programme requires a minimum enrolment of about 1,500 to 2,000 students.
2. The range of educational services would require an enrolment of 10,000 to 15,000 students if good standards of instructional programme were to be maintained throughout.
3. A well-defined community was seen as an important criteria, yet few writers could agree what constituted a community. The justification for organizing a district around a community has been to take

advantage of the shared feelings of loyalty. There was no evidence that loyalty made for better schools; however, this was the only criterion where suggestions were made about the possible detrimental effects of districts that are too large. These detrimental effects were commonly generalized under the term "alienation."

4. The size of an administrative unit and its instructional staff in terms of cost and efficiency reached an optimum range at about 12,000 students and a teaching staff of 280.
5. The ability of a district to finance itself and provide an adequate service was a criterion that was not fully defined. The variety of funding methods in operation made it difficult to determine what a sound economic base would be. There was some general agreement that small districts could not provide services with a degree of efficiency.

Faber (1966) concluded that a district of about 10,000 to 12,000 students seemed to be ideal. These numbers correspond to the figures accepted by the Nova Scotia Department of Education as the lower limit for reorganizing school districts into county sized jurisdictions in the late 1960s (Fleming, 1974). Coleman (1972) searched the literature to see if there was an optimal size for school districts. He argued that on the surface the selection of an "appropriate size of administrative unit" appeared straightforward, but that there was a "large variance between optimum size units in different jurisdictions" (p. 74).

In many areas where local districts were too small to operate effectively, intermediate units were established. Chapman (1974) defined the intermediate unit "as some type of educational unit operating between local school districts and the state department of education" (pp. 17-18). How an

intermediate unit is defined is often determined by the perceived function of the unit. The main functions are generally consultative, regulatory, and inspectoral. Ingram (1974) in an evaluative study of regional offices in Alberta, observed that problems in unit definition led to differences in perceived areas of responsibility. From the province's point-of-view, the main responsibility was a regulatory one. The local Alberta school district believed the role of the unit was that of service. The main criticism of the intermediate unit is that it will act as a substitute in areas that in reality require significant reorganization.

Schools

The problem of educational disparity that is related to size is not particular to Canada nor the United States, but to much of the industrialized world. From the other side of the world Darnell (1981) asserted that"problems associated with rural conditions which are being experienced in Australia are problems that you share with others in many rural sectors of the world" (p. 29). Most small schools are also rural schools. In terms of numbers, most small school districts are also rural districts.

The small school is expensive to run. The exaggerated costs are the result of too few students per educational unit. Teaching personnel is the major expenditure for a district. In a financial sense, when the pupil/teacher ratio is low in a school, then that school becomes an inefficient part of the district. Some people will add that small schools are also ill-equipped in materials, resources, and teaching staff. There is always a question about the quality of education being provided in these schools. Empirical evidence based on standardized testing and comparisons between students from small and large schools is inconclusive in the sense that there do not appear to be any

significant differences. There is evidence that student behavior in terms of discipline and participation is better in a small-scale environment. The quality of education determined on the basis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of both small and large schools is subjective and certainly in many cases arguable. On the surface a simple solution to the problems of surrounding a small school appears to be to close it and to move the children somewhere else. There is no clear evidence concerning what influence a school closure has on a community other than some demographic changes and the obvious elimination of a facility.

Policy-making

The problem with smallness becomes a problem of policy. There are two options for dealing with this problem. The schools can be closed, and the children bused to larger areas, or the schools can be maintained and improved if they are perceived as inadequate. The choice between these two options is first a consideration of the district wherein the schools are located, and second, a policy consideration of government that may or may not come to the rescue in terms of funding.

There are certain ironies to the small school situation. Johnson (1981 b) has witnessed a massive enrolment decline and school closures in some of Scotland's largest urban areas. The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal experienced several large school closings in the mid-1970s due to provincial language laws that excluded immigrant children from the right to enroll in the district's English schools. However, for the most part the problems related to the size of small school districts and small schools is also a rural problem. At the time of the proposed consolidation of schools in Nova Scotia in the early 1970s, over 75% of all students attended schools

in small towns and in rural areas.

The end of World War I saw compulsory attendance laws for public schools in place in all of Canada's provinces except for Quebec. The social changes of the 1920s led parents to expect more for their children. Higher expectations and compulsory education increased the custodial role of the secondary schools to the extent that a majority of Canadian children entered high school (Stamp, 1982, pp. 112-113). In spite of increased numbers now attending high school, only a small minority ever graduated. The economic hardship of the Depression years sharpened the educational disparities amongst provinces and especially between regions within a province. As early as 1910, Canadian reformers such as J. W. Robertson had expressed concern over the rural school problem. These early warnings about disparities between rural and urban schools called for the consolidation of rural schools to improve standards for rural children. Little would be achieved however until after World War II when significant changes in educational expenditures were initiated. A comprehensive survey of Canadian education by K. F. Argue (1945, p.4) showed that provincial disparities of educational expenditures on a per classroom basis could differ by as much as $800. He suggested the concept of equalization of funds to remedy these disparities. The policy of equalization would in time become a fundamental principle of financial relationships between Ottawa and the provinces. Again the disparity to which equalization was to be generally applied were differences between urbanized society and rural society.

Public policy towards rural education in the United States evolved but not necessarily progressed. Nachtigal (1982) discussed the American experience thematically. The first approach was to change rural schools into

urban schools through consolidation. This one best system vision was replaced by the realization that perhaps the rural schools were necessary and should be improved. Before much action was taken in this direction, the rural schools were lumped together with their neighbouring urban schools. Little consideration was given to the possibilty that there could be fundamental differences between rural and urban schools. These educational problems were viewed as being generic; a problem of the rich and the poor.

Sher (1981) reported that all the nations belonging to the 24 member Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United States "has implemented policies of school closure and consolidation for a longer time and to a greater extent" (p. 53). Excluding Canada, the general policy trend in the other member nations is towards decentralization and strong financial support for rural education. Norway provides an example of the extreme in approach, where law states that no public funded school may have more than 450 students.

The fact that there are so many variables attached to the issue of small schools, and the absence of any reasonable mid-point alternative, leads policy-making into the *passive* mode. Those who argue for closure and consolidation often do so on the basis of equal opportunity. Children who attend larger schools have access to more than children who attend smaller schools. There is no evidence that the larger school provides an alternative beyond simple access. The information available to the policy-maker is either contradictory or lacking in authority. The decision is simple enough as some of the literature indicates. Give more funds to the school districts so that they can either upgrade their small schools or move the students

elsewhere within the district.

Efficiency

If it could be determined that small schools are *good* and that big schools are *bad* and that there was a definite relationship in terms of the values learned by the students in the respective institutions, then perhaps a definitive case could be made for maintaining and improving small schools as opposed to consolidation. The issue would rest in ascertaining the *goodness* and the *badness* for general application. At present an attempt at creating a policy claim would be based on the use of intuition and insight to substantiate the argument.

The debate on school district reorganization often centres on the economic efficiency of the district as a whole and/or on the individual school. Cost effectiveness is equated with the viability of the organization itself. Closure and consolidation are deemed cost-effective on the basis of economy of scale, whereby the increase in the size of an organization is paralleled with a decrease in unit cost. Coleman and LaRocque (1986) said the supporters of consolidation "argue that such economies are realized mainly through lower administrative costs, lower maintenance costs, higher pupil/teacher ratios (and consequently lower teacher costs), and bulk purchasing" (p. 325). The economy of scale argument is frequently simplified to a basic cost comparison of pupil/teacher ratios. O'Donaghue (1971) found that the expenditure on teachers was 3 times greater in the smallest schools as compared with the largest schools. Alberta Education (1984) in a comparative analysis of small and large schools found a general relationship between cost and elementary school size. Their research indicated that the 300 to 500 students-per-school range was the point at

which pupil costs would increase or decrease. Shapiro (1971) pointed to a decline in pupil costs in Alberta school districts which was directly related to increases in district size. The decline in cost he warned could be "offset by cost increases associated with geographic dispersion of districts" (p.89).

Is there an optimal size for school districts? There is a view from the other side of the size dilemma that judges particularly large school systems as too costly in terms of per pupil expenditure. A current example of this type of situation was described by Kantrowitz and Foote (1992, December) whereby the Los Angeles Unified School District, which currently employs 31,000 teachers for 641,000 students, requires an annual system budget of $3.9 billion. This district is not the largest in the United States. Yet another concern besides cost, is that size will restrict the flexibility of an organization. In theory other large organizations allowed flexibility, diversity, and productive participation. Coleman (1972) felt that schools should not necessarily be excluded from that group of organizations that demonstrated flexibility. School principals in Alberta were asked to state their opinions of optimal school size. Holdaway (1988) found that principals of smaller schools recommended larger schools than their own, and those in larger schools recommended a smaller school size. The only major concern to some of these principals was " the very large size of some senior high schools"(p. 6).

Economics

The argument that consolidation saves money by having larger classes and fewer teachers is unbalanced by greater transportation costs. Sher and Tompkins (1976) believed there is no evidence that consolidation results in lower costs per pupil or lower taxes. Guthrie (1980) felt that cost savings are

too ambiguous and that transportation costs make a significant difference. Coleman and LaRocque (1986) claimed that small school were indeed inefficient because "the costs of providing educational services are largely the costs of providing trained teachers" (p. 328). In British Columbia teacher salaries added up to 76% of total district expenditures. However, they insisted that this did not mean that small districts were inefficient as well. The case is that most small schools are located in small districts. Apparent inefficiencies in the small districts are results of operating small schools.

Forsythe (1983) asserted that because of the available data it was not possible to accurately measure and thus judge the economic efficiency of small rural schools. Alberta Education (1984) indicated that since one third of its schools are considered small schools that "it may be appropriate for Alberta Education to research appropriate means to reduce the relatively higher costs associated with small schools, and their relative importance to the rural way of life" (p. 11). From an international perspective, Sher (1981) indicated an acceptance that the small school was here to stay and that "governmental and professional opinion has shifted in favour of increased resources and attention for rural schools" (p. 14). Bumbarger and Ratsoy (1975) analysed the small schools and jurisdictions in Alberta. They assumed that if the facilities were not in need, they would not have been in existence. Their recommendations were directed towards improving the quality of school programmes. "The variable of jurisdiction size should be funded separately from that of school size" so that small schools within a district would receive special assistance (p. 47).

In 1976 the Centre for Educational Research, which is the OECD research unit, authorized the Project on Basic Education and Teacher Support in

Sparsely-Populated Areas. Part of the mandate for this project was to collect information and insights on educational practice in the rural areas of the member states. Not a single nation according to Sher (1981) indicated that "schools in sparsely populated areas cost less to operate than metropolitan schools" (p. 43).

Population sparsity guarantees that rural districts have and will continue to have high per-pupil costs. Consolidation is one suggested solution; creative financing is another. The debate concerning the small school and small school district should be viewed from a different perspective which may help clarify the dilemma.

Students

The discussion surrounding the relationship between the quality of education and school size takes two approaches. One is the comparison of student achievement on the basis of standardized testing. The other is a broader more subjective view that evaluates children on a whole range of attributes and takes into account the environmental aspects of schooling.

The results of standardized testing are generally mixed and inconclusive. Alberta Education (1984) found no significant differences in student achievement in a testing programme given in 1982-1983. The Alberta Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement (1979) found in the area of mathematics that "in general the small and medium sized schools outperformed the larger school" (p. 8). In Europe, Forsythe (1983) reported that test analysis was not conclusive in determining that size was a significant variable. Edington and Koehler (1987) suggested that student background and access to information be taken into consideration when matching test results. Rural students have less access to information, so

results that do indicate differences in achievement would show a greater overall progress. A comparison of the rate of graduation of high school seniors in the state of Washington made by Larson and Reiter (1985, p. 3) showed that smaller districts had a graduation rate of 92.6% while the state average was 82%.

In their seminal work, Barker and Gump (1964) claimed that students in small schools participate more in school activities because there are more opportunities for them to participate. Participation was three to twenty times greater in smaller high schools when compared to schools with enrolments of 2000 and more. Kleinent (1969) also felt the school size would either encourage or discourage roles for participation and leadership. Baird (1969) examined the level of participation in colleges of recent high school graduates. He found that non-academic achievement was related to high school size in the areas of leadership, writing, speech, and dramatic arts. Baird believed that "students in small schools do seem to make more efficient use of the facilities they have, at least in encouraging student participation in educationally valuable activities" (p. 259). Barnhart (1979) felt that students in smaller settings learned to communicate more effectively and were better all-round students for it. Glass (1982) related the class size to general student achievement. There are three interrelated factors that work together. The smaller class size allows fore more flexibility in the use of programmes so that they can be adapted to individual needs. This creates a greater interest in learning on the part of the student and thus motivates the teacher by improving their morale. A happy and enthusiastic teacher is a better one.

Teachers

The respective effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a teacher in a large school would not have the same degree of influence on the student body as a whole, as would a teacher in a small school. There is some concern for the equality of education as it is related to teacher effectiveness. Dunne (1977) generalized student and teacher support systems in the United States as being poor. Wood and Kleine (1987) reviewed the resources for staff development in the United States and found that of 197 citations on staff development only 4 pertained specifically to development in a rural setting. They believed that "rural schools differ markedly from one another" (p. 47), and suggested a national research agenda on rural staff development. An Ontario study led by Davis and Ryan (1980) on the effects of declining enrolment felt that there was "no single solution applicable to small schools" (p. 224), and that the needs of students and teachers would be fulfilled by an approach to professional development that was specific to each situation.

Lundsgaard (1983) identified three problems with staff development in rural areas. First, there was usually no full-time personnel in rural districts who could act as staff consultants. Second, there was always the problem of financing inservicing on a small budget. In-service programmes would generally have to be led by outsiders. This would usually require the session leaders to travel into the community, which would incur more expense to the district. Third, was the ever present logistical obstacle of trying to schedule professional development sessions without disruption. Part of the problem of staff development for Reece (1984) was the contradiction of needs and wants. He asserted that as many as half the

teachers and principals in small schools did not believe or perceive a need for special preparation. Teachers could be prepared before they are assigned to a rural area through student teacher training. Hoyt (1981) saw special needs in the area of multiple level training for elementary teachers, and multiple discipline experience at the secondary level. On the other hand, Horn (1976) did not recommend pre-service teacher training as an answer. He suggested the use of a screening process to ensure that teachers who were hired possessed the required flexibility to handle a diverse teaching assignment.

In Alberta, Shapiro (1971) found a relationship between the size of the teaching force and the rate of teacher turnover. "Up to a substantial district size," he said, "turnover declines as size increases" (p. 98). He also found that larger districts hired teachers with more experience. He did not suggest whether the smaller districts hired on the basis of economy, or whether only inexperienced teachers applied to work in the smaller districts. A different situation appears to exist in Manitoba. Marshall (1985) found "no significant difference between the teaching population in small rural schools and teachers in urban large-school centres" (p. 31). There was no difference in years of experience, training, age, and mobility. However, he felt the small school to be a special case as far as teaching is concerned and that there was a need for special training.

R. S. Johnson (1981a), an inspector of schools in Scotland, whose area of responsibility included the Highlands, argued that "ultimately the effective survival of small schools depends upon the preparedness of teachers to work in them" (p. 45). Johnson (1981b) described a programme of study and in-service training which the Aberdeen College of Education and Her

Majesty's Inspectors of Schools provide cooperatively to both student teachers wishing to teach in the highlands and experienced teachers already on the job. The schools in that area receive priority status, in spite of recent government cutbacks in finance, but the key is a "highly decentralized management structure" p. 135).

Social Aspects

Another issue concerning small-schools, school closure, and the process of district consolidation are the resultant the social consequences. Forsythe (1983) said the "supporters of small schools use social arguments against closure on the assumption that the long-term interests of rural children and rural communities are the same" (p. 49). Wood and Kleine (1987) believed that each community was so unique that generalizing may not be possible, and that each community may have to be examined individually.

If a school is closed the result is busing children to a larger school. Lee (1957) studied the relation between busing and the emotional adjustment of school children in England. He found there was "strong evidence for an association between the long school journey and maladjustment" (p. 105). Marklund (1969) felt the fatigue of bus travel would have an adverse affect on pupils. He studied 3600 grade six students in rural Sweden and found no significant differences in school performance. Bus travel to school may be inconvenient but there does not appear to be any conclusive evidence that it is harmful. Moving children to a large school may in the long run have harmful effects. Wynne (1978) and Marshall (1985) pointed to the larger schools as places of violence, discipline problems, and alienation.

Does a school closure have an affect on the community itself? Cooper (1979) said the age structure of a community can change as a result of there

being no school to draw young people to a community or to keep young people from leaving a community. Another important factor was that families with children may move out of a community to avoid having their children spend long periods of time travelling to and from school. Forsythe (1983) estimated that the average loss of time spent on a bus is 200 hours or the equivalent of eight full school days. Thus the absence of a school could age a community in a demographic sense.

Size: Strengths and Weaknesses

The main issue seems to revolve around interpretations of the strengths and weaknesses of small schools as perceived from various perspectives. Buttram and Carlson (1983) for example, compared the attributes of the rural school to the criteria from effective schools research. They said "the strengths inherent in small schools clearly support characteristics and practices associated with findings emanating from effective schools research" (p. 31). The subject again is that of the quality of education but this time it is the overall package that the small school delivers. A 1985 report made by the Illinois State Board of Education described small schools as inefficient and inferior. Rogers (1986) studied 34 small high schools with an enrolment less than 500. He found course offerings which exceeded state requirements. In addition, the drop-out rates were lower, and the rate of participation in extra-curricular activities higher. Achievement scores were higher than the national average, and a high percentage of students were enrolled in challenging academic classes. Edmonds (1973) examined 56 one and two room elementary schools in Prince Edward Island. Many of the schools were old and needed renovations, but what went on inside the classroom was good education. "The closer decision-making powers are to

the people involved in those decisions" he said " the better they feel"(p. 25). In British Columbia, Johnston (1976) found that of eight factors determining educational opportunities in small schools, size was the least important.

Beckner (1983), Dunn (1977), and Nachtigal (1982) all praise the small school in essentially the same categories of: personal relations, morale, administration, student/teacher interaction, instruction, and community involvement. Alberta Education (1984) and Marshall (1985) provide a qualitative analysis of the small school. The following lists of advantages and disadvantages of the small school is comprised of these two analyses:

Advantages

Greater opportunities for local autonomy.

Closer relations and cooperation amongst constituencies.

Greater teacher participation in decision-making.

Greater student participation in decision-making.

Greater student participation and responsibility in academic activities.

Greater student participation and responsibility in extra-curricular activities.

Slower paced, less pressured environment.

Better situation to implement change.

Decrease in student travel time.

More security for younger children.

Closer teacher/ student relationships.

Teachers more knowledgeable about students in general.

Subject matter more easily integrated.

Utilization of more innovative teaching methods.

School administrator closer to the action.

Clearer expectation that guidance become a function of all staff members.

Disadvantages

Students are exposed to same teachers more.

Students come into contact with fewer teachers.

Team teaching opportunities are reduced.

Individual teachers may be only teacher at a grade level.

Inservice activities are difficult to plan for the school as a unit.

Teachers are asked to assume more responsibilities.

A small professional staff has fewer diverse approaches.

There may not be a continuous clerical staff.

Library is not staffed full-time.

Specialists are itinerant causing schedule difficulties.

It is difficult to hold good administrators and teachers.

Principal may be assigned to more than one school.

Limited curricular offerings especially at senior high level.

Cafeteria operation presents difficulties.

Ethnically homogeneous community limits students' exposure to other cultures.

The division of advantages and disadvantages is fairly equitable. Advantages tend to emphasize the element of close-personal contact between student and school, while the disadvantages emphasize the idea of lost educational opportunity. Some of the items on both sides are arguable. The small school does provide a more family-like environment which seems to lead to more participation and better communication. Some critics, for example Harvey (1973) viewed the situation in the small school

as lacking in stimulation and constructive peer-pressure and thus not productive. As for the case of student achievement, neither argument is decisive.

In Nova Scotia fifteen schools have been identified as small rural high schools (Small Rural High Schools Task Force Report, 1993). Small high schools were defined to be those whose senior high enrolment was less than 125 students. The task force reported that these schools had more difficulty providing the necessary course requirements when compared to the larger schools in the same district. When responding to task force inquiries, the school administrators from these schools reported that teaching staffs were overextended in offering the basic core and that some teachers lacked the specialization in some of the subjects they were required to teach. With one exception every small rural high school had a lower average class size than larger high schools in the same district. In all cases these schools were highly regarded by parents, students, and school board members. All of these schools were recognized as being the focal point of their various communities. It should be noted that no data were provided concerning student achievement at these schools or comparative data within their respective districts.

This study looks at one county school district that was consolidated for the general aim of improving educational opportunities. Chapter 3 will provide a closer examination of the reorganization of schooling and the formation of the larger administrative jurisdiction in Nova Scotia. In addition the development of educational programmes at the secondary level will be outlined. Finally the professional development of teachers and administrators will be discussed in general as staff development in

education and professional development in the province of Nova Scotia.

CHAPTER 3

Nova Scotia Context

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for the description and discussion of a particular school district in Nova Scotia. In 1982 this school district was put together by consolidating five smaller school boards. This reorganization was not a solitary action but part of a province-wide reorganization that involved 71 school boards of diverse composition and geographical dimension. This large scale change in the organization of public schools, which was implemented in 1982, was itself a part of a long-term process that had been reorganizing the administration of education. As a general trend public school systems have been reorganized into larger and larger administrative units. For example, in Nova Scotia the number of school districts has been reduced from 1800 to 22 since 1903.

The degree to which this particular school district is related to the general trend of consolidation since the turn of the century is undefinable. It is nevertheless, part of it. This chapter in part presents what Silver (1983. p. 294) called the "introductory historical sweep" that will describe and explain the development of schools and school districts in the province of Nova Scotia. The chapter is organized under the following major divisions: (a) school district reorganization in Nova Scotia ; (b) educational programme in Nova Scotia ; and (c) professional development.

School District Reorganization in Nova Scotia

The school district is the predominant organizational structure for providing public education in Canada and the United States today. In general, the district can be defined as being responsible for providing

elementary, secondary, and often vocational education. A board of elected representatives governs the operation of the district, and a central office staff of professional administrators and educational specialists oversee the various educational, support, and maintenance operations.

The patterns of district reorganization which first occurred in the United States have been similarly prevalent in the provinces of Canada. By 1950 Western Canada had organized larger units of local administration by the action of the central, provincial authorities. In the remaining provinces the strength of local democracy was able to retain responsibility for a little longer (Phillips, 1951). In matters of Canadian educational innovation it appears that those provinces west of Ontario have in most cases been willing to take the risk (Tompkins, 1986).

The organizational structures of schools and school systems have been shaped by time, conditions, and need. Collins (1961) identified several forces that influenced early local school district organization in Canada. Particular systems were reflections of "population distribution, migration, and growth; sources and distribution of wealth; transportation and communication; and expectations of the individual and the social group as to who shall be educated, for what purpose, and how much" (p. 5). The evolution of school districts into larger and more complex organizations began in the late nineteenth century. Since that time, up until the present day, three educational policy goals have at different times, and with varying emphasis dominated educational strategies. The three goals of *efficiency, equity* , and *effectiveness* can be roughly ascribed to different historical periods (Mitchell & Encarnation, 1984). The first 50 years of this century has seen efficiency as the major goal. The 1950s was a transition period when

equity would become dominant. The two decades between 1960 and 1980 witnessed enormous government expenditure in both Canada and the United States in an attempt to equalize educational opportunity for all members of society. Since the 1980s, improvement in the quality of education to increase student competency has become the predominant goal. The terms *quality, effectiveness,* and *excellence* seem to be interchangeable and are used currently by the media in particular to mean the same thing.

According to Mitchell and Encarnation (1984) the pursuit of one of these goals has usually been at the expense of the other two. Bacharach (1990) summarized the American reform movement of the past decade as a conflict between the goals of equity and excellence, wherein excellence has prevailed. As to whether the two goals were mutually exclusive, he stated that "although conceptually this may not be true, pragmatically it may well be the case" (pp. 219-220).

School consolidation and then school district consolidation has been promoted by the belief that inefficiency and inequality were related. That belief has been instrumental in the reorganization of school districts into larger and larger organizations encompassing more schools and students. Mark and Haller (1990) argued that consolidation, as a concept, has been institutionalized into the belief system of state education officials. This vision was supported by Strang (1987) who referred to government agencies in the United States as "critical generators and carriers of this model" (p. 352). At first, the educational requirements of westward expansion into the North American hinterland were satisfied by one teacher, one room, school districts (Collins, 1961; Tyack, 1974). Even in the well-established eastern

regions the same organizational pattern existed. Conrad (1960, p. 78) estimated that in rural Nova Scotia there was one school board for every 1.3 teachers as late as the 1930s.

The Free School Act of 1864 established a system of free education in Nova Scotia. Moffatt (1964, p. 29) wrote that in that year there existed 1,400 school sections. J. W. Dawson had become the first Superintendent of Education for the province in 1850. During his short and frustrating tenure, he was able to found Provincial Normal School in Truro and establish a Journal of Education, which was published in Halifax. He had been appointed by Joseph Howe with the hope that his leadership would sway the Legislative Assembly and improve educational conditions in the province. Dawson's plan was for a system of free education throughout the province financed by compulsory local assessment and matching government funds. Faced with fierce and partisan resistance to such a plan in the Assembly,

Dawson resigned in 1853, and left the province to assume duties as principal of McGill University (Johnson, 1968, p. 52). Dr. Alexander Forrester was appointed by Howe to succeed Dawson in the struggle to legislate provisions for free education, however; it was not until there was a change in government that the ideas, which had originally been put forward by Dawson, were finally pushed through the Assembly. The results of the 1861 census were important. It revealed that the province had an extremely high rate of illiteracy and that approximately 50,000 children between the ages of five and fifteen did not attend school (Hamilton, 1970). With Joseph Howe now out of power and the new Conservative administration of Dr. Charles Tupper in power, the Free Education Act was adopted in 1864. In the

following year Tupper pushed through compulsory assessment to pay for the new school system. Legislation for compulsory school attendance for children aged 7 to 12 was passed in 1882. In 1895 the upper-age level was raised to 16 in towns, and by 1915 to all children throughout the province.

The first attempt to create a larger school unit occurred in Middleton, in 1903 when a consolidated school was built to replace eight smaller schools. Funds for this initiative were provided by the Macdonald Rural School Fund. Sir William Macdonald, a tobacco merchant from Montreal and J.W. Robertson, a federal Commissioner of Agriculture and later principal of Macdonald College of McGill University, together provided the financial basis and educational leadership for the Macdonald-Robertson movement, which according to Tomkins (1986) was "the first and one of the most influential national curriculum reform endeavors in Canadian history" (p. 109-110). This movement stimulated federal interests in education across Canada. Even at such an early date, there was concern about educational standards in rural areas. Robertson went to the Middleton area himself to help organize and gain public support for this consolidation of eight schools. After three years of operation, funds were withdrawn and four of the eight schools reverted to their original status as one-room school houses. The reason for the failure of this early experiment in consolidation was, according to Moffatt (1964), that "transportation was too difficult with horse-drawn vehicles and school sections were not prepared to bear the added expense" (p.31). The concept of consolidation in rural areas was ahead of its time. It would require widespread use of the internal combustion engine and the concomitant improvement in road construction to create an adequate infrastructure to support further consolidation efforts.

The impetus for change and modernization in education in Nova Scotia was begun with the appointment of Dr. Henry Munro in 1925 as Superintendent of Education for the province. He proposed a four point programme to improve education which included: (a) improving the teaching profession by increasing the quality and length of academic and professional training; (b) revising the school programme to accommodate differentiated interests and abilities; (c) reorganizing the financial and administrative structure of the school system; and (d) providing equal educational opportunity for secondary children in rural and urban regions. In 1938 a Commission on the Larger School Unit was appointed. It reported that "the system of school finance was disintegrating" (Moffatt, 1964, p. 33). In 1942 legislation was adopted which enabled the creation of the larger municipal unit. Sheffield (1988) noted that "in the short space of four years from 1942 to 1946 all municipalities had adopted the larger unit "(p. 4). This new rural high school policy, which included full provincial funding for the capital cost of these schools, ensured for some communities a six- year secondary school. These schools were required to have a minimum enrolment of 300 students and would provide programmes from grades 7 to 12 in academic and special subjects. Nine of these schools were built by 1950 and were known as "regional high schools" (Moffatt, 1964, p.33).

In 1953 the Education Act was completely revised and rewritten. In that same year Mr. Justice Vincent Pottier was appointed to examine the system of educational finance, and in 1955 the legislature approved amendments which brought into effect most of the recommendations of the Pottier Commission. The report proposed "an extensive reorganization of the financial structure with a Foundation Programme for both rural and urban

municipalities financed by a uniform tax levy on an equalized assessment" (Sheffield, 1988, p. 5). Fundamental to this report was the belief that fiscal responsibility was to be shared between the Government of Nova Scotia and the local governments of the towns, cities, and municipalities. In addition, the commission felt the consolidation of schools "should proceed as rapidly as financial and local conditions permit" (Cited in Johnson, 1967, p. 173). The legislation that followed the Pottier Commission resulted in a great expansion in school facilities. Moffatt (1964) noted that in the period between 1956 and 1963 "the school enrolment rose from 156,874 to 192,694 and the number of classrooms from 5208 to 6943" (p. 35). This expansion in the late 1950s foreshadowed the educational requirements that would follow when the majority of the baby boomer cohort reached high school age.

In the late 1960s the minister of Education hired private consultants to assess the feasibility of uniting smaller school districts into larger amalgamated units that would be co-terminous with county boundaries. The government wanted to know if there would be adequate public support for larger units (Ricker, 1986). In anticipation of the results of this research, enabling legislation was passed in the House of the assembly "to permit the amalgamation of all the school boards within the bounds of an area designated by the Governor in Council as an amalgamation area" (Journal of Education, May, 1970, p. 11). The rationale behind this decision to encourage larger educational units was the perception that the smaller school districts were unable to provide equal educational opportunities for their students. Following upon the recommendations of the consultants, the government passed the Education Assistance Act in 1970 which

provided financial incentives for those districts that wished to amalgamate into a county-wide district.

The government did not anticipate that the total cost of education would be reduced through the consolidation of school districts. It was expected, that the funds allocated to larger districts would be spent more efficiently. In general the Department of Education believed that amalgamation would benefit public education in two main areas: economies of scale in administration and in improved educational opportunity (Journal of Education, May, 1970). Government expectations are summarized as follows:

Economies of Scale in Administration

1. There would be a reduction in the duplication of services.
2. Services needed in small and isolated regions could be added.
3. Educational resources such as personnel, buildings, and equipment could be better utilized.

Improved Educational Opportunity

1. The provision of appropriate kinds of educational programmes would meet the needs, interests, and capabilities of all types of students.
2. More and better qualified teachers could be supplied throughout the district.
3. A wider distribution of consultant services would be available.
4. Student evaluation would be based on local assessment with an emphasis on the continuous progress of students through school.
5. There would be a wider distribution of library facilities, language laboratory equipment, computers, and all types of audio-visual

apparatus.

The perceived benefits of amalgamation ran parallel to the principles of the Nova Scotia Comprehensive School Programme, which the Department of Education had been attempting to implement throughout the province since 1966. The programme was meant to coordinate the work of all divisions of the department with an expansion and integration of vocational and academic facilities (Nason, 1966). Implementation of this comprehensive approach would have been greatly simplified by joining the many smaller school districts into larger educational units.

Colchester County (the site of the pilot study undertaken by the private consultants), Kings County in the Annapolis Valley, and a large geographical region in Cape Breton, which comprised part of Cape Breton County and all of Victoria County) were lured by the financial incentives of the Educational Assistance Act. As a consequence, three large amalgamated districts were formed in 1970. In Kings County and Colchester County the schools were integrated with their respective vocational counterpart to comply with the total design of the Comprehensive School Programme. In the other amalgamated district, the vocational school remained separate and outside the jurisdiction of the amalgamated district.

By 1970 a firm link had been forged between the establishment of the large amalgamated districts and the further implementation of the Comprehensive School Programme across the province. For the government officials then in power, the course seemed clear that "the comprehensive programme can best be achieved under a system of amalgamated school boards" (Journal of Education, May, 1970, p. 18). The

amalgamation of some boards into three large districts was the result of the special financial incentives provided by the provinces. However, there still remained 71 municipal and rural boards that were not convinced about the benefits of consolidation. Sheffield (1988) believed that "these enticements met with only partial success because of local resistance to change, based in part on the fear that administrative control vested in larger boards would be less sensitive to local needs" (p. 5). In the 1970s larger school enrolments and increased costs of education created a crisis in the administration and finance of public education. Ricker (1986) asserted that "the hodgepodge, administrative structure at the local level contributed substantially to the crisis by not providing for, or encouraging desirable efficiencies" (p. 237). A provincial election in October of 1970 defeated the Conservative Government, which had originally initiated the process of amalgamation. The Liberals promised a royal commission to study the problem of financing education. In the mean time, further amalgamations were to be stopped until the process could be fully assessed.

In 1974 a positive evaluation report was released on the three new districts. In that same year the Liberal Government published the results of the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Education, Public Services, and Provincial Municipal Relations which was known as the Graham Report. Atherton (1975) said the report echoed " the dissatisfaction being voiced by many Canadians with respect to their schools " (p. 384).

Of the many recommendations made in the Graham Report, the key themes with reference to education were decentralization, local accountability, and the total financing of education by the provincial government. The report states that the Commission listened to and read

countless submissions made by the public. The opinions and motivations differed widely, but one clear message was "the people of Nova Scotia have deep misgivings concerning further centralization of educational decision making and a desire for a greater direct voice in the control and operation of their local schools" (Nova Scotia, 1974, Vol. III, p.14). The public view was that educational decision making was controlled by a bureaucracy of administrators at the provincial and local level. The report summarized this view by saying "most disturbing of all was the sense of helplessness and even, occasionally, of fear that seemed to affect so many contemplating the educational power structure" (p. 14).

What the Graham Commission recommended represented a complete about face. They suggested the coordination of all services that affected children, such as health, social services, recreation, and education. Further, the Commission suggested that all schools be organized under eleven regions to administer all government services. The report did not advocate centralization of responsibility for delivery of these services. As far as the delivery of education was concerned, the eleven Regional Boards of Education would divide their regions into school sections. A local body called the school council would be established by the regional board. The school council would be ultimately responsible for what was to go on in the classroom. This council would be comprised of a total of nine members. Moffatt (1975) explained the organization of the council as being comprised first of three parents with children in the school and three adults with or without children in the school. These council-members would be elected by the community. In addition there would be two teachers who were members of the school's teaching staff, and the principal who would act as a

secretary for the council. Atherton (1975, p. 386) discussed the areas of responsibility of the school council, and I have summarized his discussion as follows:

1. The council will choose resources and equipment.
2. The council will allocate staff, space and time.
3. The council will allocate money to staff the school and purchase resources.
4. The council will provide for governance of the school as it pertains to local circumstances.
5. The council will determine policies, objectives and procedures within the school.
6. The council will ensure that school programmes and results are presented and explained.
7. The council will express dissatisfaction or doubt concerning programmes.
8. The council will approve/disapprove programmes and propose alternative programmes.

The role of the Department of Education would be decentralized at the same time. Most of its staff would be moved to the eleven regional offices where they would provide a service function rather than the traditional regulatory one. The inspection and assessment of schools would be done by the establishment of a small commission directly responsible to the Minister of Education.

Atherton (1975) described the report of the Graham Commission as a "rational and logical attempt to deal with public criticism of education in Nova Scotia" (p. 391). The problem with the report was that the groups of

people responsible for implementing its recommendations were the very groups threatened by it. The government's response in the years immediately following the report was to set up a committee to examine the suggested courses of action. The Liberal government attempted to adapt the report to legislation that would be acceptable to specific interest groups. At the annual meeting of the Liberal Party in the spring of 1977, it was announced that "the move be towards smaller school units and away from further consolidation" (NSSBA, Newsletter, March, 1977, p. 3). Whether the Liberal Government would have finally been forced to take a stand after three years of virtual inaction following the publication of their royal commission report, is a moot point. In the fall election of 1978 the Conservative Party was reelected under the leadership of John Buchanan. The new government appointed its own committee, the Commission on Public Education Finance, to study the ongoing problems of education and educational finance. Thus in 1980 another group of investigators went out before the province and invited the public to make more submissions concerning the status of education.

The Commission on Public Education Finance (1981), also known as the Walker Commission, suggested new formulas to fund education on an equitable basis. During the 1970s the Government had responded to educational problems on an ad hoc basis. The 1981 report was an attempt to remedy that situation. The Walker Report recommended that all school boards be reorganized into 21 new district jurisdictions. Outside the two urban areas of Halifax and Dartmouth, and the three districts amalgamated in 1970, the remainder of the 69 school districts would be consolidated to follow county boundaries. The reduction of this wide variety of

jurisdictions to 21 school districts was to be strictly voluntary. With the exception of the Hantsport School Board, all jurisdictions complied with the recommendations. It was not until 1989 that Hantsport adopted the district concept. True to the apparent independent nature of this particular jurisdiction, it joined the Kings County District School Board which rests in an adjacent county outside its county boundary.

The consolidation of school districts in Nova Scotia in 1982 was the culmination of many factors. Central to any of the plans to reorganize the delivery of education through larger administrative units has been the relationship between finance and educational opportunity. Collins (1961) points to the cases of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia wherein the "main purpose in reorganizing local districts into large administrative units was to improve the quality and quantity of educational opportunities available to rural youth" (p. 19). Among the topics dealt with in the Walker Report, it was "to this critical issue of equal educational opportunity, above all concerns expressed to it, that the Commission was repeatedly encouraged to direct its attention" (p. 20). The difficulty had always rested in the ability of each jurisdiction to pay for the desired educational opportunities. Implementation of the recommendations of the Walker Report meant that the province's share of educational costs would be increased, and that the municipalities' shares would be decreased. In many areas the creation of county school districts required the joining together of several small jurisdictions, which consisted of a single high school and a few elementary schools, around a much larger municipal jurisdiction, which consisted of several high schools and a system of feeder-elementary schools. The county district concept was

immediately perceived as being advantageous to these smaller jurisdictions that did not have the population base to provide funds for adequate facilities and programmes. The larger jurisdiction, which was centred around a town, would have to share its relative wealth with these poorer jurisdictions. This condition was perceived as a definite disadvantage by some. However, the new funding scheme proposed in the Walker Report would offset this perceived disadvantage by reducing the school board's share of funding and increasing the provincial share. The report did warn that some jurisdictions would not find reduced local inputs because "some boards have expenditures much in excess of provincial funding possibilities"(p. 51).

Outside of Halifax and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia is essentially a rural province comprised of mainly small and middle sized towns surrounded by agricultural lands, woods, and the sea. Using the enrolment figures of the Walker Report (1981, pp. 90-92) 80% of all students enrolled in Nova Scotia's public schools at that time attended a town or rural school, and the remaining 20% of the students attended urban schools. The fact that all school jurisdictions, with the exception of Hantsport, voluntarily accepted the district concept suggests that is was seen to be beneficial to the constituencies involved. What may have been uppermost in the minds of those making the decisions was that here was a plan that would improve areas of need and would also withstand time and changing conditions. Harold Doucette (1980), a former president of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU), described his visit to rural schools in the province as a "real awakening" (p.1). He commented on the discrepancy in the perception of conditions around the province wherein " what we take for granted in

urban areas as being essential services of a well rounded education, many rural school boards consider to be frills" (p.1). For, as the Walker report was to state in its financial overview, "we found it impossible to design this perfect system because of the differences in the sizes of boards in Nova Scotia and availability of progams in those boards; however, we feel that our recommendations represent a fair and workable approach" (p. 51).

In 1989, the Department of Education hired private consultants and set up the Formula Review Committee to study the finance of public education. Known as the Doane Raymond Report (1990), the report of this committee concluded that the province was spending too much money on education and should enforce province-wide standards of upper-limits for provincial spending in each school district. This would require that each county generate its own funds for supplemental spending above that ceiling. Russell MacDonald (1990), president of the NSTU at that time stated that "the equivalent of more than 200 teaching positions in Nova Scotia have been lost because of funding cuts and additional pressures are placing education in a perilous predicament for 1991" (p. 1). One of the "additional pressures" MacDonald was referring to was the government acting upon the general fiscal restraint recommended by the Doane Raymond Report.

Since October, 1992, the basis for Nova Scotia school board representation has been changed. All school board members are now elected from specific geographic constituencies. Prior to this time school boards were comprised of elected members, municipal appointees, and provincial government appointees. The democratization of these governing bodies was an attempt to appease criticism that local problems can best be solved by local

representation.

It was stated in the introduction to this study that at present, Nova Scotia education is facing a financial crisis. Much has occurred since the consolidation of school districts in 1982. The same Conservative government is no longer in power. In terms of being able to continue financing education on an equitable basis across the 22 school districts in the province, the county district concept apparently has not withstood the passage of time well. It is not legal for a school board to operate with a deficit budget. In the middle of the 1993-94 school year the new Liberal government cut its allocation of funds to all districts by 2%. The result has been that all school district employees were required to take four days of unpaid leave. The government cut its funding by another 3% for the 1994-95 school year. The result was a reduction in teaching staff and school programmes.

The district structure as created in 1982, which was responsible for the operation of schools in Nova Scotia for 14 years, will cease. In August, 1996, a new amalgamation will be implemented. The 22 school districts will be consolidated into nine larger districts. New central office staffs will be hired to provide administration for the new jurisdictions. School board members who currently hold elected office will maintain their positions until their terms expire. In one of the new amalgamated boards, it is expected that 54 school board members will sit and provide governance.

School Advisory Councils are being formed to assist every principal in the operation of their respective schools. In general the councils will consist of the principal, two teachers, one member of the support staff, two parents with children currently attending the school, one adult member of the

community, and some student representation. Guided by the principles of site-based management, there will be an incremental expansion in the role and responsibilities of the school council. At the same time, the role of the school board will be decreased and ultimately eliminated.

Educational Programme in Nova Scotia

In 1881 the first grade by grade curriculum was established and published in Nova Scotia. Ten years later the secondary programme was divided into years with a separate provincial examination for each year. This "exam system" was to endure until the 1930s (Moffatt, 1964, p.30). Alexander MacKay, who was appointed Superintendent of Education in 1891, viewed the secondary schools as a "natural channel" through which future leaders would rise (Tompkins, 1986, p. 81). English and mathematics formed the core for Mackay's high school programme. The element that would bind together the studies of all secondary students was the use of common text books. MacKay believed the high school "must be the people's junior university and as such must give the keys of knowledge to the principles which underlie generally every line of human activity" (Tomkins, 1986, p. 81).

It was not until 1925 and the appointment of Henry F. Munro as Superintendent that a revision of the school programme was attempted. Secondary schools were organized into three years of junior high and three years of senior high school. Besides the regular academic subjects, electives such as agriculture, commerce, music, art, industrial arts and home economics were included. Some provisions were made for the inclusion of electives in the junior high school sector. Moffatt (1964) believed that as late as the 1960s "most parents were content if their schools offered the regular

educational ladder to university and other types of post-secondary training" (p. 36).

Implementation of the Comprehensive Programme began in Nova Scotia in 1966. Nason (1966) described the design of the programme as attempting "to seek out and cultivate the special abilities of each pupil, bright, average, or dull, and provide him an opportunity to develop to the limit of his capacity" (p. 17). Three major developments formed the framework for the Comprehensive Programme: (a) the coordination of all sectors of the Department of Education; (b) the increase and expansion in vocational facilities; and (c) the increase in grant money and services. The general thrust of the programme was to balance equal opportunity and the meeting of individual needs. Equal opportunity would be ensured by making the programme available to everyone, and individual needs would be met by the breadth of the new programme. It was hoped that the problem of school drop-outs would be addressed by providing a suitable alternative to premature employment or unemployment. Nason (1966), then Director of Elementary and Secondary Education, made it quite clear that it was "the responsibility of school boards for the Program's availability within their jurisdictions" (p. 21).

At the elementary level, the programme consisted of a standard programme of six to eight years leading to junior high school. An auxiliary programme was also included for educable and trainable retarded children leading to senior auxiliary classes, and employment, or to sheltered workshops.

Junior high school from grades 7 to 9 consisted of a standard programme and two tracks or streams. The modified standard programme was designed

for children in preparation for senior high and beyond. The adjusted programme emphasized industrial arts and home economics, in preparation for direct employment, or general senior high school, or vocational school.

The senior high school had four tracks: (1) university-preparatory; (2) general-programme; (3) business-education; and (4) vocational program.

The original implementation had planned for the Comprehensive Programme to integrate all elementary, secondary, and vocational sectors under the proposed amalgamated school boards in 1970. Ricker (1986) explained that the government decided against the merging of vocational education with the new school districts in 1982 "although it did not remove it from the control of the two amalgamated boards that had operated vocational schools under the terms of the 1970 agreements" (p. 241).

It was noted in the preceding section that the recommendations of the Graham Report (1974) prepared wide ranging changes for the organization and administration of public schooling. With respect to programme, the recommendations were few. However, as with the administration of schools, the educational programme was decentralized to the school level. The government would determine general goals; the schools would decide upon and implement the day-to-day activities. The report suggested the elimination of the grade system in the elementary and junior high schools and narrow course differentiation in the senior high school. Teachers who made submissions "warned that continuous progress and individualized instruction could never be successful without provision for smaller classes, more abundant learning resources, more specialist teachers, more intelligent administration, and greater public understanding and support"

(Nova Scotia, 1974, Vol. III, p. 15). The committee also responded to demands for increased emphasis on fine arts, drama, and music. In addition, the report recommended the study of morals, comparative religion, and ethical judgement. The committee asserted that any system of education that "attempted to ignore values and ethics would lack unifying principle and clear purpose and would be incapable of educating responsible and effective persons and citizens" (p. 18).

The Walker Report (1981, p. 21) recommended that every student in the newly defined county districts be provided access to a minimum CORE programme. At the secondary level this CORE consisted of : English, mathematics, science, French, history, geography, physical education and at least two from music, art, industrial arts, and home economics at grades 7 to 9 and ; English, mathematics, science, French, history, geography, physical education, and library services at grades 10 to 12. School districts were not restricted to this outline, and could offer programmes in excess of the minimum programme. Following the reorganization of school districts in 1982, directives concerning a CORE programme were not issued by the Department of Education. In reference to the CORE recommendations, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association commented that the outline in the Walker Report "was shortly thereafter set aside both by Government and by its authors, who explained that the courses named at that time were examples only" (NSSBA, 1983, February, p. 1). There was concern over an apparent retreat on the original proposal for a minimum programme. The speech from the throne at the opening of the legislature in 1983 and comments by the Minister of Education had "created widespread expectation of a new and improved public school programme"(NSSBA, 1983, February,

p. 3).

In February of 1984, the Minister of Education announced the outline of a CORE programme that all school districts must make available by September, 1984. In the junior high schools courses had to be offered in: English, French, health, science, mathematics, social studies, and physical education. In the senior high schools courses must be offered in: English, French, science, social studies, and mathematics. Beyond this CORE school boards could offer the following electives in both junior and senior high schools: industrial arts, home economics, music, and art. In addition to this the senior high schools could offer courses in business education and physical education. It was not clear in this announcement whether or not the CORE programme must be available in every school in a jurisdiction. The Minister stated that "each school board shall provide for all students resident in the area under the jurisdiction of the school board"(Education Nova Scotia, 1984, June, p. 3). The announcement also emphasized the Department's desire to increase French instruction and the use of computer technology. Concern was expressed over recent public discussions that implied women and girls had not participated fully in the studies of mathematics and the sciences (The Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education, 1985). Surveys in Nova Scotia aimed at measuring the equality of gender participation according to the Minister "appear to indicate that Nova Scotian schools are doing relatively well in changing this situation" (p. 6). He continued:

> we must be certain that all our emphasis on computer familiarity and computer use will be directed equally to both sexes and that in computer education, as in mathematics and the sciences and in vocational and

technical training and education, all opportunities are equally open to and equally well known and appreciated by boys and girls and men and women. (p.6)

The usual entrance requirement for universities in Nova Scotia has been a 60% average in five grade 12 university preparatory level subjects including English. In the last five years this average has increased to 70% and 75% depending upon the university, the faculty, and the amount of space available. For entrance to the faculties of Science and Business, math is required. To graduate from high school a student must acquire 16 credits. The Public School Programs (1989) stated that "it is strongly recommended that all students take a balanced program including some credits in mathematics, social studies and science as part of the minimum total of 16" (p. 23). However, the compulsory credits only include 3 English credits, one for each year, and 1 Canadian content course. Four of the 16 credits must be at the grade 12 level. The Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education (1985) was disturbed by signs of declining standards in quality of education at the university level. Submissions from post-secondary institutions in the province and by business groups expressed grave concerns about the student entering their establishments:

> Universities spoke of the uneveness of the knowledge indicated by similar marks from different high schools; technological institutes asserted that students could pass through high school without studying the mathematics or science courses they would require for career training; professional bodies pointed out that many graduates of both high school and university lacked the oral and written communication skills that are essential to succeed in business. (p. 46)

The Commission recommended that the secondary school system ensure that its graduating students leave with the fundamental academic skills of reading, writing, listening, reasoning, and performing mathematical and computer operations. According to the public school program set out by the Department of Education in 1989, the last grade where science, math, and social studies are compulsory is grade 9. The Commission acknowledged that there are minimum requirements for graduation from grade 12, but further they commented that "unfortunately in terms of CORE curricula they leave much to be desired" (p. 52).

In January, 1986, the Minister of Education assigned the task of making a comprehensive examination of the senior high school programme to the Advisory Committee on the Public School Program. The purpose of this committee was to "examine issues related to the public school program and to make recommendations to the minister of education for changes, revisions or modifications to the public school program or to the related sections of the Education Act or the Regulations under the Act" (Education Nova Scotia, 1989, May, p. 2). Specifically the committee was to review the high school credit system with respect to hours of study and the number of credits and compulsory credits required to obtain a high school completion. For the next three years the committee met to consider professional and public opinion. In 1987 the committee prepared and presented eight recommendations. These recommendations generated 172 written responses from individuals and organizations.

Philosophically the committee held the position that "excellence in education in the high school may be judged not only by the quality of individual courses, but also by the diversity of educational experiences in

which students participate" (Education Nova Scotia, 1989, May, p. 5). The responsibilities of the school district were also outlined:

> A common shared educational experience should be provided by schools to all students who complete the high school program. It should, in addition, be mandatory for school boards to provide a range of options, developed and prescribed by the Department of Education, from which students may select according to individual needs and objectives. (p. 5)

Following a review of the numerous submissions, the committee outlined a programme of 10 compulsory senior high school credits which consisted of: English- 3 credits; French- 1 credit; Mathematics- 1 credit; Science- 1 credit; Social Studies- 2 credits; Fine Arts- 1 credit; and Practical and Technical Arts- 1 credit. Fine Arts was defined as drama, music, or art. Practical and Technical Arts were defined as home economics, industrial arts, life skills, computer studies, business education, physical education, career studies, and health education. At that time students were required to complete a total of 16 credits to qualify for high school completion. The committee recommended that the total number of credits be increased to 18 for those students entering grade 10 in September 1989. In addition it was recommended that a minimum of 120 hours of instructional time be spent for each full credit.

The Report of the Advisory Committee on the Public School Program released in 1989 was accepted in principle by the department but amended in terms of the time line for implementation. Students requiring 18 credits would be those entering grade 10 in September 1990. The Minister reported "recognizing that school boards will need some time to reorganize and assemble their resources... the committee recommends a maximum of five

years for implementation by school boards" (Education Nova Scotia, 1989, May, p. 1).

At the beginning of the school year in 1991the Minister of Education released a statement of a proposed CORE programme for discussion purposes. Regional meetings were held across the province from September 9 to September 18 to discuss the proposal. The CORE definition did not limit school boards, it merely indicated what each school board had to offer. As well, the inclusion of a course in the CORE did not mean that the course was compulsory and that every student was required to complete it (Education Nova Scotia, 1991, September).

On this occasion the Department of Education stressed the need for effective guidance services and good libraries to act as an integral part of the CORE program at all levels. Acknowledging that the family had the primary responsibility for personal and social growth, the government felt that the school's role was of great significance in this area as well. This social responsibility and the added burdens of individual educational planning and career development would be met "primarily through a planned, comprehensive guidance program delivered by school counselors, teachers, and administrators" (Education Nova Scotia, 1991, September, p. 3).

The Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA) responded to this proposal with a general criticism that the government had put the cart before the horse. Reflecting concerns of its member boards the NSSBA suggested that "before the Department of Education propose a Core program, it should start with the student and prepare a vision of what it means to be 'educated'"(NSSBA Newsletter, 1991, October, p.1). The NSSBA further suggested that enough time be set aside that would allow

individual districts to meet these responsibilities. Concern was also voiced about the Department of Education making provisions for equality for all students considering the disparity of conditions across the province. On the theme of equality of opportunity, it was felt that equality could be "guaranteed by adequate funding to ensure that programs are taught by teachers having expertise in the respective areas" (p. 2).

An amended version of the proposed CORE programme was ready in 1992 for implementation the following school year beginning in September 1993. It was clearly pointed out that what existed now was a foundation upon which would be built further enhancements. The definition was still evolving wherein "additions will be carefully evaluated with respect to the priority they should receive as offerings that should be available to all students" (Education Nova Scotia, 1992, October, p. 1). A lengthy philosophical vision statement prefaced what was essentially the same list of CORE requirements and the related services of guidance and library facilities. The vision statement restated the quality through diversity theme, which had first appeared with the eight original recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Public School Program in 1987. There was a definite competitive edge to the educational system envisaged by the staff that had created this particular document. With reference to life in the 1990s, the preface notes that "the economy is becoming more diversified and is placing a greater emphasis on information-based enterprises, global competitiveness and sustainable development" (p. 1). In spite of these demands young Nova Scotians would have an educational experience that would maintain "a supportive climate for personal growth and intellectual development" (p. 2). Self-esteem was stressed as a goal achieved through a

"learner-centred school environment" (p.2).

In January, 1993 the Department of Education reported on the status of the CORE programme and senior high school completion requirements. The tone indicated that there was still some confusion in the province concerning the definitions of the CORE and those courses which are compulsory. The CORE, it was emphasized, " is **what school boards must offer,** whereas compulsory courses are **the courses that students are required to take** " (Education Nova Scotia, 1993, January, p. 2). The schedule for implementation of minimum high school completion requirements was delayed again. The number of total required credits of 18 which was set for implementation in 1989 was delayed until the 1996-97 school year. Students entering grade 10 in 1993-94 will only require a total of 17 credits of which seven will be compulsory. The goal of 10 compulsory credits will be partially reached in 1996-97 by introducing two half-credit courses called *Career and Life Management* and *Physically Active Lifestyles* . The Department declared its commitment to the compulsory fine arts and French credit requirements, but deferred the implementation date to some unspecified time. The number of compulsory credits for senior high schools remains at seven at least until the school year beginning in 1996 when it becomes eight.

It has been consistently pointed out by the Department of Education that some districts provide more offerings than what is outlined in the CORE programme. Many districts will continue to offer more, but "priority must be given to the core" (Education Nova Scotia, 1992, October, p. 1). The requirement that each and every high school must provide at least a minimum programme by 1993 is of great significance to each county school

district. There is now an external measure of systemic equality that is unequivocal about what programme each school must make available. The only equivocation seems to have been in the dates of implementation and the composition of compulsory courses.

Professional Development

In Nova Scotia, responsibility for staff development rests with both the Department of Education and the district school boards. Beginning in the mid-1960s, provincial government grants were given as incentives to school boards to encourage teachers to improve themselves. Nason (1972), Deputy Minister of Education, stated that "by 1969, the Department of Education had become increasingly convinced that this program was not achieving the desired result to a degree that would justify the costs involved" (p. 1). As a consequence, Professional Development Associates of Ottawa were commissioned to evaluate existing provisions for staff development. They recommended a teacher-centred program, with the government's role defined as leader and coordinator. The programme was not concerned with the certification or up-grading of teachers for salary status. Rather, it intended that independent, local action would be initiated. The report of the Commission of Public Education Finance (1981) did not make specific recommendations concerning staff development as related to the planned district reorganization. Their recommended funding formula did allot 1% of the district expenditure toward in-service training. No definition as to what in-service training meant was provided. When major changes are made in curriculum, the Department of Education does provide training through the Curriculum Division. Generally the responsibility for staff development rests with the central office administration of each school

district.

What is professional development or as it is more often called "staff development"? Edelfelt (1977) suggested that it was essentially in-service education, which was "a waste of time, poorly organized, inadequately financed, and put on teachers by people in control" (p. 111). This rather narrow view emphasizes what are certainly the negative aspects of what professional development can become. However, it does not represent what it is, or to what it can aspire.

In the late nineteenth century and up until the post-depression era the term "staff development" meant little more than the passing on of new information. Pedagogical practices generally remained unexamined. The Commonwealth Teacher Training Study in 1929 and the United States Office of Education survey of teacher education in 1933 were the first attempts at compiling organized knowledge about teaching activities (Howey & Vaughn, 1983, p. 93). After the Second World War great importance was placed on curriculum reform. Corresponding to this emphasis on the introduction of new curricula was the entrenchment of the role of the teacher at the centre of school improvement. In the 1960s the solution to the problem of making schools better was the implementation of new curriculum materials for teachers. In-service training for teachers and "a great deal of initial planning to insure curricula that were teacher-proof" (Wideen, 1987, p. 5), were assumed to be essentials for success.

In education today the development of the professional staff is viewed more as a partnership of many actors involved in many and varied activities. Griffin (1983, p. 2) defined it "as any systematic attempt to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understandings of school persons toward

an articulated end." School persons refers not just to teachers, but also to administrators and supervisors. The interest and financial commitment to this educational activity is extensive. Fenstermacher and Berliner (1985, p. 295) estimated that staff development costs approximately $1500 per teacher per year, and that nearly all of the 17,000 school districts in the United States offers professional development of its staff.

The conceptual model of professional development that this study has utilized has been adapted from Orlich (1989, p. 6). This is a traditional, bureaucratic approach which outlines six subsets or categories of activity which individually, or in combination, comprise the umbrella concept of staff development. The six "functions" of professional development are organized as follows:

1. In-service Education
   - Improving skills and instructional procedures
   - Implementing curricula
   - Instructional planning and organizing
   - Expanding content-knowledge of subject area
2. Organization Development
   - Solving problems
   - Increasing staff communication
   - Improving climate
3. Consultation
   - Arranging or conducting clinics and workshops
   - Promoting all phases of staff development throughout the district
4. Communication and Coordination of Resources
   - Assisting with intra-district communications

Assisting with communications between school administration and staff

Providing central coordinating service

Providing and maintaining a teacher centre

5. Leadership Training

Assisting processes of innovation

Identifying problems and suggesting solutions.

Researching new practices or procedures

6. Evaluation

Arranging or conducting needs assessments

Evaluating human resources and program quality

Evaluating efforts in staff development

Organizing for systematic feedback

It would be difficult to discuss a single subset of staff development in complete isolation from some of the others. Some in-service models could well consist of leadership training. Similarly Organizational Development (OD) would likely require an in-servicing component. Evaluation, in terms of needs assessment, would be a prerequisite to the implementation of a programme; whereas evaluation as a concurrent monitoring and assessment process would be a requirement once a programme was underway.

Of vital concern to professional development is the literature related to the adult learner and the transformation of information and knowledge into practice. Fenstermacher (1978) put forth the proposition that if we know what makes a teacher effective, we also know how to make teachers effective. However, this proposition, he explained, was a false one because

it is based upon false assumptions and leaps of logic. For example, a researcher uses a process-product design to measure outcomes of differing methods used to chair meetings. One method is discovered to be vastly superior to all others when the objective of the meeting is to obtain consensus. This superior method consists of a complicated set of steps which include observation and appropriate, corresponding action. A procedure can be developed from the method, and the procedure can be presented to school administrators in a neat package at a one day in-service session. The false assumption lies in the expectation that the school administrators who attend the in-service session will realize the value of the new method and utilize the acquired procedure systematically at future staff meetings. Unless the evidence presented at the in-service session transformed the administrators' beliefs about how staff meetings can be run more effectively into beliefs about how staff meetings should be run, their actions will follow old tried and true patterns.

Fenstermacher believed that education consisted of "changing one's subjective beliefs into objective beliefs" (p. 162). This means that if you present to an individual evidence which is contrary to the subjectively held beliefs of that person, and if the individual has the capacity and willingness to reason through the evidence, they will transform or adapt the subjectively held belief into an objectively held belief. The significance of this transformation is that it will manifest itself in action. The main purpose of staff development is to alter behavior in a positive and lasting way. It requires more than providing information in the hope that people will be rational enough to utilize it. Fenstermacher's transformation process is similar to other hypotheses that explain internal disharmony

when an individual's established beliefs and values are confronted by new conditions and requirements. Dewey (1966) expressed education as "a constant reorganizing or reconstructing of experience" (p. 76). Festinger (1957) asserted that for action to occur there had to be a consistency between what someone knows and believes. New information that is contrary to one's beliefs creates a dissonance that will often result in the rejection of the new information. Showers, Joyce, and Bennet (1987) made a similar assessment inasmuch as "what a teacher thinks about teaching determines what the teacher does when teaching" (p. 79).

Andragogy, the teaching of adults, is based on four assumptions. Knowles (1973, pp. 46-47) believed that adults have a capacity for self-direction and an orientation towards learning that focused on problem solving. Adults learn what is necessary to carry out their social roles, and also possess a wealth of experience that can be called upon. Houle (cited in Pitner, 1987, p. 31) asserted that the teaching of adults was essentially the same as the teaching of children, but there was a slight distinction between child and adult learning. Showers, Joyce, and Bennet (1987, pp. 79-80) investigated over 200 studies that dealt with effective in-service training. A synthesis of the research is presented:

1. Training requires a presentation of theory, a demonstration of a new strategy, some initial workshop practice, and prompt.
2. The characteristic of flexibility seems to be a necessary attribute.
3. The place of training and who gives it does not matter.
4. Initial enthusiasm for the training has little bearing on the learning that takes place.
5. The effects of training do not depend on whether the teachers have

organized and directed the programme.

Some of these findings are in opposition to much of the current folk wisdom about successful in-servicing. Howey and Vaughan (1983, pp. 104-105) interpreted the available evidence and proposed six general conditions for effective staff development. These elements include "interactiveness" (consideration given to mediating variables), "comprehensiveness" (consideration given to individual activity as part of the overall plan), "continuity" (follow-up and feedback), "potency" (relevance and practicability), "support structures and personnel" (counteract individual isolation and give evidence of organizational commitment to objectives), and "documentation" (planning, implementation, and outcomes).

A great proportion of staff development programs are classified as in-servicing, and the group most often targeted for these programs are teachers. The focus of these sessions is usually pedagogical. School administrators attend and often participate in in-serving sessions with their staff. It has been emphasized generally throughout the literature that in-servicing for teachers, without genuine administrative support and leadership, is unlikely to succeed. McEvay (1978, p. 75) explained that school administrators could influence the development of their staffs in an informal way with everyday acts. Administrators provide tacit support by encouraging their teachers to experiment and take risks in the classroom. As well, the regular solicitation of teachers' opinions creates an effective pattern of communication. School districts often provide opportunities for professional development that go unused because the information that give access to these opportunities is not widely disseminated. The regular and informal communication of professional opportunities can also be made by

administrators that would encourage the voluntary aspect of development.

Summary

Most of the public education at the elementary and secondary levels in Nova Scotia is currently delivered by school systems that were reorganized into large county school districts in 1982. This system of school districts was implemented because it was thought that it could sustain and equalize educational opportunities better than what had been in place. Slowly but surely larger and larger administrative units have emerged. Twenty-three years ago three large amalgamated districts were formed. Eleven years ago, the rest of the province followed the pattern set by the amalgamated districts. In 1982 about 80% of all public school students attended schools in small towns or rural areas. The inequalities or disparities present in these schools would be leveled-off by the sharing of greater resources within a larger jurisdiction. School districts and individual schools that were too small would benefit from membership within a larger organization. Alternative concepts were presented. At the time the Graham Report (1974) certainly represented a departure from what could be considered mainstream. However, the rationale ultimately held by the decision-makers instituted the large school district concept as the means to equalize educational opportunity.

Besides determining how Nova Scotia's educational system was to be organized, the provincial government has also decided what should be taught. With apparent caution a CORE programme has been developed, which each and every school must provide. This CORE also includes certain electives that do not have to be present in every school in a district, but they must be made available somewhere within its jurisdiction.

Minimum requirements concerned with the total number of courses that must be completed as requirements for graduation have been announced. The number and type of courses that are compulsory have also been announced. The implementation of these requirements; however, has suffered from continual delay.

The educational system was greatly criticized by post-secondary institutions and by representatives from business groups with respect to standards in the Report of the Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education (1985). Problem areas that were specifically pointed out were in the maths and sciences and communication skills. The current list of compulsory courses requires only one math and one science credit out of a total of 17 required credits. The English requirement remains at three credits, one credit at each level. Post-secondary institutions influence course selection by creating and enforcing entrance requirements to which students can respond voluntarily on the basis of their individual goal to attend these institutions. The Department of Education's decision on what students are required to study seems to emphasize individual choice. A great deal of the decision-making as to what kind of education each and every student gets rests with the school district, its administrators, its teaching staff, and its resources.

Professional development was generally perceived as in-service training. The Nova Scotia Department of Education takes responsibility to train teachers when curriculum changes are initiated at the department level. On the whole, professional development rests within the jurisdiction of the central office staff of each school district. There is freedom here for a school district to pursue what it believes are its requirements. There is also the

freedom for a school district to encourage its school administrators and teachers to take a leadership role in the direction of professional development.

The reorganization of many school districts into fewer and larger jurisdictions was believed to be the solution to the problem of equal access to quality education for all Nova Scotians. These new districts would also facilitate the haphazard implementation of the Comprehensive School Programme. This programme was an attempt to attend to the individual needs of all students and thus compensate those students who required more than a minimum programme. In addition, a growing conviction that education was a lifelong process and the view that adult educational services needed expansion was addressed by the Graham Commission Report in 1974. The recommendations of the subsequent Report of the Commission on Public Education Finance (1981) did not address this topic specifically, however; the new districts were to be "responsible for all educational services in the district" (p. 22).

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

Introduction

More than a century and a half ago Egerton Ryerson expressed his view of what education was all about. He said it should be "useful", and in order for this condition to prevail education needed to be "related both to the characteristics of the individual and the particular needs of society" (Sissons, 1947, pp. 16-18). The belief that public education in Canada should be *useful* is also a contemporary view. As to the question of whether the needs of individuals are equally as important as the needs of society, it depends upon who is asked. It is arguable that parents would in general emphasize the needs of their children, while those speaking on behalf of commerce, industry and government would stress the needs of the whole nation. With respect to the amount of public funds spent annually on education, it is not imaginable that any rational individual would foster the idea of continuing a system of education that was not going to be useful at all. According to Easton (1988, p. 5) the elementary and secondary school sector in Canada provided educational services for 4.7 million students or some 18 per cent of the total population. In addition, these services required the employment of over a quarter of a million teachers. How education is deemed useful and the degree to which that usefulness has been attained is open to examination and interpretation.

Ryerson's view of usefulness appears to be conditional upon what may be a set of two different objectives. It was suggested that what was good for the individual and what was good for society were the same thing. The apparent contradiction, however, may not rest in Ryerson's

conceptualization of usefulness, but rather in the passage of time and context that has influenced how one thinks about individualism, society, and usefulness.

Katz (1971) asserted that the "fundamental structural characteristics" of present day American education were established in the nineteenth century (p. xix). Katz (1973, p. 25) also believed that the "basic structure" of education in Canada and the United States to be essentially the same. He further suggested that "the ideology of educational promotion in the nineteenth century was rather less egalitarian in Canada than in the United States (1973, p. 26).

There are two observations to be made about what has been said. First, ideas may be so closely linked to the era in which they were first conceptualized that the transfer of these ideas to other eras require a significant adjustment in thinking in order to comprehend any meaning. To consider these same ideas within a contemporary framework, may not be possible without meaningful contextual explication or by somehow transforming current conditions, beliefs, and values. Second, when ideas in the past have tangible results, such as the institutionalization of compulsory public education, the resultant structures may survive their historical context without having made any apparent significant change.

E. H. Carr (1961) believed the task of writing history was constrained by a dilemma that was imposed upon the historian by the passage of time. The object of the historical research could not be approached without the intrusion of contemporary influences that were part of the writer's life-experience. It was argued that the perspective held by a historian was distorted by a particular world-view of time and culture. This condition

helped to account for the diverse explanations of a singular phenomenon held by different writers, who lived in different times. The change was not in the phenomenon under study, but rather the result of environmental elements that influenced how the historians perceived a particular phenomenon.

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate educational research that is historical, or at least has historical elements, from educational research that is not. The past intrudes on most human endeavors and education is a series of activities in which time is an integral part. Can a current condition or situation be explained without reference to prior conditions and situations? The present may be described, but the picture that is drawn will be very thin in terms of meaning. For example, Smith, Dwyer, Prunty, and Kleine (1988, pp. 25-41) found the need to search the past for a context in which to explain the current situation in a local school district. Research that attempts to describe and explain the occurrence of change has time built right into the design. The concept of change includes a set of prior conditions and a set of present conditions. A set of implicit future conditions may or may not be a factor; however, considering the temporal orientation of Western culture towards the future, it may be difficult to ignore entirely.

The study of an organization or a specific aspect of an organization as a particular phenomenon cannot be done in a laboratory setting. Mintzberg (1979) said that "measuring in real organizational terms means measuring things that really happen in organizations, as they [the participants] experience them" (p. 586). Qualitative research has emphasized the importance of conducting research in the natural setting (Bogdan & Biklen,

1982). Best and Kahn (1986) suggested that the most appropriate approach to research is that which best fits the objectives of the researcher. The case study approach was selected for this study because it is a longitudinal exercise that reveals development over an extended period of time. Gross and Herriott (1979) believed the case study was a "highly useful mechanism to describe and analyse the complexities and realities of change efforts and the personal, social and cultural factors that influence them" (p. 354). House (1980) said the case study might be more accurately designated as a "case history" (p. 39). For informal, narrative writing that made frequent use of quotes, illustrations, and comparisons that were implicit rather than explicit. Case studies, he argued "will often be the preferred method of research because they may be epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience and thus to that person a natural basis for generalization"(p. 5). The nature and organization of knowledge is linked to personal experience and the expression of that knowledge is through the experience.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected by questionnaire, interview, and by document search.

Documents

The documents comprised publications, reports, and memoranda from the Department of Education; local newspapers; reports, memoranda, and minutes of meetings from the central office of the school district; and reports and minutes of meetings from the governing school board of the school district. With respect to school board documents, all data were made available except for minutes and reports that were the results of meetings

held *in camera.*

The central office maintained all school board minutes, committee reports, memoranda, special bulletins, and year-end summaries. These documents were catalogued in chronological order separated by year from 1982 to the present. All of these documents were surveyed in chronological order. The selection of data from school board documents was guided and determined by specific criteria. The researcher sought information about district goals and practices that were directly related to: (a) the specific educational programme offerings in all secondary schools; (b) the continuing educational programme; and (c) the professional development of administrators and teachers at the secondary level. In addition to these main criteria, documentation was examined that was related to: (a) the development of district goals; (b) the suitability of programmes with respect to post-seconday and employment opportunities; (c) the distribution of administrators and teachers throughout the district; and (d) the evaluation of district practices that were concerned with programme and staff development.

Documents Published by of the Nova Scotia Department of Education were examined. The department's two main publications, *Education Nova Scotia* and *Journal of Education* were analysed for specific references to the equalization of educational opportunity, school district consolidation, school programmes, adult education, and the development of professional staff. These documents were researched to 1960 a time just prior to the point when significant increases in enrolments resulted in increased demands on school systems. Before 1960 these issues had not become areas of concern. Specific provincial government commission reports pertaining to

educational opportunities, school district reorganization, and educational programmes were also analysed.

Specific data concerning educational programme and the teaching staffs in all the schools for a period prior to consolidation to 1982 were obtained directly from the Department of Education. This mass of data also included information from all five smaller jurisdictions that predated consolidation in 1982. The data consisted of: the courses taught in all the high schools; student composition for all these courses; the teaching assignments for individual teachers; the composition of teaching staffs for each school; the school administrative staffs, and; the composition of the central office staff. Demographic data were provided for all the employees of the district(s) which included years of experience working in the field of education and level of education.

Interviews

Interviews were held with the senior management staff of the school district. Senior management consisted of a superintendent, two assistant superintendents, the curriculum supervisor for junior and senior high schools, the coordinator of adult education, and the head of the district run teachers' centre. All these individuals had been employed by the constituent school boards prior to the consolidation. Two of the senior central office administrators had been superintendents of constituent school boards. The researcher believes that the interview is an effective and reliable technique of data collection when used in conjunction with other sources. This is supported by Guba and Lincoln (1981), Bogdan and Biklen (1982), and Werner and Schoepfle (1987). There are a number of interview formats that range from a non-structured, conversation - type, referred to by Werner and

Schoepfle (1987, p. 299) as "casual interviews," to a highly structured interview which aims to elicit scaled responses.

The interview structure was of a semi-structured or semistandardized nature, described by Berg (1989, p. 17) as using "a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics." The format of the semistandardized interview limited the topics and focused the questions to the areas selected for inquiry (see Appendix A). All interviews were taped and later transcribed by the researcher. It was noted at the time of transcription that during their later stages, the interviews tended to lose their predetermined structure and take on the form of the 'conversation-type' interview. The interviews varied in length from approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

The central office administrators who were interviewed had all been administrators in the original jurisdictions prior to consolidation in 1982. None of these individuals were strangers to the interviewer, which allowed a comfortable transition from the initial "ice-breaking" to the more formal aspects of the interview. At first the subjects were asked to extrapolate upon their general conceptualization of educational opportunities and to relate this to the areas of concern. In particular, the respondents were asked to "go back in time" to when the district was first created and to work their way through to the present. On specific issues they were requested to evaluate and compare conditions and situations over time. At key points of interest to the interviewer, the subjects were encouraged to elaborate. In some instances when events were brought up that were familiar to the interviewer, specific questions related to the incident were utilized. In a few cases subjects were asked to nominate individuals whom they believed would be knowledgeable and likely sources of valuable information.

During the process of data collection and data analysis another group of interview respondents was chosen from teachers, union officials, government officials, central office and school administrators from the district under study, central office administrators from other school districts, school trustees, and parents. These respondents were approached after the initial interviews to clarify statements or incidents for which they had first-hand knowledge. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 67) and Berg (1989. p. 110) referred to "purposeful sampling" as a method of expanding the developing theory. Questions were directed to 18 individuals in informal interviews that ranged from five minutes to a half-hour in length. Some of these interviews were held over the telephone. Those longer telephone interviews were taped and later transcribed. Permission to tape the longer telephone interviews was solicited in advance of the interview. The purpose of these shorter interviews was to clarify my understanding of issues and situations that arose during the collection and analysis of data. Some respondents were asked to answer specific questions related to a particular circumstance; others were asked to give their general impressions and recollections about a situation they had experienced.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire was developed to elicit perceptions concerning program delivery and staff development in the district and in the schools from all 19 junior and senior high school administrators (see Appendix C). Most of the items in this questionnaire sought open-ended responses. Some personal and school data were also collected in order to determine the background and experience of these school administrators. A pilot study was conducted in Edmonton, Alberta to field test the suitability of the items contained in

the questionnaire. Recommendations and suggestions were made by 15 Edmonton school administrators, who participated in the pilot. Their comments resulted in some adjustments in the organization and wording of the questionnaire.

All the schools in the district under examination can be categorized as being either town schools or rural schools. Of the 9 secondary schools, 4 are rural schools and 5 are located in towns. A questionnaire was developed and given to all the graduating students of a small rural high school and a small town high school (see Appendix D). The same questionnaire was also given to a stratified sample of graduating students from the largest high school in the district. This high school, which has from 175 to 225 graduating students per year, has been the unofficial *showpiece* of the district. English was the only compulsory subject in the senior high school; thus two grade 12 English classes were randomly selected from this school. The senior high school in Nova Scotia has two streams; an academic stream and a general stream. Thus, one class was a general English class and the other an academic English class. In all three schools class time was set aside and the questionnaire was submitted under the supervision of guidance personnel. This questionnaire attempted to ascertain what these potential high school graduates thought about their respective schools in terms of strengths and weaknesses of programme and its suitability in providing opportunities for the future in post-secondary institutions or in the work force. Relevant demographic data were also obtained. This questionnaire was piloted prior to its use in the high schools. It was given to a group of first year university students to ascertain the clarity of the document.

A third questionnaire was developed and sent to 20 school board

members (see Appendix B). This group consisted of men and women who were either current or former members of the governing board of the school district under question. Twelve school board members responded to the questionnaire. One essential criterion that determined the selection of membership in this group of respondents was more than five years of experience serving on the school board. Some of the respondents were members of the original school boards that existed prior to consolidation. Data were acquired concerning their perceptions of the educational programme the district has been able to provide, changes that have occurred, and of the role of the board member in the district's various operations .

Data about teachers were obtained and analysed. Department of Education documents provided all the essential demographic data, teaching experience, level of education, and teaching assignments for all teaching staff for the entire period under question.

Teachers were not approached as a group to obtain data. However, some teachers were interviewed briefly to clarify my understanding of specific situations and issues. School administrators and former administrators who had returned to the classroom were also sought out for information to help clarify certain situations. These interviews were not intended at the beginning of the research, but became necessary as the data already obtained by questionnaire or documents were insufficient to explain specific occurrences.

The areas of inquiry that aimed to seek data concerning educational programme and professional development in one school district are expressed below with the methods of data collection that were outlined

earlier.

Table 4-1

Area of Inquiry

1. Program Access 2. Program Variation 3. Perception of Program 4. Adult Program
5. Distribution of Staff 6. Staff Development: Goals/Practice
7. Staff Development: Perceptic.. of Success

Data Collection Method	Areas of Inquiry						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interviews: Central Office	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Questionnaire: School Administrators		+	+		+	+	+
Questionnaire: School Board Members	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Questionnaire: Graduating Students			+	+			
Documents	+		+	+	+	+	+
Literature			+	+		+	

Data Analysis

Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Bogdan and Biklen (1982) described analysis as an activity that occurs simultaneously with data collection. Miles and Huberman (1984) discussed three concurrent activities. First, data reduction is a simplification process that seems analogous to the quantitative process of data collapsing. Second, data display is the activity of creating a non-narrative representation of the data. Conclusion drawing, the third activity of analysis, is a process of discerning tentative patterns and explanations. Glaser (1978, p. 32) further recommended that some aspects of the review of the literature be suspended until data collection is near completion. In this way, the literature can be better integrated with the emergent theory. Content analysis, suggested by Berg (1989), involves a complete engagement

of all data until themes become apparent.

The organization of data for this study rested on two distinct points along that continuum suggested by Goetz and LeCompte (1984) between *construction and enumeration* , which was described above in the discussion of qualitative research. One point lay closer to construction; the other closer to enumeration. Data from the transcripts of interviews and from the open-ended questions on the questionnaires were collapsed into categories. Networks were formed in an attempt to connect data into coherent patterns. This "networking" was explained by Bliss, Monk, and Ogborn (1983, p. 8) as the extension of putting things into categories. Meaning was derived from the pattern and distribution of the terms that emerged. This process fell closer to the constructive side of the continuum. Enumerative data primarily from Department of Education documents were collapsed to be used as descriptive statistics to assist in telling the story.

Reliability and Validity

Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1979, pp. 112-117) and Best and Kahn (1986, pp. 154-155) defined reliability as the extent of consistency that a procedure demonstrates. Researchers who used qualitative methods, according to Bogdan and Biklen (1982) saw reliability "as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than literal consistency across different observations" (p. 44). This view is generally supported by Guba (1978), Owens (1982), and LeCompte and Goetz (1982).

Owens (1982) noted that in educational organizations "there are relatively few events that may be described as 'alike' and, what is more, these events often may be best observed directly" (p. 10). Traditionally

generalization in research has been such that findings are translated and extended to universal parameters. The perception of relevance that is held for many studies is the degree of applicability of its findings to other settings (Eichelberger, 1989). When information is used for the purpose of decision-making, human nature tends to look for causal relationships that apply across the board to all conditions. Owens (1982) observed that in qualitative research "generalizations are suspect, at best, and knowledge inevitably relates to a particular context" (p. 6). If in qualitative research, generalization is limited to a particular context, then how useful are research findings for educational practitioners in general?

There are three approaches that may help answer this question: One is philosophical (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961); one is artistic (Eisner, 1981), and; one is methodological (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982 and Owens, 1982).

From a philosophical perspective, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) held three assumptions about value orientations and the ranges of variation in these orientations that are present in all cultures at all times. The solutions to human problems they believed were not infinite in number nor in variety, but limited to five areas of classification. These solutions are directly related to value orientations and to the degree to which these orientations are held by the members of society. They insisted that while variations exist amongst groups of people, "they are neither limitless nor random but are, instead variations within a limited range of possible solutions" (p. 341). The five problematic areas common to all human groups are delineated as follows:

1. Human Nature Orientation refers to the character of innate human nature.

2. Man-Nature Orientation refers to the relationship between people and nature.
3. Time Orientation refers the temporal focus of human life.
4. Activity Orientation refers to the modality of human activity.
5. Relational Orientation refers to the modality of peoples' relationships with other people.

Every society and sub-culture has a dominant profile of these five value orientations. Alternatives exist in the rank ordering of preferences. When societies undergo change the ordering of preferences will not be clear cut, however; "all alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times but are differentially preferred" (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961, p. 10).

For example, the value orientation concerned with time has three foci or divisions. The temporal focus can emphasize the past, the present, or the future. In the last two centuries, Western civilization has generally focused on the future. In North America this focus seems to have been more acute than in Europe. The idea of progress and growth, which in modern times has been the driving force of our civilization, leans towards some future condition. Education has held this same focus, and has been viewed by much of society as a means to prepare individuals for the future and subsequently for the growth of society. Current popular culture which is generated and spread by the media of music, film, and television are generally oriented towards the glorification of the here and now-the present.

The influence of popular culture on youth is tremendous and often compelling. In both Canada and the United States there is great concern about the effectiveness of public education to educate, and the ability of

public education to keep children in the schools. There may be problems in each and every school, which may vary specifically to each context. However, the argument could be made that those problems wherein students fail to see the relevance of trying to get an education are problems related to a disjuncture in value orientation preference. The solution to school drop-outs is not defined by the individual circumstances of each drop-out, but by the refocusing of the value orientation that deals with time. Either public education is required to adjust and stress the concerns of the present, which would coincide with the impetus of popular culture, or students have to be pursuaded to focus on the future by changing the temporal orientation of popular culture.

A significant change in the value orientation concerned with the relationship between people and nature is taking place right now. A shift from the emphasis on our mastery over nature to one of harmony with nature is in daily evidence. Even popular culture has refocused on this issue of the environment, and its influence has been notable in young people. What people do is influenced by values. Differences exist within orientations in terms of preferences or emphases, but all values are defined within certain parameters. From this philosophical point-of-view, the problem of generalizability of condition is a more limited one.

Eisner (1981) proposed an artistic approach to research that does not rely on random sampling which is viewed as the "cornerstone of the process" of generalization (p. 7). Generalization according to Eisner "is possible because of the belief that the general resides in the particular and because what one learns from a particular, one applies to other situations subsequently encountered" (p. 7). Using literature as an example Eisner, believed that

artistic efforts to portray the unique vividly and with insight transcend the technicality of random selection. The purpose of the artistic approach is to create meaningful images that people can insightfully interpret. This approach is similar to that of the *thick description* put forth by Geertz's (1973) discussion of culture.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) and Owens (1982) referred to several technical procedures that enhanced the credibility of qualitative research. First, the researcher needs to have spent a long period of time on site collecting data. This will deal with what Smith, Dwyer, Prunty, and Kleine (1988, p. 30) called "eliminating one's contextual ignorance" which allows the researcher to perceive the significant from the atypical and mundane. The second procedure is to utilize reliable members from the group under study for the corroboration of data. The third technique applies to studies that require a lengthy investment in time on the research site. It is sometimes useful to quit the inquiry for a short period to consult with qualified colleagues in order to discuss the progress of the research. This process permits the researcher to reflect and receive relevant feedback. Another procedure calls for the creation of a resource that consists of relevant documents from the research site. This resource will provide a link to the context over time. The final technique is triangulation, which generally refers to the use of different sources of data to focus on the same phenomenon.

Triangulation is the cornerstone of historical research. The literature on qualitative methods emphasizes the process of triangulation. According to Mathison (1988) "good research practice obligates the researcher to triangulate, that is, to use multiple methods, data sources, and researchers to enhance the validity of research findings" (p. 13). The intent of

triangulation was expressed metaphorically by Jick (1979) as the military strategy of zeroing-in on the exact position of an object by using multiple reference points. Denzin (1978, pp. 294-307) explained three types of triangulation: (a) Data triangulation, which means using different sources, or the same sources at different times; (b) Investigator triangulation which means using more than one person to collect data; however, Miles (1979) pointed to some logistical problems that arise when research teams are utilized in qualitative studies, and; (c) Methodological triangulation which refers to using multiple methods of data collection.

The basic assumption for the use of triangulation is that it will eliminate bias and converge upon the truth. Mathison (1988, p. 15) observed that there were two other probable outcomes that were likely to occur: inconsistency and contradiction. However, both Mathison (1988) and Jick (1979) believed the failure of convergence of data in triangulation would have a positive effect. Data that do not converge need to be explained further and this requires the researchers to probe more deeply and enrich explanations. As well, divergent data that do not fit the developing model may result in the researcher pursuing a new direction of inquiry and the subsequent development of a new model.

Delimitations

The research was restricted to one school district in Nova Scotia. The breadth of the study was delimited by the choice of two criteria, educational programme and staff development.

Because the purpose of this research was to describe what one school district has done and is doing in the areas of educational programme and staff development, there is no intent to generalize beyond the district in

question. Generalizability refers to the degree to which a narrative of a particular situation and population can be extended to other settings and persons. Maxwell (1992, p. 293) suggested that there were two aspects to generalizability in descriptive research. External generalizability, which is the application of the particular to the universal, is not usually claimed and thus not an issue. Internal generalizability, which is generalizing within the particular, is more of an issue especially if the data have been drawn solely from interviews. This study which included interviews did not base its analysis to the exclusion of other sources. Interpretation was balanced by data from all sources and by the familiarity with the setting and its population. Consequently internal generalizability was maintained.

A further delimitation imposed upon the study was the variable of time. Data were collected to place the study in the historical context of the development and delivery of education in the public schools of Nova Scotia. However, this study examines a single school district in a time frame that encompasses the period from 1982 to 1992. The data that were collected by interview and questionnaire pertain to that ten year period of time.

Limitations

The accuracy of the findings was limited to perceptual data provided by the central office personnel who were interviewed. The substantial use of questionnaires also limited the kinds of perceptions which could be expressed. There were also limitations related to the respondents ability to recollect events from the past. Data collected from interviews and questionnaires applied only to the school district under study.

Confidentiality

As is customary with the case study approach to research all personnel and place names have either been changed or deleted. All persons interviewed or otherwise referred to will be identified by title such as, school board members, central office personnel, or school administrators, For the purpose of this study the school district under investigation has been called *Nova County District School Board.* The *Nova* school district was formed by joining five smaller school boards. They have been renamed and listed according to size, going from largest to smallest jurisdiction, as follows: *Alpha Municipal School Board; Beta Municipal School Board; Gamma School Board, Delta School Board,* and;*Epsilon School Board.* There are nine high schools in the Nova school district. Each has been linked to their original jurisdiction as follows:

1. Alpha Senior High School
2. Alpha Rural High School
3. Alpha Junior High School
4. Alpha Consolidated Junior High School

5. Beta High School
6. Beta Rural High School

7. Gamma High School

8. Delta High School

9. Epsilon Junior High School

A more thorough explanation of this labeling will be presented in Chapter 5.

Summary

Eichelberger (1989, p. 164) believed that all research was in some way historical because it is set in time and in place. The application of research

findings to other places and other times is problematic. When the intent of the researcher is to relate and explain a phenomenon or a series of phenomena from the past, it is assumed that the subject matter and content of the research is in the mind of the researcher, worthy of the effort. As was discussed, research studies do not have to be prototypical representatives of one of the approaches. Research can rest along that continuum between both poles on the basis of what is most appropriate to the situation under study.

Validity has been defined as measuring what one thinks is being measured. In qualitative research data are generally not quantified, although certain aspects can be quantified for descriptive purposes. With respect to data Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) stated that "data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them" (p. 191). This view is analogous to that expressed by E. H. Carr (1961) in his seminal work on the historigraphical process wherein "the historian without his facts is rootless and futile; the facts without their historian are dead and meaningless" (p. 30). The meaning of a narrative rests in the interpretation of the data and not within the data itself. Brinberg and McGrath (1985, p. 13) argued that " validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques. . . . Rather, validity is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to the purposes and circumstances."

It is difficult to guarantee high degrees of objectivity, reliability, or validity regardless of the mode of inquiry. The researcher is obliged to guard against these factors being biased by conscious and unconscious prejudices. Guidelines concerned with the notion of maintaining objectivity in

organizational studies were put forward by Cameron and Whetten (1983, p. 269). They referred to areas of awareness, which included perspective, time frame, purpose, type of data, and the domain of activity on which judgement is focused.

In this study, the researcher directly observed the formation of the new school district and its subsequent operation within a ten year time frame. The school district was judged on whether the new organization equalized educational opportunities across its jurisdiction in all secondary schools. The study delimited the focus to the development and equal distribution of professional staff and equitable programme offerings in all secondary schools. The type and sources of data that sought out the degree to which educational opportunities were equalized comprised interviews with central office staff, questionnaires by school board members, school administrators and graduating students, and documents.

CHAPTER 5

The Case

Introduction

According to the Nova County Annual Report, 504 students graduated from the Nova County District School Board in 1989. The intended destination of 68% of this group was a variety of post-secondary institutions, which included university, community college, technical schools, and nursing schools. By the summer of that year, about 20% had found employment in the work force or with the armed forces. Almost 8% of these students would be returning to the district in 1990 to upgrade marks or to get credits in required subject areas they had neglected to get the first time around.

When these graduates were entering grade 4 in the fall of 1981, there was no organization called the Nova County School District. In its place stood five separate school boards: Alpha, Beta, Delta, Gamma, and Epsilon school boards.

The Alpha Municipal School Board and Beta Municipal School Board were the largest of the five school jurisdictions in Nova County. Alpha school board occupied the western end of the county with 12 schools and almost 5,000 students. Beta school board, located in the eastern end of Nova County had approximately 2,000 students enrolled in 10 schools. In the middle of these two larger school boards were two small school jurisdictions each located in a town. Delta School Board had about 500 students enrolled in two schools and the Epsilon School Board had one school, which held 350 students. The Gamma School Board, which was situated in Gammatown, the largest municipality in the county, had two schools with

a total enrolment of approximately 1200 students. The Alpha Municipal School Board's central office was located in Gammatown, but its 12 schools occupied the region outside and around the town.

When the schools opened their doors to start the school year in 1982, a new school district was responsible for the delivery of elementary and secondary education in the county. The Nova County District School Board was one of 17 newly organized school districts that began service that September. It was believed that these reorganized and significantly larger school districts would increase educational opportunities for all Nova Scotia children. Increased opportunities would result from more children getting access to a wider programme that would be delivered by better prepared and more evenly distributed teaching staffs.

This chapter will describe the events that occurred and the efforts that were made in Nova County District School Board in roughly a ten year period from 1982 to 1992. The description will begin with an explanation of the formation of the new district and the reorganization that took place within it. This will provide a framework as well as establish a familiarity around which will follow a description and analysis of staff development endeavors for secondary teachers and administrators and the delivery of educational programme at the junior and senior high school level.

Reorganization of the District

Five Districts into One District

There was a considerable amount of diversity among the five original jurisdictions that were to make up the new county district in both the size of enrolment and the composition of that enrolment. Families that sent children to the rural high schools earned a livelihood mainly through

agriculture or by working in the woods. The towns, which were located along the coast, offered employment in the fishing industry and related activities. In many cases, professional people worked and lived in the towns or travelled to the Halifax-Dartmouth region, which was an hour's drive from the centre of the county. Gammatown, which is also the county seat, had been the site of the recent construction and operation of a large manufacturing plant. This event acted as a stimulus to the economy and to a large degree attracted people to that part of the county.

In terms of gross operating budget prior to the consolidation, the Walker Report (1981, p. 67) outlined the expenditure of each individual jurisdiction. Table 5-1 compares these figures. The financial amounts have been rounded off to the nearest one hundred thousand.

Table 5-1

Gross Budgets and Per Pupil Expenditure Prior to Consolidation (1981)

District	Budget	Expenditure Per Pupil	Enrolment
Alpha	$10,000,000	$2120	4716
Beta	$4,000,000	$2011	1989
Delta	$1,000,000	$1976	506
Gamma	$2,000,000	$1576	1269
Epsilon	$600,000	$1681	357

The proportion of the total funds that were used by the local jurisdiction varies considerably. This diversity is an indication of the relative wealth of

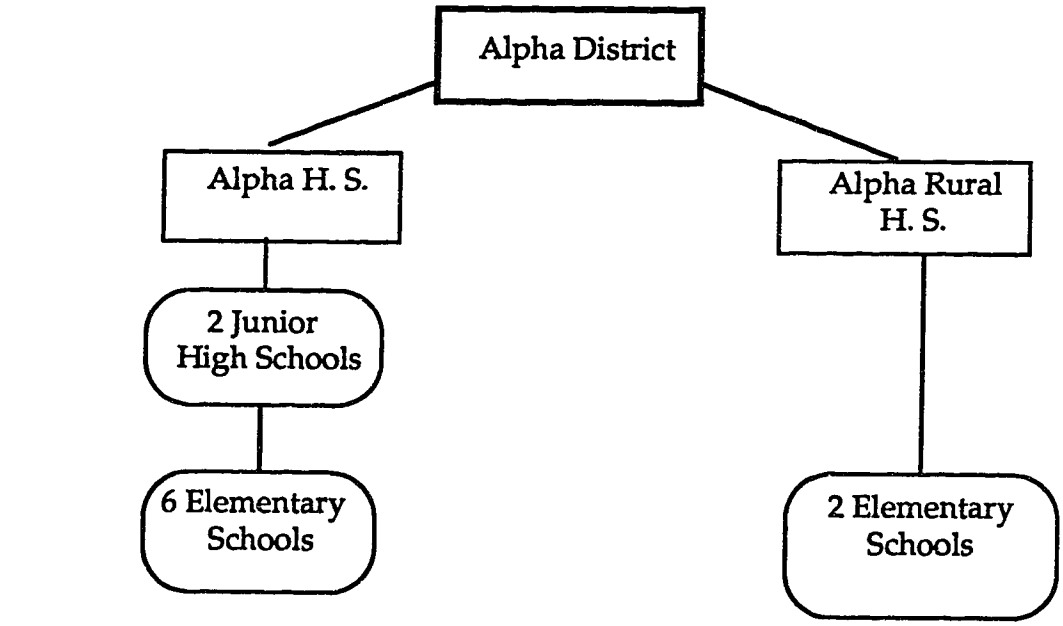
the regions represented by the school boards. However, the scope or range of the board's operation tended to further dilute resources. For example, Alpha and Beta districts operated a number of schools in a relatively large geographical area. These schools included rural high schools and their elementary feeder schools. Alpha was able to generate 24% of its funding locally, and Beta only 17% of its funds. In contrast to this, the Gamma, Delta and Epsilon jurisdictions were able to raise 43%, 53% and 31% respectively. The Gamma and Delta boards provided identical services. They each had a combined junior/senior high school and an elementary school. Both were located in towns. The Gamma board had over two and a half times the number of students and twice the operating budget. The Delta board raised only 31% of its funds locally; 12% less than Gamma was able to raise. On a fiscal basis, what existed within the county boundary was a diversity of school systems such that the province assisted one board by providing over 80% of the operating budget and another with as little as 47%.

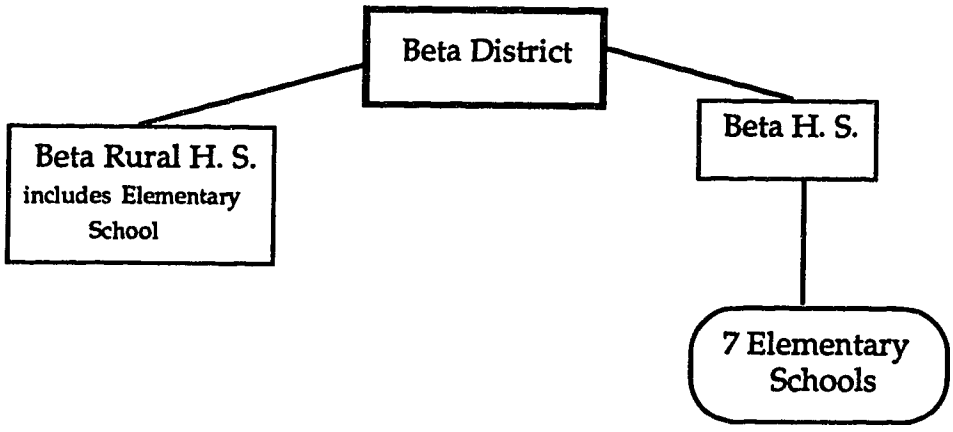
This disparity of financial resources is more apparent when you examine the amount of money spent on a per-pupil basis. The difference between the Alpha and Gamma school boards is $544 per pupil. The Gamma board was located in a town and responsible for the operation of only two schools. The Alpha school board was spread out across a wide geographical area and operated twelve schools.

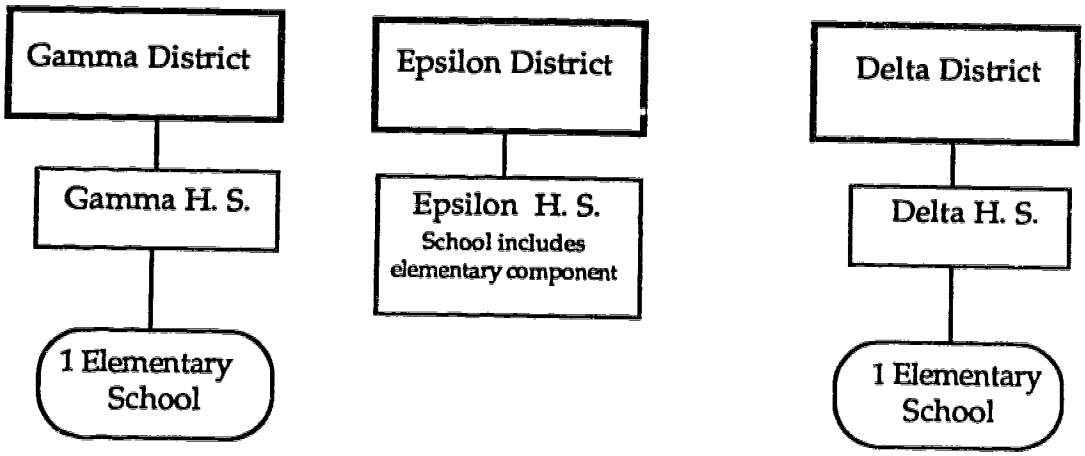
The family of schools operated by each school board was diverse as well. The rural high school in Alpha district provided secondary services for an elementary school that was situated in an adjacent county. The Beta district operated a primary to grade six elementary school for about 20 students on an island several kilometers offshore that was accessible only by ferry.

Figure 5-1 represents the family of schools for each of the five original jurisdictions. Please note that the elementary school that rests outside the county is not included in the elementary schools of the Alpha school board. With the exception of Alpha High School, which is a senior high school with classes from grades 10 to 12, and those high schools designated as *junior high schools* , all high schools are combined junior/senior high schools with grades 7 thru to 12.

Figure 5-1 . The system of schools operated by each jurisdiction before consolidation in 1982.







The school in Epsilon provided classes from Primary to grade 12 all under one roof. Prior to the consolidation in 1982 an agreement had been reached between the respective boards of Epsilon and Alpha whereby the senior high school students from Epsilon would attend the new Alpha High School when it opened in the fall of 1978. A series of circumstances existed at that time that allowed both parties to benefit. The construction of Alpha High School had been initiated with the understanding that high school students from Gammatown would attend. The Gamma school board opted out of the new high school and decided to maintain their own school. The vacuum created in the expected enrolment at Alpha High School could be filled in part by accepting students from Epsilon.

A former administrator from Epsilon who was involved in the negotiations between the two jurisdictions explained that: "We hated to see

the students go, but it was really in their best interests." The senior high at Epsilon High School he claimed had been "academic" and "competitive." The weakness was at the elementary and junior high levels. The Epsilon area was aging and elementary enrolment was dropping. There had also been "pressure put on the Epsilon school board by parents" to provide courses in Home Economics and Industrial Arts and to offer guidance services to junior high students. The Alpha school board could send students from a neighboring elementary school to bolster the elementary enrolment numbers and supply staff expertise for these sensitive subject areas. Both sides gained from the agreement, and the transportation of students was cost-shared.The school in Epsilon became an elementary and junior high school. After consolidation the students from Epsilon continued to attend the Alpha High School.

When consolidation was implemented in 1982 there was no major realignment of high schools and feeder schools. Because of the Epsilon-Alpha agreement mentioned above, there was no need to make any major changes in the transportation of high school students to new areas. In September 1992 a new senior high school was opened after much district and community debate. This new school will be discussed later in this chapter in the section that deals with programme.

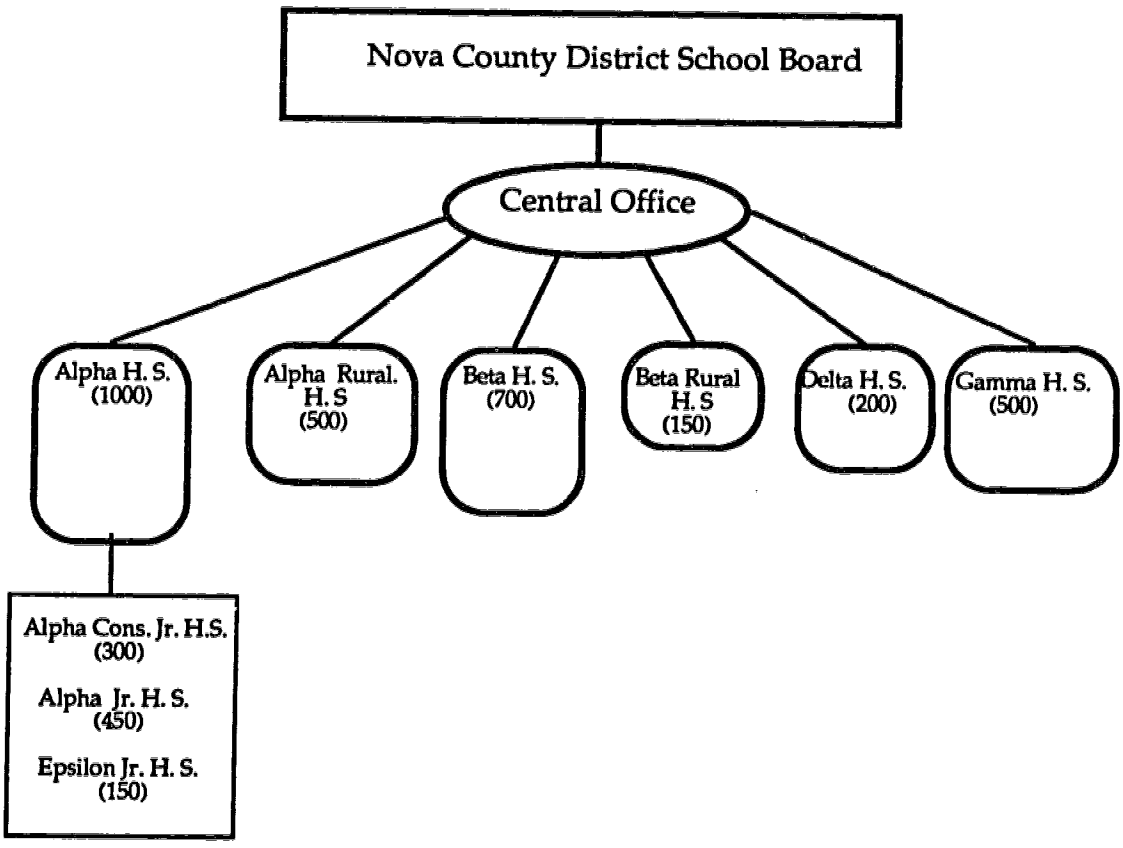
The new family of secondary schools which existed from consolidation in 1982 until 1992 is represented in Figure 5-2.

The Organization of Central Office Administrators

When it was agreed that the five school boards were to join and form one county-sized district, a central office staff of administrators would be established to operate a district that now consisted of 27 schools,

approximately 500 teachers and school administrators and about 9,000 students. Added to this were finance and clerical support staff, maintenance and custodial staff, and those responsible for student transportation. When the competition was opened to hire a superintendent for the new district, four of the superintendents from the original jurisdictions applied for the position. The superintendent from the Alpha school board was appointed to lead the new county district under the title of Chief Educational Officer (CEO). The former superintendents from Beta and Gamma school boards, and the assistant superintendent of the Alpha board were appointed as assistant superintendents to

Figure 5-2 . The organization of high schools after 1982 (individual school enrolment is shown in parenthesis).



the new district. Figure 5-3 illustrates the central office composition of the original jursidictions with their repective teaching staffs.

Figure 5-3 . Central office organization of pre-consolidation school boards 1980.

Alpha S. B.	Beta S. B.	Delta S. B.	Gamma S. B.	Epsilon S. B.
Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent	-	-	-	-
Curriculum Consultant	Curriculum Consultant	-	-	-
Number of Teachers (253)	Number of Teachers (114)	Number of Teachers (28)	Number of Teachers (68)	Number of Teachers (35)

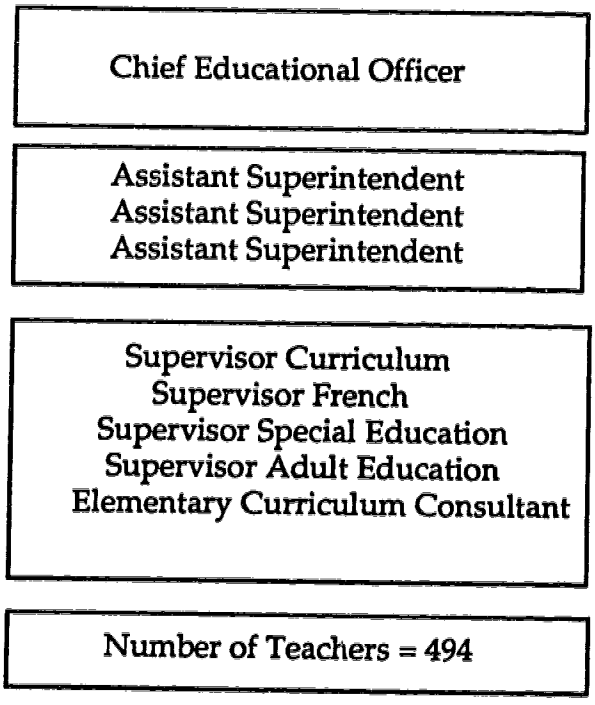
The superintendent of the Delta school board became the principal of the Delta High School, which up to that time had been operated by the superintendent with a vice-principal on the site. The superintendent of the Epsilon District left central office to be a math teacher in Beta High School.

The superintendent and assistant superintendents of the new central office staff, or *Senior Management Team* as they were called, were essentially represented by the four senior men from the three largest school boards. From the Alpha board: the curriculum consultant became *Supervisor of French* , and a junior high school principal was appointed *Supervisor of Curriculum* . A former Gamma board a high school teacher was appointed supervisor of other services. He would become *Supervisor of*

Adult Education . From outside the five jurisdictions a *Supervisor of Special Education* and an *Elementary Curriculum Consultant* were hired. The new central office would now consist of nine individuals.

The three assistant superintendents were given specific areas of responsibility. The three primary responsibilities were personnel, curriculum, and special services. Special services referred to Special Education, alternative educational programmes, and discipline. Under the former Alpha jurisdiction a fledgling Teachers' Centre was opened in 1981. It was operated at first on a part-time basis by a teacher-librarian from the Alpha Rural High School. In a few years this became a full-time operation and the position of *Coordinator of the Teachers' Centre* was designated as a central

Figure 5-4 . Central office organization of Nova County District School Board 1982



office position. The development of this centre will be discussed in detail in the section on the development of professional staff. The role of Adult Education and Special Education will be presented in the section on the delivery of programme.

In its first year of operation the new district was under the direction of a central office administration that consisted mainly of those same individuals who headed the five separate school boards the year before. The central office administration was comprised of nine men, seven of which had held administrative experience at a fairly high level with the previous five school boards. The average age of this group in 1982 was 45; the oldest was 58 and the youngest, the Elementary Curriculum Consultant, was 31.

The certification of the central office staff averaged between a TC6 and a TC7. The TC8 certification is the highest ranking designated by the Department of Education and usually requires two graduate degrees. One of the Assistant Superintendents had a Doctorate in educational administration and the Supervisor of Special Education had a Doctorate in educational psychology. The two remaining Assistant Superintendents and the Curriculum Supervisor had Master's degrees in education. The Supervisor of French was from Europe and held an advanced degree.

In 1982 a profile of the central office administrative staff would show a well-educated man in his forties with an average of 21 years of experience as a teacher and/or administrator. There were also three speech pathologists and a TMH specialist who worked out of central office at the time. An educational psychologist was also on staff at different times from 1982 to 1992. I have not included these individuals in any discussion of central

office administration because they were not at a supervisory level, and because their areas of responsibility were primarily at the elementary level.

In the 1984-1985 school year, the Chief Educational Officer was replaced by one of the Assistant Superintendents reducing the total number of Assistant Superintendents from three to two. The Coordinator for the Teachers' Centre was added to the central office staff. In 1986 the Elementary Curriculum Consultant's position had been eliminated, which reduced the number of administrators at central office to a low of seven.

By 1992 the profile of central office had changed to some degree. Two of the seven permanent central office administrators were now held by women. The position of Elementary Curriculum Consultant had been expanded when the former Supervisor of Adult Education retired. This retirement subsequently enlarged the area of responsibility and thus expanded the role of one of the female administrators. In terms of overall educational experience the group's years of experience had diminished to just slightly under 20 years.

On April 13, 1984, the Chairperson of the Nova County District School Board issued a press release stating that there would be a change in superintendent. Schneidereit (1984, April 14) reported that the Chairperson announced "having completed the initial two years under the new District Board structure, the Board now wants to make a change in administrative style" (p. 21). The statement declared that the decision had not been based on any specific actions taken by the superintendent. However, Mr. Ronald Morrison, an official with the executive of the NSTU declared "the decision of the Board to opt for a new leadership style is not based on substantial reasons" (Schneidereit, 1984, p. 21). In August, one of the assistant

superintendents was appointed acting Chief Educational Officer. The new CEO had been the assistant superintendent of the Alpha school board. So although the majority of school board members were desirous of a new administrative style, they did not seek this style from outside the county.

The vacancy in the assistant superintendent's position was not filled. The former Chief Educational Officer was appointed system consultant for the 1985-1986 school year and put in charge of developing a Cooperative Education Programme. The programme attempted to coordinate and utilize local business and industry resources for student work experience activities as a stay in school initiative. In the following year the former superintendent was appointed principal of the Alpha Junior High School.

This change in central office reduced the number of positions by one and caused a slight readjustment of responsibilities. As one school board remarked in response to a question about the administrative staff in general: "Our administration is top heavy due to the amalgamation of the district. We must now wait for retirements to ease this problem."

In 1986, when the position of *System Consultant for Co-operative Education* was dropped, the Elementary Curriculum Consultant position was also phased out. The elementary curriculum consultant's position was reinstated in 1988. The term Chief Educational Officer was dropped and replaced with the term *Superintendent* . The *Director of Finance* , who was in charge of operations, and thus responsible for maintenance and accounting has been omitted because of the rather indirect link between those responsibilities and the delivery of programme and development of professional staff.

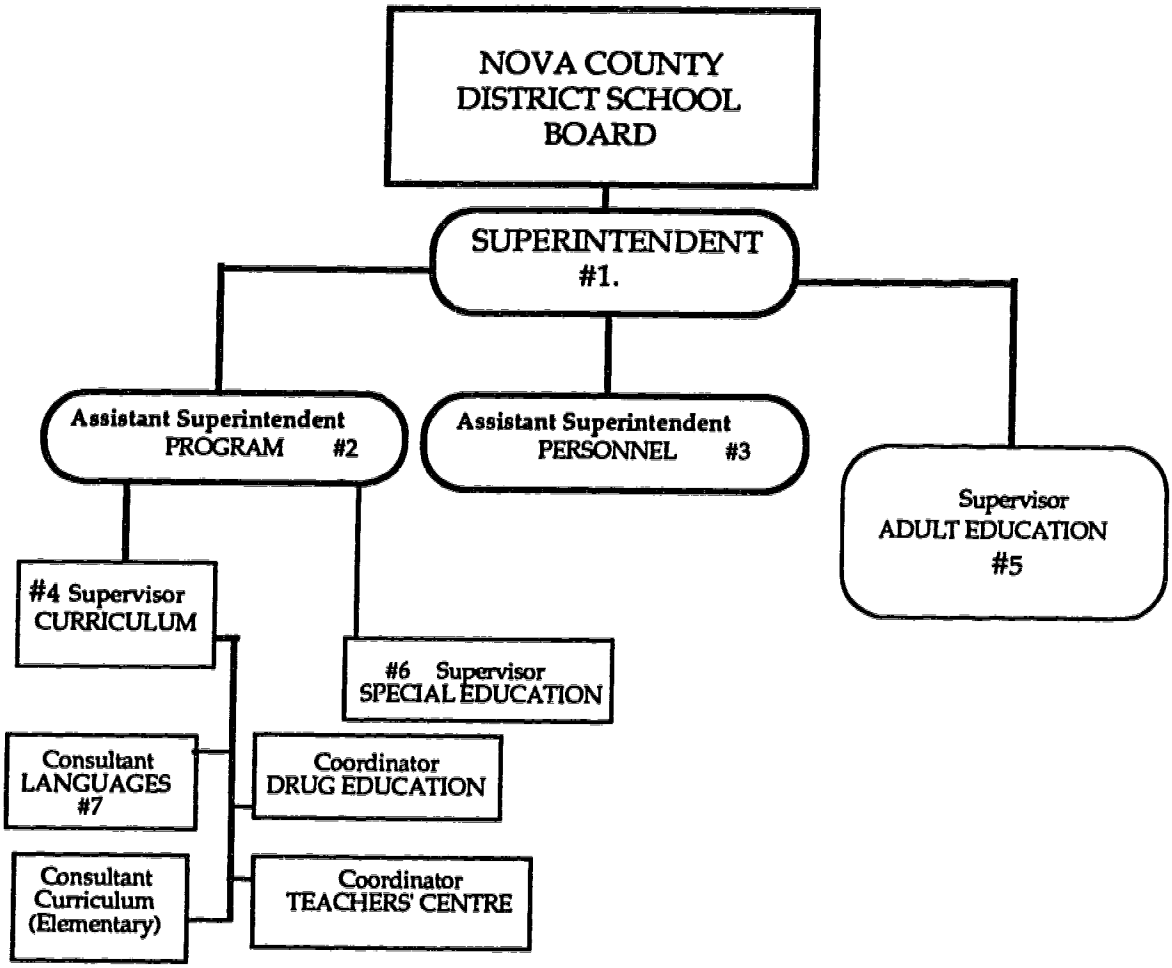
In response to a perceived increase in drug use by students attending

the district's elementary and secondary schools, the Board seconded a teacher from Alpha High School to a two year central office position entitled *Coordinator of Drug Education* . This position was maintained for roughly two and a half years from 1988 to 1990.

The organization of the central office professional staff in terms of the designation of specific positions that have been held has changed slightly over the ten year period between 1982 and 1992. There have been seven positions that have remained stable. These seven are indicated in Figure 5-5. The responsibilities of the assistant superintendents have been altered because of the reduction in their number from three to two in the spring of 1984. The workload has been reduced in some *non-educational* areas such as the responsibility for transportation, which was switched away from the area of personnel to operations and the *Director of Finance* . Since 1985 those activities dealing with the operation of the district outside strictly educational matters have been shifted to the Director of Finance.

The reinstatement of the elementary curriculum consultant in 1988 removed the affairs of the elementary sector from the direct responsibility of the *Curriculum Supervisor* . However, the chain of command required the elementary consultant to report to the supervisor. In the spring of 1992 the *Supervisor of Adult Education* retired. He had held that position since consolidation. Rather than hire a new supervisor for adult education, the Board merged areas of authority and delegated his responsibilities to the elementary consultant.

Figure 5-5 . Organization of central office personnel and areas of responsibility (the seven numbered positions indicate relative stability).



The number of professional staff at central office directly involved in educational matters reached a high of ten between 1985-1986 and 1988-91 and a low of seven in 1984-1985 and 1986-87. The total number of central office administrators that existed before consolidation was eight: five of whom were superintendents and one an assistant superintendent. The organization of these administrators following consolidation was by function and not by geography. In terms of function there was no

differentiation between the elementary sector and the secondary sector except for curriculum. This differentiation by role was not in place for two years between 1986 and 1988. During this time one person was responsible for both curricular areas. This was changed by the reintroduction of an elementary consultant in 1988.

In 1994 the Department of Education believed it could lessen the impact of reduced funding to all school districts by permitting a change in the criteria that determined retirement. A three-year window of opportunity was opened for all teachers and administrators who wished to take an early retirement without a significant loss of benefits. Owing to this opportunity, the Superintendent, the two Assistant Superintendents, and the Secondary Curriculum Consultant retired. The position of Language Consultant was reduced to a half-time consultant position and a half-time teaching position. The elementary and secondary curriculum consultant positions were merged again for the second time. By 1995 the structure of the central office had changed considerably. All that remained was the Superintendent, an Assistant Superintendent, one Supervisor of Curriculum, the Supervisor of Special Education and the half-time Language Consultant. The position of Co-ordinator of the Teachers' Centre was held intact, but this was a central office position of organizational convenience and not of function. The number of central office administrators who dealt directly with education was reduced to four and a half positions. The tasks and responsibilities, which at one point were shared by nine individuals was reduced to less than half that number.

Features of the Larger District

Central office administrators and school board members were asked about

their perceptions concerning effective and desirable features of the larger district, and especially how consolidation may have influenced the quality of education. Overall both groups of respondents felt that the results of consolidation had been beneficial in many areas. Some of the benefits were qualified, and some of those interviewed expressed negative feelings about the consolidation that were related to specific areas.

School Board View

It was generally held that it takes time to see improvements. Central to the belief that the new district benefitted students was the increase in opportunities through better access to a wider range of school programmes. Students now had the ability to transfer to any school within the district to seek out special programmes or courses. The perception was held that teachers also benefitted from more flexibility in movement. Although as one board member was to comment: "Some school administrators used the transfer process to unload weak teachers." In-servicing for teachers was viewed as a "big plus." County-wide in-servicing provided more uniformity of teaching across the district. Teachers now could also benefit from professional development opportunities that did not exist before consolidation. It was also believed that school administrators had more opportunity for transfer to other schools.

Certain efficiencies were apparently the result of the new district. There was less duplication of services. There was now in place a more efficient transportation system for students. In time "coordinated costs" meant better opportunities for all students. One school board member believed that pre-consolidation inequalities resulted in unpopular decisions:

The larger district required some boards that had educational resources,

quality buildings, and well-developed programmes to be placed on hold and watch financial resources be funneled to have-not areas. The frustrations experienced in some areas of the district were balanced by students throughout the district having more equitable opportunities.

In their travels around the new district some board members were exposed to conditions they did not know previously existed. They became more aware of problems especially those that pertained to smaller schools. It was generally felt that the role of the school board member had changed since 1982. It was more demanding in terms of time and abilities. It is more difficult to know the whole district, and some believed "to visit each school is a must."

A considerable amount of time was now being spent on matters not directly related to education. For example, student discipline and teacher union arbitration were becoming more and more time consuming. Because of increased size, there seemed to be more demands made by parents: "The public expects a board member to know many details of insignificant issues that we expect administrators to solve." The size of the district has influenced the operation of the board itself. One member complained that" a decision made at the board table takes forever to be implemented; the bureaucratic structure is a nightmare and the flow up and down the chain frustrates many."

Central Office View

The administrators at central office felt there had been "general improvement." One respondent felt there had been "overall improvement" but if you went to specific schools he felt "the answer is no." One administrator remembers seeing " a great discrepancy in what one

school would require compared to another school." It was held that under the new district there was a consistency in programming which helped alleviate that original discrepancy.

A transfer policy that enabled students from all over the district to gain access to specific needs was seen as improved quality. Special Education was an evident example of the new district's opportunities. Special education provisions had expanded tremendously: "Not only in terms of the numbers of students involved in the programmes, but also in terms of the programmes themselves, the breadth of the programmes." It was noted that prior to the expansion of special education children were staying at home and not bothering to attend school. In fact right across the new district the retention of students had improved.

One administrator saw improvement in the district evaluation processes that had been developed over the years. He felt the "process of evaluating people in a sensible, reasonable, and collegial way has contributed to the equalization of opportunity in our district." These processes start at the top with the Board evaluating the superintendent and the central office team evaluating the school administrators. In addition there is in place " a very positive summative and formative kind of evaluation system that evolved for our teachers."

The phenomenon of leveling-off or leveling-down opportunities was discussed. Everyone agreed that the smaller schools had benefitted through the formation of the district board: "The large school district has been able to protect the smaller school staff-wise. That's a fact! You can see the smaller schools are protected." One official felt that the money that had been available for one area had been quite plentiful, and that today this area did

not receive the kind of money for instructional materials it received ten years ago. Another administrator felt he couldn't see "any schools where they may have lost significantly, although they may think they have."

From the very beginning efforts were made to bring those schools which were perceived as being below standard up to the district mean. With regards to a district policy to govern leveling-off processes, one individual stated: "I have never believed in tearing one school down to build another one up. That's just not right. I can't find one school that is down in everything. A school may be superior in one area, but even the worst school has advantages in something else."

District Values

In his discussion of developing school systems Greenfield (1969) commented that "everyone sees an organization from his own particular vantage point" (p. 1). Initially the consolidation of school districts did not bring about fundamental changes at the school level. For half the teachers and administrators the CEO and one assistant superintendent had not changed. The other central office administrators if not familiar, were at least not unknown.

For the central office administrators and for the members of the new governing School Board things were not quite the same. Their roles had changed and been redefined. The CEO was now in charge of a jurisdiction twice as large as what existed previously. Two former superintendents were now assistant superintendents with a specific and reduced area of authority responsible to a superordinate. In 1982 some school board members were elected by specific geographic constituencies within the county, or appointed by municipalities, or appointed by the provincial government. What ever

the method, school board members were now responsible for decisions that would influence schools in areas beyond their former jurisdiction. The role of the school board member had been redefined by geography.

Coleman and LaRocque (1990) referred to *district ethos* "as a set of educational values and attitudes held in common amongst educators in a school district" (p. 9). Accordingly these district values and attitudes are formed by central office administrators in a fashion similar to the shaping of school climate by school administrators. Did the behavior of the new central office administration and of the new school board members show evidence of *sharing* ? Or did people act upon the perceived needs and advantages of their respective former constituencies?

The interviews with central office administrators and the questions put to school board members addressed the development or evolution of *a sense of district* and a unity of purpose. Three central office administrators talked at length about the*sense of district* . They defined a sense of district in part as a sharing of values and attitudes. What is implied by this sharing is that district employees in general and those with some degree of authority in particular are able to act and behave in a cooperative fashion and to make decisions that would benefit the district as a whole. Decision-making that benefits the district implies to some degree that a well-off parochial unit would not benefit as a result.

Philosophically this is a utilitarian approach to decision-making. Consider the example of the intended district appointment of a responsible student to be an advisor to the administration of all high schools. The district authority believes that students will benefit in the long-run if there is a student-administrator in all the district's high schools. This

appointment may not benefit the school immediately nor may it benefit the district immediately. However, the representation of students in places of visible authority to act as role models could benefit the student bodies, the teachers, and the school operation as a whole. Decisions such as these can be more difficult to make at a local level. It is somewhat similar to asking people to voluntarily pay more taxes to improve education, or to impose a quota for some future social benefit. The governing school-based council recommended in the 1974 Graham Commission Report would have had responsibility over most aspects of education. The hiring of staff would have been one of those responsibilities. Could a locally-based decision-making authority make an unpopular decision for some uncertain future benefit as easily as an authority that was removed geographically, emotionally, and politically from the locus of the consequences? It is not suggested that rationality is the only basis for decision-making, nor is it suggested that perspective necessarily guarantees rationality. Some good decisions are difficult to make, and problematic decisions are sometimes easier to make when you are at arm's length from the players.

According to the central office administrators, the problem of protecting your former territory did not exist for them, but it was however, a problem for many members of the Board. Equalizing educational opportunities across the new district required some difficult decision-making, especially in the political sense. It has been stated by central office that the reason some of the small community schools remain open today is because of the district: "A small school like Beta Rural has far more teachers much to the chagrin of everybody else. For example, Alpha High has almost a thousand students and they have 52 teachers, while Beta Rural has 300 students and they have

20 teachers."

Schools such as Beta Rural have remained open because of the ability of the larger district to dispense resources unequally. The strict application of a common staffing formula to all schools would in effect force the closure of Beta Rural High School and Delta High School. These schools have also remained open because of public pressure to keep them open.

School Board View

Eight school board members commented on the difficulty of decision-making when that decision posed in a conflict of interest between their own particular constituency and the needs of the district as a whole. Two general views were held on this subject. Over time, it was felt that most members would "grow to view the district as a whole." The influences of politics were also expressed. This attitude could be anticipated especially since all board members were now elected and more directly responsible to their constituency. As a consequence, it was deemed "important to represent your constituents." The idea that what was good for some constituents must be good for all was presented as a logical argument. So was the argument that if you want to get re-elected, you have to look after the voters in your area. The act of voting against the best interests of the district was seen as a "trap" and a "temptation" that must be "actively, constantly, and consistently avoided, or else the entire district concept ultimately will fail."

One board member with many years of service reflected that this conflict: " was certainly one of the major problems at the beginning of consolidation, but it has improved recently. There are still some occasions when it is necessary and appropriate to be an advocate for your constituency or a

constituent, but equal educational opportunity is still the goal."

Central Office View

The concept of an evolving and shared *district vision* as expressed by the central office administration was interesting in how groups other than themselves were depicted. With respect to the issue of loyalty to old jurisdictions, one administrator was quite adamant: "No ! In all honesty, I think back you know and I like to be critical of myself and my colleagues, but I don't think that we were ever into our old territory as a staff. I don't think that was ever a senior staff problem."

However, the senior staff believed that members of the school board had considerable difficulty in adjusting to the district concept. Pride was central to one explanation of how board members were able to overcome parochialism. Prior to 1982, the Alpha school system had instituted the International Baccalaureate Programme at Alpha High School. The programme was for gifted students, and was very expensive. At the opposite end of the spectrum the Verge House located in Gammatown provided a school-home for 10 highest needs students. This was also expensive, and restricted to a limited number of students. There was resistance to the continuance of these projects by some board members because of the great expense and the restricted application of benefits to so few students. However, the perception that the district was somehow special overcame the resistance and this evolved into a pride that "our district has gone beyond what the province suggests." Closely linked to the emergence of pride was the feeling that the district exemplified what was "creative" about education rather than what was "standardized."

The process of winning board members over to see things in terms of the

whole district was a long one. One central office administrator recalled:

> There is a greater understanding of sharing now than there was ten years ago. It hasn't been easy to come by. It did not happen overnight, but it is here now. And we have evolved to it. Ten years ago if a controversial idea was put on the table the people who were from that area on the board would be very excited and very supportive. But the people who weren't would be skeptical and see it as a possible threat. There was not at all approaching a true sharing and compassion of understanding towards different areas by board members. Now I don't mean to tell you that all that is gone because it isn't. I guess human nature is what it is. In the past it was extremely difficult for school A all by itself to get something new, and it was easy to defeat that sort of move. Now that is completely reversed and people are more compassionate and more understanding and they are thinking district. That is a subtle but very real and meaningful change. It is an interesting phenomenon. In fact the board members who are on the longest are the most understanding.

The Teachers' Centre is located on a main thoroughfare in Gammatown. In 1981, as part of the Alpha school board, it had a humble beginning on the bottom floor of a high-ceiling old house. As one central office official said: "When the Teachers' Centre first started we had 35 teacher visitations the first month and thought that was fantastic. Now it is up to about 750 visitations a month." At present the centre is one of four Teachers' Centres in Nova Scotia. On the tenth anniversary of the centre's opening, the President of the NSTU Local acknowledged that the centre was "a source of pride in this county and the envy of many school boards both inside and outside this province"("President's Message," 1991, p. 2).

The successful operation of the Teachers' Centre has mainly been attributed to its coordinator, who is frequently described as "tireless" and "enthusiastic about everything - even paper clips." However, the coordinator attributes the success of the Teachers' Centre to the School Board members:

> Teacher centres that are successful, that have been operating with long term success, are funded 100% by the school board. It's a school board function. The only reason why a teachers' centre should operate is. . . if it improves the instruction and the delivery of instruction to the children. That's the bottom line. It's not a social club for teachers.

The centre is used by central office for small committee meetings, conferences, and in-service functions. Students are sometimes brought in by teachers to utilize the technology available at the centre. In spite of the fact that the stated goal is to improve instruction, the coordinator sees the centre "as a home for teachers after school." He is quick to add: "The last thing a teacher needs at six o'clock at night or four in the afternoon is to see another group of kids."

Many of the district's teachers have been linked together electronically. The Teachers' Centre organized the first bulk purchase of computers in Canada in 1984. The response was so great that the following year Apple Canada introduced educational packages for educators across the country. About 75% of the coordinator's time is now spent on activities that are computer related. He estimates that: "in our county, teachers operate between 120-130 Macintoshes. That's one brand. If you include all brands over 200 teachers own computers." A lot of my work is done on the telephone with teachers who are experiencing computer problems.

Equalizing Educational Opportunity

Defining Equal Educational Opportunity

Before examining the efforts made by the district in the areas of staff development and programme, I thought it important to establish how those in charge of the district conceptualized the idea of educational opportunity and how or where they thought the district had made a difference in the equalization of opportunity. The model of equal educational opportunity, which was presented in Chapter 2 and synthesized from the literature, consists of three tiers. First, students require equal access to programme. Second, students, who are deficient in ability or readiness for whatever innate or socioeconomic reasons, require compensatory attention. Third, students need to acquire values and attitudes that hold a love of learning, which will make them lifelong learners. This third tier necessitates the availability of and access to an educational programme for students who leave school prematurely.

School Board View

As far as the board members are concerned access *is* opportunity. Some saw access being made available on the basis of "ability" or "potential". One individual felt: "We strive to offer programmes to all students as their needs demand. Keeping small schools open limits our success in this regard." Student transfer and the provision of transportation assured that access was available because specific programmes could not be provided in some schools. It was another school board member's feeling that the transportation of students had gone too far because students with special needs were moved out of their communities away from the security of friends and family.

Specific district efforts in the development of long range goals to deal with facilities, special education, and programme delivery added to the opportunities. Board members thought district policies dealing with the movement of teaching staff and school administrators helped to equalize opportunities. The annual evaluation of the superintendent was a device that kept the board informed and up to date concerning the effectiveness of district endeavors.

Contrary to the generally held view, one school board member commented: "There is so much more to be said; 1982 produced a large system with a slow moving bureaucracy. I am not sure this was a plus for the student. I believe small enlightened local units can provide a very responsive school system more cheaply and effectively. The more local support and input to our schools, the better reward our students reap."

Central Office View

The beliefs held in the central office concerning educational opportunity were quite diverse. One administrator said that equal opportunity resulted in the good use of limited resources. Another central office administrator suggested that there can never be equality across a school system no matter where you look for it. He commented:

> If you believe that smaller community schools are better able to provide a nurturing environment, than larger schools, then the larger district has made it possible for some of these schools to remain open by allocating resources to compensate for financial inequalities.

Yet another administrator felt equal opportunity was, for the present time, unattainable.

It was generally held by central office staff that the new district did

increase access to a wider range of programmes. Opportunity was equated to equal access by all students to all programmes. It was felt by one administrator that the district needed to establish a standard that was available to all children. That standard he said: "Must be attained at all levels in every programme whether it be special education or an honours course. " Just what that standard was and how it could be measured could not be explained. Equal opportunity was also tied to the quality of instruction. As one interviewee said: "It is a district goal to give the best possible instruction to each student."

With respect to the quality of instruction, the teachers' union was mentioned as a barrier to solving the problem of teacher inequality. A central office administrator believed: "The NSTU adherence to the doctrine that 'a teacher is a teacher is a teacher' stands in the way of retraining teachers who are not equal in ability or knowledge." This administrator felt that indeed not all teachers were " created equally."

The district had on several occasions made supreme efforts to equalize opportunities for students on an individual basis. Some students have been "tuitioned" to go outside the system. For example, students who are hearing impaired. One student was convalescing for several months at home following a hunting accident. The board paid for a teacher to make three visits a week so the student could get through final exams. Also with regards to special education and programmes for the gifted student an administrator said : "I have to give credit to the school board for that. It has cost them a lot of dollars."

The Development of Professional Staff

Introduction

With respect to the quality of professional staff distributed around the district, one central office administrator said: "There are always a few teachers that are duds and there are always a few administrators that are duds." This section will present a description of the efforts made to develop the professional staff of the new district. The presentation will be divided into segments dealing with central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers.

Professional Development of Central Office Administrators

The activities engaged in by this group tend to be voluntary and conference-oriented. There is a budget set aside for professional journals and other professional publications. A small library has been set up in the central office adjacent to the offices of the senior management team. These administrators do not share in the professional development money that the Board budgets for teachers in the contract. One administrator said: "We are always encouraging ourselves to visit other school districts within the province; but of all the professional development in this district I feel the most discontentment about our own."

The twelve current and former school board members, who responded to the questionnaire, indicated their perceived levels of involvement in encouraging central office administrators towards professional development. They were asked to scale their *actual* level of involvement and their *preferred* level of involvement. They were also asked to indicate their actual and preferred levels of involvement in the evaluation of central office administrators. Table 5-2 presents these responses on a seven

point scale.

In 1984, a job description for the Chief Education Officer was developed by the Board, which set out goals and duties for the CEO as well as an evaluation document to be used by the members of the Board to appraise the CEO on an annual basis prior to June 30 of each year. None of the goals refer specifically to the professional development of central office staff. One of the 19 duties outlined in this job description does state that the CEO shall "initiate professional development and inservice activities for Board

Table 5-2

School Board Members Perception of Role in Professional Development of Central Office (Mean Response)

Encouragement

Actual Role = a
Preferred Role = p

Question	VH 7	H 6	M H 5	Med 4	M L 3	Low 2	V L 1
What is your level of involvement to encourage the professional development of Central Office Administrators?				p a			

Evaluation

Actual Role = a
Preferred Role = p

Question	VH 7	H 6	M H 5	Med 4	M L 3	Low 2	V L 1
What is your role in the evaluation of Central Office Administrators?		p		a			

employees that are consistent with the objectives of the Board and the Nova Scotia Department of Education" (1984, NCDSB Minutes of Meetings, Appendix A, pp. 207-208). The Board evaluation document lists no criteria that apply to the professional development of staff at any level. It does evaluate whether or not the CEO is knowledgeable and up-to-date in educational developments. This knowledge was to be judged on the basis of attendance at Department of Education meetings, curriculum conferences, and the successful operation of the curriculum section of central office.

The Professional Development of School Administrators

School Administrator Profile

At the very beginning in 1982 an effort was made to build team spirit among school administrators. Principals' meetings required the attendance of all 26 of the district's principals. One of the central office administrators said: "I think principals' meetings were too unwieldy. . . with a group of 26 you know it's hard to deal with things." In response to this condition efforts in the last few years have been made to split principals into sector-relevant groups. However, because some schools are consolidated, several high school principals are also elementary principals. One principal had a school with students from grade Primary to grade 12. Thus in spite of efforts to improve the flow of communication at principals' meetings by narrowing the field of business, the nature and dispersion of students in many of the schools work against this.

All the secondary schools have at least one vice-principal. There is no district-approved job description for vice-principals. Most of the

responsibilities of vice-principals are mutually agreed upon with the principals. In some schools written job descriptions have been developed. The boundaries of responsibility however are often determined in an *ad hoc* manner on the basis of availability.

The availability of time for school administrators in the district to perform administrative duties is not distributed across all schools equally. It has been pointed out by central office administrators and school board members that in terms of student enrolment some schools are "top heavy" with respect to administrators. Some consideration has been given to the creation of *campus* organizations wherein groups of schools could be linked administratively and as a consequence share administrators.

Of the high school administrators questioned, 10 were currently involved in other educational matters. Two principals were each teaching a senior high course in their schools. Seven vice-principals had a 50% time allotment teaching in the classroom, and two vice-principals were guidance counselors 50% of the time. One vice-principal commented on the workload: "Yes it's 50% teaching and 50% administration, but it adds up to about 150% work." It is interesting to note that of the eight administrators in the classroom seven of them are math teachers.

In Nova Scotia the Department of Education provides certification for all teachers and administrators. Teaching Certificates (TCs) are classified on a scale from TC1 to TC8 on the basis of education completed. A TC 4 usually indicates that an individual has graduated from the Teachers College, but does not possess a degree. A TC5 or TC6 usually indicates someone with a B.Ed. and another undergraduate degree. A TC7 indicates a Masters level degree. A TC8 usually means the individual has completed two Masters

degrees or holds a Doctorate. Prior to the mid-1980s an individual could achieve a TC6 by taking a series of unrelated courses. Since then the Department of Education has tightened the regulations and people must follow an advanced diploma programme or achieve an advanced degree to raise their license beyond a TC5.

At the end of the first decade of operation of the administrators in the secondary schools all nine principals were males; seven of the vice-principals were males and three were females. Sixteen of these administrators were over the age of 40; five were over the age of 50. In terms of accreditation the average Teacher Certification rating for this group is TC6. Five principals and four vice-principals have Masters degrees; eight other administrators have taken some graduate courses. Seven of the principals and three of the vice-principals have not taken a course in education at a university or from a university in the last five years.

Administrators were asked if they had career plans or aspirations outside their current station. As far as some of these future career plans are concerned: eight of the principals are planning to remain principals and have no aspirations elsewhere; one principal aspires to the superintendency. Seven of the vice-principals aspire to the principalship. Tables 5-3 to 5-7 outline this profile of school administrators in greater detail.

Table 5-3 shows all secondary school administrators by sex and years of experience in education. All administrators, except one principal and one vice-principal, have had at least eleven years of experience in education. Table 5-5 points to what experience these administrators had in other positions. Seven of the principals had spent less than ten years in the

classroom as teachers. Three principals had fewer than four years of classroom experience. Table 5-4 shows that four of the principals had held their current positions for at least ten years. Table 5-6 shows the professional education held by these school administrators. Half of them hold graduate degrees at the master's level. In terms of current interest in professional education, seven of the principals have not enrolled in a university education course in the last five years. Three vice-principals have not enrolled in a course in the last five years. Table 5-7 indicates the future aspirations of the school administrators. All but one vice-principal said that they aspire towards other positions. Most are looking at the principalship. Four indicated an interest in working in central office as a consultant or superintendent. Principals indicated that they intended to remain

Table 5-3.

School Administrators' Years of Educational Experience

Principal = P.

Vice-Principal (male) = M.V.P.

Vice- Principal (female) = F.V.

Years of Experience in Education	P.	M.V.P.	F. V. P.	Total
1 to 5 years				
6 to 10 years			1	1
11 to 15 years	1			1
16 to 20 years	5	3	1	9
21- to 25 years	1	3		4
more than 25 years	2	1	1	4

Table 5-4

School Administrators' Years in Present Position

	Years In Present Position					
	1 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 9	10 t12	13t15	15+
P.	2	2	1	3		1
M.V.P.	3		2		1	1
F.V.P.	2	1				

Table 5-5

School Administrators' Work Experience in Other Positions

	Principal's Work Experience In Other Positions				
	1to 3	4 to 9	10t15	16t.20	20+
Years as teacher	3	4	1	1	
Years as V. principal	2	3			1
Years as Principal		3	1		
Yrs as Superintendent	1	1			

	Vice-Principal's Work Experience In Other Positions				
	1to 3	4 to 9	10t15	16t.20	20+
Years as teacher	1	4	1	1	3
Years as V. principal	2				
Years as Principal	1				
Counselor		1	1		

Table 5-6

School Administrators' Professional Education

EDUCATION	M.P.	M.V.P.	F. V. P.	Total
No graduate courses		1		1
Some grad. Admin courses	3	2	3	8
Diploma in Ed.	1			1
M. Ed. Administration	4	2		6
M. Ed. Other		1		1
M.A. Administration		1		1
M.A.	1			1
Current Enrolment (last 5 years)	2	4	3	9
No. Courses Taken	7	3	0	10

Table 5-7

School Administrators' Future Aspirations in Field of Education

Career Plans	M.P.	M.V.P.	F. V. P.	Total
Principalship	8	4	3	15
Assistant Superintendent	1			1
Central Office Consultant		1	2	3
Teacher in School			1	1
Teacher Post Secondary				0
Superintendent		1		1
Dept. of Education			1	1
Vice Principalship		1		1

principals. One principal showed an interest in a central office position as assistant superintendent.

The school administrators in these same schools prior to consolidation

would have had a similar profile as those who hold these positions today. In fact four of them are the same people. In 1980 there were seven principals and 10 vice-principals. One of the vice-principals was female. None of the administrators was under 30 years of age. The average Teacher Certification rating was TC6. In 1985 the same basic profile was in place with the exception that there were four additional male vice-principals in the high schools.

As far as administrative turnover was concerned, between consolidation in 1982 and 1990 there had been a change of principal in three schools. Since 1992 and the introduction of the school administrator transfer policy there have been five changes. One result of the changes since 1992 is that there is one female principal at the high school level.

Following consolidation the district created a programme to train department heads. Prior to the new district only two schools utilized the department head as an administrative position. In 1980 there were seven department heads; five men and two women. In 1985 there were 14 department heads in the district; 12 men and two women. In 1990 there were 16 department heads; 15 men and one woman. The district's desire to increase the role of women in administrative positions did not result in any significant changes in department heads. This situation can be partially explained by the distribution of teachers at the senior high level. Many department heads operate at the senior high school level. The distribution of teachers at that level is predominantly male. The average distribution of teachers by gender in all the senior high schools prior to consolidation was 77% male teachers and 23% female teachers. In 1990 the distribution for the same schools was 76% male teachers and 24% female teachers.

District Initiatives for Development

The opinion held by the members of the school board with regard to the quality of school administrators was quite high. The new district has provided more opportunities for principals, and with increased transfers among these administrators the situation will become better "balanced." Some felt that the administration in some schools "was top heavy" and that the principal/student ratio was too low: "There is a need for a new standard ratio to be set. The shrinking educational dollar will demand that." In other words, the number of school administrators was too large in some schools that had low enrolments. The perception was that the apportionment of administrators to schools should be judged on the same basis as teachers to classrooms.

The Board's feelings concerning their actual role in encouraging the development of school administrators was the same as those pertaining to central office administrators. They indicated a preference for a moderately greater role in this area. They did feel that their actual involvement in the evaluation of the school administrators was low. They did indicate a desire to have a greater role in this evaluation process. It should be noted that as a group the school board essentially consists of *lay* people. They are not professional educators. Some of the board members have full-time employment elsewhere. The perception of these board members with respect to their actual role as evaluators of school administrators reflects a realistic expectation that one would hold. The time required to evaluate school administrators would in most instances restrict their involvement to cases that were deemed problematic by central office staff. Table 5-8 indicates the perceptions held by school board members concerning their roles in

evaluating school administrators and encouraging their professional development.

The central office feeling was that school administrators have "ample opportunities", in fact: "School administrators can get as much professional development as they want to get." In general they saw three key elements to the professional development of school administrators. One was directed at school principals initially and has now filtered down to vice-principals and that is the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (IDEA). The second was a Vice-Principal Training Programme that was developed and implemented by central office. The third was the development of a comprehensive evaluation process for principals which was started in 1989.

The IDEA Programme

The IDEA programme was initiated by the NSTU. In 1986, seven individuals from Nova Scotia were selected and trained in Halifax by the Kettering Foundation, the developer of the programme. The Supervisor of Curriculum from the Nova County district was one of the seven trainees. The purpose of IDEA was to provide principals with the opportunity to develop skills in sharing problems and solutions, and becoming a collegial support group to help develop positive personal and professional change. The results of this networking could then be passed on to the respective teaching staffs to assist in their professional and personal development. The ultimate goal was school improvement. Central to this programme was the belief that the school was the primary unit of change, and that the principal was the prime mover.

Table 5-8

School Board Members' Perception of Role in Professional Development of School Administrators (Mean Response)

Encouragement

Actual Role = a
Preferred Role = p

Question	VH 7	H 6	M H 5	Med 4	M L 3	Low 2	V L 1
What is your level of involvement to encourage the professional development of School Administrators?			p	a			

Evaluation

Actual Role = a
Preferred Role = p

Question	VH 7	H 6	M H 5	Med 4	M L 3	Low 2	V L 1
What is your role in the evaluation of School Administrators?			p			a	

The IDEA trainee, who would become instructor / leader, returns to a school district and begins to develop teams of school administrators. The leader would work in a district other than the home district. Thus the Nova

leader would instruct groups in another district, and a leader from some other district would develop support groups in the Nova district. By 1990 all principals in the Nova district had commenced work in the IDEA programme.

Principal Evaluation

The evaluation process for principals was initiated by central office in response to a Board request. The Board was saying to administrators: "You people are evaluating teachers. Are you evaluating yourselves?" The process was the result of a collaborative effort made by central office and principals. The process was expected to " ensure standardized quality of administration in the district more so than anything else we have done for quite a while."

Every year four principals are evaluated. A team from central office spends time in the school. Teachers are interviewed and surveyed with respect to the administrator's performance. The team puts together a report that deals with all aspects of the school's operation and the principal's role within that operation. The report is presented to the principal and recommendations are made based upon the observations. The superintendent does not play a role in the process. However, if a principal wishes to appeal an evaluation or a part of the report, the superintendent will step in and act as a mediator. If the principal still feels wronged, an appeal can then be made to the Board.

It is believed in central office that the evaluation process "has helped principals to evolve their own self-development programme. There is always a follow-up involved with each evaluation. One central office administrator commented: "Most principals saw it as threatening, there is

no question about. But when they were finished most said they didn't realize they were doing as well as they were; and some things needed improvement."

There were differences of opinion amongst central office staff as to whether the principals' evaluation was formative or summative. One administrator said it was definitely formative and not summative. Another said it wasn't formative because it wasn't an "ongoing evaluation." Another administrator said it was formative but could become summative, although it hadn't up to that time. Despite the label one central office official said: "What has happened has really impressed me and has contributed greatly to the equalization of opportunity in our district."

One of the school administrators, who had been evaluated, was asked about the experience. He said that he did not feel threatened by the process: "I guess I trusted the guys who were doing it. But the teachers sure felt threatened." The format of the evaluation called for central office supervisors to go into the classrooms and formally observe the teachers. In some instances reports were written up on teachers based on these observations. Four of the teachers who were involved in this particular evaluation were interviewed. They didn't understand and appreciate the reasons why they had to be observed if it was the principal who was being evaluated. They expressed concerns about the lack of communication "from above" with respect to their part in this evaluation process. One particular teacher made a grievance through the union representative because a central office administrator observed two classes and filed a written report. The grievance was based on the failure of this administrator to notify the teacher in question that an evaluation was being made. The decision was

made in the teacher's favour.

Vice-Principal Training Programme

The Vice-Principal Training Programme was implemented by central office for current vice-principals and for individuals who were interested in becoming vice-principals. The programme was initiated following a Personnel Committee Meeting recommendation for the secondment of someone "to determine characteristics, duties, responsibilities, etc. of vice-principals, and will also be dealing with the development of a training programme for staff interested in becoming vice principals within the school district" (1989, February 16,Personnel Committee Meeting # 7 Minutes, p. 3). The individual selected for this task spent six weeks interviewing vice-principals, who were currently working in the district. He also spoke to some board members, central office administrators, and principals. Teachers were surveyed and a review of the literature was made. On the basis of this information recommendations were made and a format decided upon. The programme was considered "in-servicing" but was presented very much like a course of study. Preparation of the programme itself was in part the result of principals' meetings. Central office administrators, some principals, and a representative from the NSTU acted as instructors. Upon successful completion of the programme certificates were presented to the participants.

A year prior to the decision to develop this programme, an Employment Philosophy Statement was handed down following a Personnel Committee Meeting (1988, November, Personnel Committee Meeting # 13 Minutes, p. 4). The statement referred to the desire to employ a "greater percentage of females in administrative positions." The training programme for vice-

principals and the desire to have more female administrators were linked by one central office administrator:

> We have been trying very hard to get more females into administration and we have been quite successful particularly at the elementary level. We now have a female vice-principal at Alpha High School for the first time. Last year four or five of our appointments were all females.

It was originally intended that the vice-principal programme run for several sessions. The format called for six workshops and a three day summer institute. It was expected that perhaps a dozen people would apply to attend the first session. The individual who did the background research and who attended the first session as a potential administrator commented: "We were pleasantly surprised. We were overwhelmed when thirty people showed up at the first workshop." Because so few were anticipated, central office hadn't screened the applicants. The session was considered a success; twenty-eight of the candidates received certificates, and half the candidates were women.

The board and central office were now apparently faced with a dilemma. They were worried that the "expectations of the candidates would raise false hopes" about the possibilities of gaining future administrative positions. Adding to this the large amount of interest evidenced by the turnout, the board and central office decided to put the programme on hold. One follow-up workshop on behavior disorders in the classroom was held the next autumn for those interested candidates from the previous session. The programme is currently under review for re-implementation.

These three major development projects aimed at school administrators have been used since 1987. Prior to these initiatives school administrators

were encouraged to take courses at university. Prospective administrators seeking positions after 1985 were required to either have a Masters degree in educational administration, or be working towards a degree. This was not a Department of Education requirement but a district requirement. It should be noted that this requirement was not made retroactive for those who already held administrative positions but did not have a graduate degree in administration.

In general, professional development was at the discretion of each administrator. Applications could be made for educational leave. Two employees were granted leave with pay for up to a year. Leave was granted usually on the basis of seniority and was open for competition to all professional staff. A committee presided over the granting of educational leave. The committee was comprised of school board members, central office administrators and a union representative. A central office administrator who frequently sat on this board commented: "Although we only have two a year our educational leave has helped us. Because obviously over ten years we have had twenty people make use of it." Administrators could apply to attend professional conferences either in or out of the province. Funds would be provided by the district when needed and when possible.

Nineteen of the total number of 20 high school administrators responded to a questionnaire that sought out their beliefs, feelings, and remembrances concerning various aspects of the district and their role as administrators. The group was comprised of nine principals and ten vice-principals.

One area of inquiry concerned the perceptions held by school administrators about the efforts made by central office that assisted them in

their professional development. The IDEA Programme and Vice-principal Training Programme received the most enthusiastic response by principals and vice-principals respectively. A number of vice-principals also talked about the IDEA programme in glowing terms:

> You know our group meets one Tuesday a month for the whole day. Last spring we spent the day tramping through the Provincial Park at Cape Split; it was exhausting but we talked the entire time about our schools and what we were doing and what we were planning to do. Two of us got lost, but they made it out in the end. It was great.

The terms used by these school administrators to describe central office efforts were relatively positive. One vice-principal said that the people at central office were "always accessible if you need them for anything." Another administrator described how he had spent many long years working on a Master's degree; taking courses in the evenings and in the summer. By his calculation, the district had ended up paying about 70% of all his tuition fees: "You know one thing I never had to worry about was the cost. I filled out the forms and the money came in."

On the other hand one apparently disgruntled principal summed up his professional development experiences as follows: " On the rare occasion there have been in-services held after-principals' meetings, which might be seen as professional development."

Professional Development of Teachers

Introduction

Teachers form the largest group of individuals with which to discuss professional development. In 1980, two years before consolidation, there were a total of 222 teachers in the high schools; 71 teaching at the senior

high level and 151 teaching at the junior high level. In 1990 the figures remained much the same with a total of 228 teachers; 74 in the senior high schools and 154 in the junior high schools. To help focus on this large group I will describe the efforts made in the professional development of teachers from the points-of-view held by school board members, central office administrators, and school administrators. First, I will present a profile of the teachers who work in the district's high schools.

Teaching Staff Profile

The equal distribution of quality staff across all the schools of the district is an essential part of the equalization of opportunity. In terms of teaching assignments not all teachers have an equal assignment. A teaching assignment is defined as a course in the senior high school and a subject at a specific level in the junior high. Thus a teacher who teaches four sections of grade 8 math and one section of grade 9 math has two teaching assignments. All full-time teachers would spend the same amount of time in the classroom. The actual number of minutes spent in the classroom is determined by the Department of Education. However, a teacher who has five teaching assignments would have three extra areas of preparation than a teacher who has two teaching assignments. Both teachers would be occupied for the same amount of time, but the teacher who has several sections of the same course would more than likely only have to prepare for them once. The district average for all high school teachers is 4.2 teaching assignments. Those senior high school teachers at Delta High School and Beta Rural High School have a greater teaching assignment than teachers at the rest of the high schools. With respect to junior high school assignments, teachers at Alpha Cons. Jr. high (A.C.) join the junior high school teachers

at Beta Rural and Delta schools as having the largest teaching assignments in the district. Table 5-9 illustrates the dispersion of teaching assignments in all the high schools.

Table 5-9

Average Number of Courses Taught by Teachers in Each School

School	A	B	G	A.R.	D	B.R.	A.C.	A.	Jr. E	District Mean
Mn. Range of Courses/Subjects per Teacher					6.2	6.5	4.4			4.2
	3.8	2.8	3.2	3.6				3.4	3.8	

The argument made by one central office administrator is that a senior high school teacher, who is well-qualified in a particular subject area, can do a better job than a teacher, who is not as knowledgeable. If you add to this situation the responsibility for a larger and more varied teaching assignment, the greater the disparity becomes in terms of quality instruction.

In some schools teachers teach only at the senior high level or only at the junior high level. In other schools they teach in both sectors. The philosophical basis for the teaching of junior high students is not the traditional content based approach. The district now emphasizes a child-centred individualized method of instruction for junior high students whereby the content is adjusted to fit the child and not the other way around.

In the two main curricular areas of English and mathematics, there is a considerable disparity in teaching assignments in some schools. For example, in Beta High School the average teaching assignment in the junior high is two, while at Delta it is six. In the district as a whole English teachers can expect to have four teaching assignments which means teaching at four different levels or teaching outside their subject area altogether. Math teachers can expect to teach five different assignments. These are averages, however; and some individual teachers teach seven different subjects or levels while others teach only two. This does not include department heads who may have a slightly reduced teaching load or vice-principals who teach 50% of the time.

The number of students in individual classes is another factor that is believed to influence the quality of instruction that teachers can routinely provide. Some people argue that even though teachers in the smaller schools may have more subjects to teach, the total number of students they have to deal with is less than those teachers in the larger schools, who teach fewer numbers of subjects and courses. In terms of class size the larger schools do on average have larger enrolments. In 1990 for example, the average class size at Alpha High School was 22 students. At Delta and Beta Rural it was 19 students per class. These are again averages and do not take into account that some electives and honours courses will have particularly small enrolments. Table 5-10 shows the enrolment of the grade 12 English and math classes from three high schools. The class from Alpha High School was chosen at random, the classes from the other two schools were the only ones offered. These figures would support the English teacher at Alpha High School who wanted to argue that in terms of marking

assignments and other forms of evaluation the larger class would be a handicap. However for that particular year the English teacher at Delta High School could also make that argument.

Table 5-10

Student Enrolment in Grade 12 English and Math (1990)

	English 441	Math 441
Alpha H. S.	32	22
Beta Rural H. S.	17	13
Delta H. S.	29	14

The teaching assignments across the district are fairly equitable with the exceptions of Beta Rural High School and Delta High School. These two schools have adopted a semestered schedule for their senior high students, which has been in operation for several years. In terms of large teaching assignments teachers at these schools are not teaching all their courses at the same time. If a teacher were responsible for six courses in one of these schools, they would teach three in the first semester and the other three in the following semester.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education (1985) recommended the presence of more female role models in the high schools. Specifically they recommended more female teachers in math, science and guidance. It was believed that female leadership in the schools

would promote female student participation in the field of science in post-secondary institutions. Tables 5-11 and 5-12 show the number and sex of teachers in specific teaching areas in the senior high school and the junior high school in 1980 and 1990. The tables show that the number of female teachers in the senior high schools is quite low. In terms of percentage, less than 15% of the teachers in math, science, and social sciences are female. In the junior high sector the male/female discrepancy in these subjects is not as great, and the overall percentage is more evenly distributed.

There have not been any great changes in the number of female teachers in the high schools in general. In 1980 and 1990 less than 25% of all the teachers in the subject areas indicated in the tables were women. In the junior high there is an approximate 60%-40% split between men and women respectively. However, over the ten year period in question, there has been an increase in female guidance counselors.

In the senior high schools there were no women at all teaching math in the years 1980 or 1990 in the following schools: Alpha Rural, Beta, Delta, and Gamma. There were no female teachers in science classes at: Beta High School, Beta Rural High School, Delta High School, and Gamma high School. At the junior high level there were no women teaching math in Alpha Rural, Alpha Consolidated, Alpha Junior, Beta Rural, and Epsilon. There were no junior high female teachers in science classes at Alpha Consolidated Junior High School, Alpha Junior High School, Beta Rural High School, Beta High School, and Epsilon.

Only Alpha and Gamma schools showed any change over the years in the distribution of male and female teachers in the senior high school.

Gamma went from a 90%-10% male-female distribution in 1980 to a 80%-20% male-female split in 1990. Alpha went from a 80%-20% distribution to a 72%-28% distribution. This does not seem very significant, but in terms of the number of female science and math teachers, they doubled from five to ten. Between 1980 and 1990 the school expanded in those subjects by 11

Table 5-11

Teaching Assignments for Male and Female Teachers in 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990	
Senior High	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Male %**	**Female%**
English	57	43	64	36
Math	88	12	89	11
Science	88	12	89	11
Soc. Science	100	0	89	11
French	0	100	50	50
Phys. Ed.	100	0	100	0
Guidance	67	33	22	78
Sr. Total	**77**	**23**	**76**	**24**
Junior High	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Male %**	**Female%**
English	33	67	74	26
Math	63	37	72	28
Science	86	14	82	18
Soc. Science	80	20	58	42
French	50	50	39	61
Phys. Ed.	71	29	51	49
Guidance	0	100	40	60
Jr. Total	**60**	**40**	**63**	**37**
TOTAL	**68**	**32**	**69**	**31**

teachers. Of the eleven who were either hired or who transferred in, five were women. In the Beta school the number of senior high teachers in those subject areas remained the same, but the male-female distribution went from 83%-17% to 92%-8% between 1980 and 1990.

The teaching staff of the district has aged and has become more experienced since consolidation. Prior to 1982 in the nine high schools 60% of all the teachers had 10 years of experience or less. Almost 40% of the female teachers in the high schools had five years of experience or less. In 1990 slightly over 70% of the men teachers and slightly under 50% of the women had 11 to 25 years of experience. The proportion of teachers in 1990 with 10 years experience or less was just 30%. With regards to age, there were more younger women teachers joining the district in the mid-1980s than there were men.

The average high school teacher in the district has become older as well as more experienced. Almost 30% of the women on staff before consolidation were between 21 and 26 years of age. Before consolidation the largest group of men teachers, which comprised 65% of the total number of teachers, were between the ages of 30 and 39. In 1990, 70% of men teachers were between 39 and 49 years of age. In 1990 only 11% of the total staff were under 30 years of age. Sixty-one percent of the teachers in the county teaching high school were between 36 and 50 years of age, and the number of younger teachers joining the district had diminished. The average age of both male and female teachers in the district before consolidation was 34. In 1990 the average age of male teachers was 41 years of age, and the average age of female teachers was 36 years.

With respect to teacher accreditation there were no major changes in level of certification in the district between 1980 and 1990. As the years passed there were fewer teachers at the lower end of the scale. In 1980 there were more teachers with TC4, TC3, and TC2 ratings. By 1990 there were no teachers holding TC2 or TC3 certificates. The number of TC4 certificates

dropped from 12% of the total high school teaching staff to 9% between 1980 and 1990. The percentage of teachers at the upper level of the scale remained constant. There was a slight drop of TC7 holders between 1980 and 1990 amongst male teachers. This was owing to a few of these teachers raising their level to TC8. Female teachers holding TC7 ratings went from 4% to 7% in that ten year period. In 1980 75% of all teachers held TC5 or TC6 licenses. By 1990, 36% of male teachers held TC5 certificates, and 43% TC6 certificates, which was essentially the same distribution as in 1980. Of female teachers in the high school, 45% had TC5 certificates and 30% had TC6 certificates. There were 8% more female teachers with TC6 licenses in 1990 than there were in 1980, and 8% fewer TC5 certificates.

High school teachers have not made great increases in their educational status for the purpose of raising their teaching licenses since consolidation. Within the group, female teachers were more upwardly mobile in certificate ratings than were the male teachers.

School Board View

School board members indicated that they had the same degree of involvement in the professional development of teachers as they did for central office administrators and school administrators. They did want to have a greater role in this area, but no greater than for the other two groups. Their role in the evaluation of teachers was low, as it was for school administrators. The desired role was greater but not as high as it was preferred for school administrators, and certainly not as high as was wanted for central office administrators.

Board members seemed quite satisfied with the teaching staff in the secondary schools: "95% of all our teachers are great. We try to assist those

less effective ones; transfers are encouraged. We are very proud of our teaching staff!" It was felt that due to high enrolment in classes teachers were unable to work to their potential. Some concern was shown at the trend towards mainstreaming especially when teachers had to deal with "truly disabled students in their classrooms." Another area of concern was for those teachers working in smaller schools. In these schools everyone "must be more versatile with each teacher teaching several courses."

Evaluation was seen as an important part of development. The school board believed it was taking a more "aggressive stand in expectations" placed upon teaching staff. Professional development through upgrading by taking university courses had to be "valid and relevant." The Teachers' Centre was central to the board's efforts in the professional development of teachers. With an annual budget in excess of $100,000 going to the centre, directly from the board, it was felt they were being "very generous with respect to professional development."

Central Office View

Central office staff believed that over the years there has been "a tremendous improvement in our teaching staff ." The courses that teachers take are no longer "nonsense courses." Teachers were voluntarily taking it upon themselves to take more courses than they used to. One administrator felt that in some ways teachers were being forced to take courses because of peer pressure. Older and established teachers see the younger teachers coming into the schools with new ideas and "they feel threatened." Many teachers have been involved in developing curriculum and have worked on provincial committees to that end. Summer institutes held in the district often pull in 60 to 70 teachers for two or three days in

August: "They don't have to come in, but they're interested in learning how to do their job better. It's all voluntary too." Most of the administrators agreed that there was a lot of in-servicing going on: "I think we can be accused of offering too much and maybe we're not being specific enough. Sometimes school needs have to override district goals."

The new district advanced the cause of professional development for teachers. Prior to consolidation in-servicing was parochial and teachers were in "professional isolation." The new district allowed teachers in small areas to meet and talk regularly with other professionals who shared the same circumstances. The Supervisor of curriculum referred to the "cross-fertilization of ideas and experience" just through centralized in-servicing. Using the Teachers' Centre as a focal point, subject group meetings were organized for secondary teachers: "So people met and talked and over a period of years we based our in-servicing on the needs that arose from these meetings. People welcomed the opportunity to have a dialogue with fellow professionals."

When the high schools were first linked, only Alpha and Beta high schools had department heads. Central office personnel felt that the role of the department head was an important one with respect to the development of individual teachers, improving the quality of programme and instruction, and alleviating certain administrative responsibilities of principals. In view of this, a staff training programme for department heads was soon set up. The role of the department head was upgraded, and department heads were expanded into four new schools.

The Coordinator of the Teachers' Centre made a presentation to the Board in March of 1982 wherein he outlined the five purposes for the centre

as: (1) systematic curriculum development; (2) curricular resource distribution; (3) curricular materials production; (4) professional development, and; (5) social (1982, March, NCDSB Minutes, p. 36). Ten years later the coordinator said of the centre:

> We have identified four major areas that we play with. The most important is the area of professional development. We are not a toy shop; we are not the great laminator in the sky. Our real aim is professional development. The only skill we have as educators is to teach. No technology, no machine, no computer can teach. But teachers can. That's why I put most of my energies into the professional development side.

Central office staff believe that the Teachers' Centre has been an integral part of the district "since day one." It is viewed as an equalizer of opportunities for teachers and subsequently for students. Apparently each year when the funding for the centre comes before the Board, discussion turns to the cost and how two teachers could be hired in place of the centre. However, as one administrator was quick to assert: " We are not touching the Teachers' Centre." The Department of Education and NSTU provides annual funding of $150,000 dollars towards professional development grants (PDAF) to groups of teachers or individual teachers. The Halifax County School District is the largest in the province with a student enrolment of 30,000. Nova County district is second only to the largest county in the province in terms of the number of PDAF grants received each year. Central office attributes this achievement in many ways to the Teachers' Centre. Added to this is the subsequent benefit of all these ideas and materials being distributed across the district through the centre.

School Administrator View

One of the purposes of the evaluation of principals as stated in the Guidelines for Evaluation of Principals (1986, NCDSB Minutes, Appendix F) is to encourage and develop effective professional development programmes. It is the responsibility of the principal to provide opportunities for professional growth of teachers in the following ways:

Teachers are encouraged to attend workshops, conferences, etc.

Other forms of professional development are arranged.

Professional literature is provided.

Professional development activities form part of regular inservice programmes and staff meetings.

Information regarding exchanges, transfers, job-sharing, etc. is provided. (p. 3)

The monitoring of these responsibilities was part of the comprehensive evaluation that included a collection and inspection of school artifacts such as memos to teachers and minutes of staff meetings. The teacher survey, which is part of the process, included a question specifically concerned with the degree of encouragement given to their professional development by the school administration.

When asked what they actually did to assist in the professional development of their teachers, school administrators provided numerous responses. Most of the activities mentioned by principals were formal in nature emphasizing organization and encouragement of inservices and the passing on of information. A principal from one of the large schools said he had to "make sure teachers attended inservices." Some indicated that collaborative decision-making was a part of the professional development

in their schools, which was linked to regular staff meetings. This was seen as an opportunity for teachers to share their "expertise" with colleagues. In one of the small schools, teachers were encouraged to experiment and if it worked, innovate. One administrator saw the importance in the " discussion of current educational issues at staff meetings, in the staff room or in the hallways."

Vice-principals provided a variety of responses some of which paralleled the activities expressed by the principals. Many indicated that they organized school-based inservicing. This organizing may be a specific area of responsibility related to the position of vice-principal in certain schools. One vice-principal indicated a degree of hesitancy in this area because he was currently "developing his own sense of competence and confidence." Support was a major element for this group. They "listened to teachers' concerns" and "encouraged them to be bold." One vice-principal asserted that he hadn't anything to do with the professional development of his teachers.

School administrators rated the amount of involvement they had in various activities that were related to the professional development of the teachers on staff. They indicated their role with respect to the hiring and placement of teachers in their school, and the provision of instructional leadership. They were also asked to indicate the degree to which they organized staff development to meet the individual needs of teachers.

The evaluation of teachers is viewed by the district as professional development. In 1987, Guidelines for Supervision and Evaluation of Teachers was adopted by the board. This document defined *formative supervision* as a "cooperative and collegial professional development

procedure for tenured teachers" (1987, June, NCDSB Minutes, Appendix E, p. 1). In brief, the procedures for formative supervision required goal setting conferences, pre and post observation conferences, and a final appraisal. It was expected that every tenured teacher would participate every third year in such a procedure. The supervision team consisted of principal, vice-principal, or department head. The main purpose of summative supervision for tenured teachers was to "give intensive assistance to teachers for whom the formative supervision process has been terminated"(p. 2). This would apply to situations where concerns had arisen about the competency of a teacher. The principal and an assistant superintendent would carry out the procedure of summative supervision. Principals and vice-principals were asked to indicate their perceived role in these two areas of evaluation.

Table 5-12 describes the responses to questions relating to the professional development of teaching staff. The responses have been separated into those given by principals and vice-principals.

At the same time these administrators were asked to express what they thought their role should be in these same areas of professional development. Table 5-13 describes these preferred roles. Once again the responses have been separated into two categories of respondent.

In their comments concerning their role of encouraging the professional growth of their teachers, school administrators did not generally associate the evaluation of teachers with professional development. With respect to their levels of involvement in their various role activities, principals believed that they were more highly involved than were the vice-principals. Both groups expressed the desire to be more actively involved,

Table 5-12.

Administrators' Role in Professional Development of Teaching Staff

PERCEPTION of ACTUAL ROLE (Mn. Response)

Principal = P N = 9
Vice-Principals = V N = 10

School Administrators	V. H. High	M. H. Med.	M. L. Low	V.L.
Hire and Place Teachers	P	V		
Evaluation of Teachers- summative		P	V	
Evaluation of Teachers - formative		P		V
Encourage Professional Development		P	V	
Organize Staff Development for Special Needs	P	V		
Provide Instructional Leadership		P	V	

again the vice-principals to a lesser degree.

School administrators were also asked what they thought central office did to help facilitate in the professional development of teaching staff. The overwhelming response of school administrators was that central office provided or assisted in the provision of in-servicing. Central office was also a resource for financial assistance either by giving money directly or by providing substitutes that allowed teachers to visit other schools. Variable leave was also frequently mentioned. Variable leave was set up by central office to allow a number of teachers to pursue activities for an extended period of time. The school board set aside a bank of days each year that

Table 5-13.

Administrators Preferred Role in Professional Development of Teaching Staff

PERCEPTION of PREFERRED ROLE (Mn. Response)

Principals = P N = 9
Vice-Principals = V N = 10

School Administrators	V.H. High	M. H.	Med.	M. L.	Low	V.L.
Hire and Place Teachers	P		V			
Evaluation of Teachers- summative		P		V		
Evaluation of Teachers - formative			P		V	
Encourage Professional Development		P		V		
Organize Staff Development for Special Needs	P		V			
Provide Instructional Leadership		P		V		

teachers could apply for. If a teacher wanted to spend five days attending a special workshop, a proposal would have to be submitted explaining the purpose and value of the leave. If the proposal was accepted, the board would supply a substitute and the teacher could attend the workshop with pay. Most "reasonable requests" were accepted until the bank of days was used up.

Many school administrators made reference to a large scale effort being

made at the junior high school level called Junior High 2000. This endeavor involved eight of the nine high schools in the district. It was a long and involved process that included the efforts of the board members, central office, school administrators, and teachers.

Junior High 2000

The decision to make changes in the junior high sector involved both the development of staff and programme. The changes which were planned and are currently being implemented are the result of a long and circuitous process.

To begin, the senior management team at central office investigated change methods used in two other districts to create a process for long term planning in December 1984. According to central office staff, the systems used elsewhere did not seem to "fit our particular circumstances" (1985, January, NCDSB Minutes, Appendix A, p. 1). A process and time line were developed by central office that consisted of the formulation of questions relating to programme, personnel, and operations. Answers to these questions would be developed by professional staff and Board committees by the spring of 1985. The answers would establish criteria that would be used as a basis for official positions. The next year would be spent examining the district to see which schools did not meet the criteria. Following this analysis options would be developed and presented to the board. Approval for the options would be sought from the Board and the public in June of 1986 so that the implementation of some of the changes could begin in the school year commencing in September 1986.

As part of the public participation in this process written briefs and oral presentations were delivered at a series of meetings held throughout the

district. Various groups were invited to participate: individuals, parents, school staffs, Home and Schools, Boards of Trustees, Municipal units, and other community groups. Sixty-seven written briefs were presented to the School Board. In October 1986, the Board released a White Paper for discussion purposes. One of the many recommendations suggested was an investigation of the status of the junior high sector because "over the years, considerably more emphasis has been placed on the organization and curriculum offerings at the elementary and senior high school levels than at the junior high level" (1986, October, NCDSB White Paper, p. 3). Following the release of the White Paper, the public had eight weeks to respond to the recommendations and positions presented in that document. Seventy-six written responses were received by the Board. On September 21, 1987, the Board released a paper called New Directions, which consisted of a statement of the long range goals for the district. Many areas were covered, however, the statement reiterated the district's desire to do something about the junior high sector.

Once the priority was set to change the junior high, central office staff approached the principals. For the following year the Curriculum Supervisor worked with the principals who had junior high sectors and developed a list of eight ways to "make the junior high stronger." Each junior high sector was then surveyed to see where the greatest discrepancy lay between where the schools were and where they wanted to be with respect to the eight priority areas developed by the principals. The survey was analysed and the two worst areas were targeted. One central office administrator had suggested: "Let's not try to do everything. We want to do things well."

The recommendations of the junior high school study were put before the Board in the spring of 1989. In general they recommended that the junior high sector be guidance oriented and highly organized to promote grouping for instruction, individualization of instruction and flexibility. Recognition of individual abilities and the development of problem-solving skills were to be developed as well. It was also suggested that "junior high students, as much as possible, should be physically separated from senior high students" (1989, June, NCDSB, Minutes, Appendix B, p.1). The Board did not accept the recommendation concerned with the separation of the junior and senior sectors, and put it off for further study.

In terms of curricular requirements, it was recommended that all junior high sectors offer a wide variety of elective activities. Those activities specifically recommended included industrial arts, family studies, art, drama, band, typing or keyboarding, and public speaking.

Two transitional periods for junior high students were identified as being particularly problematic. It was suggested that a process be developed to assist students when they moved from grade six to grade seven, and from grade nine to grade ten. To this end all junior high schools were to become more guidance oriented.

The Curriculum Supervisor then began what was to become the major focus and primary effort in staff development for the district. Teams of two teachers were brought in from each junior high to effect change in their respective schools, and a team of three principals was formed to help the supervisor manage the process. The supervisor said: "There was constant dialogue between myself and the three principals. This led to inservices because the principals were worried about getting all the teachers involved."

There was a lot of ambiguity because the teaching teams were excited, but back at the schools teachers were saying "what the hell are you people talking about." A series of inservices was held for the junior high school teachers. The supervisor recalled: "Each principal and team member said this is what we need in our school; so it was tailored to each school in terms of the degree of progress and the degree of comfort to change. The Board's goal was still there, so there was this central sense of a goal. This goal the Board adopted; how you get there is up to you."

Educational Programme

Introduction

This section will describe the efforts made in the district with respect to the educational programme that is available across the district, and to perceptions of how well that programme has been delivered. At a meeting of the Core Programme Committee in 1983 the school board explained its philosophy:

> Under the global approach we would organize and operate our 27 schools as if they were one single school in purpose. That purpose would be to offer the most complete educational opportunities possible for each and every student, regardless of travel required (within economic reason), and regardless of which area in the County our students happen to reside. (1983, Core Program Committee Meeting Report #31, p. 5)

This section will present an overview of the programmes that the district has made available, followed by the views and beliefs of school board members, central office administrators, school administrators, and students with respect to educational programme in the district.

District Profile of Programme Offerings

When school administrators were asked whether they thought the programmes at their respective schools were satisfactory, most of them replied that they were. When asked if their programmes met the needs of all of their students, most of their students, or just some of their students, administrators believed that most of their students' needs were being met at their schools. In addition, they felt that the teachers in their schools were satisfied as well.

The development of a CORE programme has been a difficult process. The Department of Education has been very reluctant to take a stand and declare categorically what students who graduate should study. In spite of criticism by business and the universities on the lack of standards and consistency between schools, the Department of Education has designated few courses to be compulsory for graduation. One high school in Halifax has claimed that its senior high school students can select from 140 different courses (Cited in Davis & Ryan, 1980). The number of high school courses approved in the Department of Education's Public School Programmes has varied slightly over the last ten years. The most recent listing of senior high courses in the Public School Programmes (PSP) is numbered at 112.

When the Department of Education made public its Report of the Advisory Committee on the Public School Programme (1987), the Board of the Nor[illegible]ty District struck a committee to meet with school administrators to discuss the recommendations. The main topic of discussion was the proposed increase in total number of credits students would be required to complete for graduation and the increase in compulsory credits from four to ten.

The general feeling of the principals was that "they approve of the recommendations philosophically, but if implemented, will cause problems in some of the smaller secondary schools" (NCDSB Minutes, 1987, p. 131). With respect to staffing it was felt that implementation would require hiring of additional staff, retraining, and transfers. It was pointed out at that time that an increasing number of grade 12 students were already returning after graduation to pick up one or two more subjects. Any further increase could require a fourth year for many senior high students.

The courses offered in the district fall into five categories. There are academic courses that are considered to be university preparatory at the grade 12 level. There are general courses for those students not bound for university. There are open courses, which are often thought of as interest courses. There are honours courses for the gifted student, and finally those courses that rest outside the PSP listing. These courses are often pilots or courses developed by schools to meet local needs. Table 5-14 shows the average number of courses offered throughout the district since 1985.

On the basis of these numbers, the district appears to emphasize the delivery of academic courses. The number of open and general courses is about the same. There has not been a significant increase or decrease in the type of course delivered over the last ten years. If you look at the individual schools over this period you will see increases and decreases in the number of total courses offered at the grade level. This fluctuation is most likely the result of changes in annual enrolments.

Table 5-14

Average Number of Grade 10, 11, and 12 Courses Offered in the District Since 1985

Type of Course	District Average Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Open	4	4	4
General	3	4	3
Academic	6	7	9
Honours	0.5	0	1
Out. PSP	0	1	1

When you look at the total number of courses offered each year in the five categories, there is a considerable disparity amongst the schools. Alpha High School is well above the district average in all course categories. Delta High School and Beta Rural High School are below the mean in all categories. Table 5-15 gives the total average number of course offerings by school and category since 1985 and compares them to the district mean.

With respect to academic and open courses, most of the schools with the exception of Alpha High School offer a relatively equitable range of courses.

Table 5-15

Average Course Availability in all High Schools Since 1985

	SCHOOLS						
Courses	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Alpha Rural	Delta	Beta Rural	District Mn.
Open	22	14	10	12	7	8	12
General	13	13	11	10	5	7	10
Academic	30	25	24	23	14	19	23
Honours	4	1	1	0	0	0	1
Out PSP	13	1	1	1	0	0	3

It is evident that there are great disparities in the access to the type of course which meets the special needs of students. Many of the schools do not have a large selection of general and honours courses. In those courses that are outside the PSP there are also great disparities. These are the innovative offerings that are developed in the schools for particular groups of students.

At the junior high level the differences are not as noticeable. Again size is the determining factor. The larger junior high facilities have been able to offer special education and French Immersion is available at Beta High

School and Gamma High School. Most of the junior high sectors offered separate adjusted classes in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies at one time or another. Since 1989 and the new focus on junior high schools, few of these special courses remain.

The significant differences in programme rest in what could be called the extra courses. For example, in several schools courses such as Career Guidance, Study Skills, Remedial Reading, and Forestry have appeared for a year or so while resources and staff were available. Some have been introduced and have been maintained, such as Forestry at Beta Rural High School. Beta High School, Alpha Rural High School, and Alpha Junior High School were able to initiate and sustain a fine arts programme, which the other schools could not do because of staffing.

The sixty-one graduating students who were surveyed were asked to select the three courses they believed would be of most value to them in the future. A total of 163 selections were made. The students from the smaller two high schools obviously did not have as large a selection from which to choose. Of the 163 selections made by these students 65% of the choices consisted of 5 CORE subjects. The students from Alpha had 83 courses to choose from that year, yet few selected beyond 5 CORE subjects from the list. Table 5-16 outlines the selections.

Many of students who made these selections are the same students who complained about the lack of variety in course selection. Students attending Alpha High School where 83 courses were available complained of a poor selection. In spite of this disposition, when it came to the selection of courses deemed important for their future, the selection was quite narrow. The courses that comprised 62% of all those selected were available at all

the high schools in the district.

Table 5-16

Course Selection by Graduating Students on the Basis of Perceived Future Value

Math	22%
English	15%
Law	9%
Biology	8%
Physics	8%
62% of all Selections	

Much significance has been placed upon low female student enrolment in math and science courses. This concern was expressed in particular by the business sector and by post-secondary educators in the Report of the Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education (1985). Since 1984, in all the schools across the district there has been a gradual decrease in the percentage of female enrolment in university preparatory mathematics classes and in grade 11 and 12 physics. The female student enrolment in chemistry and biology has been stable since 1984. In those schools that offer honours courses in math and the sciences, the female student enrolment is extremely low except in biology. Table 5-17 provides the percentage of total

female enrolment in selected university preparatory classes in 1984, 1987, and 1990.

Table 5-17

Percentage of Total District Female Enrolment

University Prep. Course	1984	1987	1990
Math	54	38	36
Physics	40	31	32
Biology	63	56	57
Chemistry	60	47	58
French	68	70	63

There seems to be an equitable distribution of male and female students in the remaining courses with the exception of French. French courses are a predominantly female domain. Although the district distribution varies from year to year on either side of a 65%-35% female-male split, in some schools in some years it varies as much as 80% female enrolment to 20% male enrolment. This distribution pattern may be changed when the compulsory French course is implemented and when those junior high students in French immersion reach the senior high school.

School Board View of Educational Programme

In terms of equality of programme across the district many board members pointed to the problems that exist at the smaller schools. It was felt that the small schools couldn't provide the same programme as the larger schools. However most felt "the opportunity to transfer to other schools and semestering would close the disparity gap."

Board members were asked how they felt the district prepared students for post-secondary institutions or for employment. It was noted that in 1982 the district gathered data from post-secondary institutions about the adequacy of its graduates: "It appeared then our students were adequately prepared." Some board members felt that things had changed since 1982, and that now there was more need for guidance. It was observed that it was more and more difficult for students to enter the community colleges because of fewer spaces and higher entrance requirements. There was some doubt raised about students leaving the system having adequate skills to gain employment, especially with the economy being so poor and so few jobs available. One member commented: "I have always argued that students who have a high school diploma should know how to do simple math, fill out a job application etc., but so many people are applying for jobs for which they are just not suited."

Views were expressed about long-range goals in the area of programme. Stay in school initiatives were deemed important as well as the expansion of French Immersion. However, it was generally believed that existing programmes should be evaluated before adding on new ones and that the district needed to "make better use of existing facilities, staff, and services." Board members did not see their role in the evaluation of programme as

being high nor did they express a desire to have a much greater role.

Table 5-18 shows the actual and preferred levels of school board member involvement with respect to maintaining a school system that allows students to meet post-secondary and employment requirements. It also shows their perceived level of involvement in providing equal opportunities across the district.

School board members' perceptions about their preferred and actual roles are disparate when concerned with meeting students post-secondary needs. Although board members' expectations for the district to provide students with employment opportunities are not as high as those for post-secondary needs, the range between preferred and actual roles is the same. Board members do not indicate the desire to have as great a role in providing equal opportunities across the district as they do in meeting post-secondary needs. The perceived differences in what board members are doing and what they should be doing to provide equal opportunities across the district are not as great as those in the other two categories.

Central Office View

An administrator in central office felt that: "If there is a child with an identifiable need, chances are that somewhere in the district there is a programme that will fit that child." Equality of programme across the district was viewed in two ways. First, it was agreed that because of the differences in the size of schools, you cannot have equality in the breadth of programme. The 1985 Annual Report of the Programme Committee provided the number of different senior high school courses offered across the district in 1984. Table 5-19 compares the number of senior high school

Table 5-18

School Board Members' Perception of Role in Providing Opportunities (Mn Response

Actual Role = a

Preferred Role = p

	VH 7	H 6	M H 5	Med 4	M L 3	Low 2	V L 1
Meet Students Post-secondary needs		p		a			
Meets Students Employment Opportunities			p		a		
Provide Equal Opportunities across District			p	a			

courses in each school as presented in the annual report. Included with these figures are the number of courses offered in 1990.

The second type of equality has to do with the quality of the programme that is presented in each school. One senior management official commented at length:

> If my children were going to attend any one of the six senior high schools, I would like them to go to the high school that was nearest my home wherever that would be. From a quality point of view I feel just as confident as a parent sending my kids to any of those six schools. I know if I send my child to the smallest he is only going to have eight or ten courses to take. Those are the essentials and they are present in all schools. Now if I had a child who had some severe or extreme personal academic needs, I would want him to go to a school where there was a broader curriculum so that he could meet his needs. In this respect I

think it is absolutely fair to say that one high school is as good as another, despite the fact that there isn't the same equal number of courses being offered.

Another central office administrator felt the number of courses being offered was important: "The only significant music and art programmes we have at a high school level are at Alpha High School; we tried at Alpha Rural High School and at Gamma High School but we ended up with two or three kids in the end."

Table 5-19

Number of Courses Offered in Senior High Schools 1984-1990

	1984		1990	
	Enrolment	Courses	Enrolment	Courses
Alpha H. S.	1000	78	914	83
Beta H. S.	336	50	310	51
Alpha Rural H. S.	300	49	212	43
Gamma H. S.	286	48	260	47
Delta H. S.	132	36	112	36
Beta Rural H. S.	67	29	56	36

This administrator was a proponent of the two high school concept that was first presented in the Board White Paper in 1986 during the initial stages of the district's long-range planning. The two high school concept called for the closing of senior high school sectors at Delta High School and at Beta Rural High School. Beta High School would become a junior high school and a new larger high school facility would be built nearby to take all the senior high school students including those from Epsilon who since 1978 had attended Alpha High School. He felt that this larger facility would provide a programme equal to that available at Alpha High School. However, public pressure from the various communities resulted in the two high school concept being shelved.

After a considerable amount of delay a new high school was built and opened in the fall of 1992. The school was designed to accommodate approximately 450 students. When it opened this new school housed the senior high school students from Beta High School and eight students who transferred from the Beta Rural High School. As of September 1992 the Beta High School was renamed the Beta Middle School. Thus in its eleventh year Nova District's family of schools was altered with the construction of a new high school. However, at first it did not result in the transfer of students from different schools. In reality all that occurred was that the senior high school students from Beta High School travelled an extra 15 minutes down the highway and that those who used to walk to school in town are now bussed. The senior high teaching staff from Beta High School and administration moved with the students. In 1994 the senior high sector of

Beta Rural School was closed and the students transferred to the new high school. The closing and transfer was not easily accomplished by the school board.

As far as the equality in the delivery of programme it was felt that the people of the district had been fairly well served in terms of an equitable distribution of teachers and administrators in the past ten years. An interesting comment was made concerning school administrators. It was unfortunate that the district was unable to interest educators from outside the district to apply for administrative positions. It was remarked that: "In time it will have the same effect as an incestuous relationship."

Another senior management team member talked at length about equitable staffing and the apparent problems faced at one particular high school over the years:

> I always sensed that teachers were most reluctant to go to Alpha Rural High School. I always thought that Alpha Rural was the place that teachers least liked. Some teachers have actually asked me what kind of social life could I expect to have out there? It was difficult to get people who really impressed you at interviews to go there. Sometimes after you appointed someone to a position there, you would get a phone call saying: 'I just got a job in another county. I am sorry about the interview, but no thanks.' So we would end up looking at our second choices.

It was also felt that teachers didn't stay as long in Alpha Rural as they did elsewhere. There was a sense that this transient situation applied to the school administrators as well. The principal there at the time of consolidation had indicated to central office that he was interested in working in another county and should the opportunity arise, he would

leave. The opportunity apparently didn't arise and he remained principal there for nine years following the formation of the new district. Further comment from central office confirmed this lack of mobility: "I think that sort of thing happens in the Alpha Rural area. I don't see it happen much at Beta Rural High School or in other schools. But at Alpha Rural thai is a problem. So I don't know in terms of being able to provide equal staffing and equal calibre or quality of staff."

With regard to questions about the educational programme providing post-secondary and employment opportunities, central office administrators are more optimistic about the district's influence to get students into post-secondary institutions than gaining employment. It was generally felt that students who graduate have good opportunities to continue their studies. Some success in this area was attributed to six guidance counselors who "are out banging on university doors for scholarships and trying to get scholarships from business." One administrator believed that a closer liaison was required between the schools and universities. Schools still retained a type of ownership on the students even if they attended university: "Someone has to be the ombudsman for the kids."

It was also felt by central office staff that business and the schools had to cooperate more closely. Co-operative education was deemed good and worthwhile, but more efforts were needed. Schools were going to have to consider the specific needs of the employer and to respond to them. However, caution was expressed at the possibility of education becoming too "employer driven."

One central office administrator was very concerned about educational

standards in the district, across the province, and across the country. The percentage of student retention had increased dramatically over the years and: "We may be trying to do too much for too many and not doing as well as we should be doing." He believed that the top kids were getting a programme at the senior high level that was much "more rigorous" than it used to be. But he added that there had been a "great watering down of some programmes at universities, and the same thing is really happening in our system." The problem lay at the lower end of the academic scale where students were no longer being challenged.

School Administrator View

School administrators were asked to discuss their schools' educational programme at length. They were asked to assess the respective strengths and weaknesses of their programmes. In discussing the strengths of their programmes principals and vice-principals tended to focus on being able to meet the needs of their students or on the rigor of their programme. Administrators from the smaller schools emphasized "individualized attention" or "close teacher-student relationships." Smaller schools also mentioned the closeness between school and community. Administrators from the larger schools talked about the range of options and the "search for excellence."

The weaknesses in programmes centred around three main problem areas. One was in specific types of programmes. A second was related to school size, and a third to the teaching staff. Administrators of small schools complained of gaps in programme offerings at both ends of the spectrum; not enough general courses and not enough honours courses. Teachers were getting too old, "a stagnant aging staff." Some teachers were

responsible for too many subjects or as one vice-principal commented about his staff: " They were teaching a smorgasbord of subjects." Teachers were also teaching outside their area of expertise. It is interesting to note that the principal of Alpha Rural High School felt that his most capable students were transferring out after grade 9.

School administrators were also asked to discuss changes that had occurred recently in their schools' programme. Most of the changes mentioned were in teaching strategies or in school organization. Some talked about new programmes, and these fell into common categories of music and computer courses. Considerable mention was made of the cooperative education/ work experience component and of French Immersion. Teaching strategies were emphasized at the junior high level and were consistent with the district goal to change the new junior high school, which focused child-centred approaches.

The two smallest high schools discussed the implementation of the semester system for their senior high sectors. Semestering first started at the Delta High School in September 1987 as a pilot project. The purpose behind the change was to offer more courses at the senior high with the same number of teachers. After one year it was reported that the students preferred the system, and that the school had the full support of the parents since inception (NSSBA, 1988, June, p. 1). After much consultation with the administrators and teachers of Delta High School, Beta Rural High School implemented the semester system in the senior high sector. In both situations central office supported the changes.

According to the Superintendent, the Department of Education advised against the piloting of a semestered senior high school. The principal of

Delta High School believed that a semestered schedule would allow his school to increase course offerings and reduce the number of courses his teachers had to instruct at any one time. In September, 1987 with the support of the Board, central office staff, the community, and the teaching staff, the senior high sector at Delta was semestered. At the time it was the only school in the province that used a semestered schedule. The pilot project was evaluated at the end of the school year. There was general agreement that the new schedule was working well. It allowed this particular school to increase its programme offerings. The teachers felt there was less strain in the preparation of their classes. As one teacher commented: " It gave you a chance to breathe." The students were enthusiastic as well because they could concentrate on three subjects rather than on six or seven.

The following year Beta Rural High School followed the example of Delta and semestered the senior high school sector. Two years later owing to reductions in teaching staff, Beta Rural High School administration semestered part of the junior high school to avoid reducing their programme at that level. The successful transition at Beta was the result of collaboration between the administration and teaching staffs of the two schools. Teachers from Beta visited classrooms at Delta. They talked to teachers and students. Prior to implementation, public meetings were held at the Beta school to explain what the semestered schedule was and how it would work.

The role of the district office staff in these changes was one of facilitator. The central office staff provided support when required, but did not direct the proceedings. Of the six high schools that have senior high sectors, three

are semestered and three have regular schedules. This arrangement has proven to be an advantage to the students' of the district. Students, who miss a substantial part of their school year, can attend one of the semestered schools and still get some high school credits. For example, if a student missed classes from September to January, they would be ineligible for course credits because there is a required number of credit hours for each course. This same student could register for second semester courses in February at one of the semestered high schools and acquire three to four credits. In this way the whole year has not been a loss to the student. In addition, those students with enough credits are able to graduate in February at the end of the first semester. This has also allowed some students to seek employment five months prior to attending a post-secondary institution.

In this particular example, the students in the district were given an opportunity that did not exist prior to consolidation. Semestering was not the result of a district initiative, but rather the consequence of local problem solving.

Changes that were in the planning stages were mainly at the junior high level and focused on cooperative learning strategies and individualized instruction. At the time of the questionnaire Alpha Rural High School was investigating the possibility of trying out the semester system. In September 1992, they implemented the semestered schedule for their senior high students.

School administrators were also asked if there was a specific group of students that was most affected by any weaknesses in programme. Most schools said that all students were generally affected. Some schools targeted

either gifted students, "low level achievers" or both together. Epsilon Junior High School stated that did not have any weaknesses so therefore no students were affected by weaknesses in programme.

School administrators were questioned about their level of involvement in various activities related to their role and the educational programme offered at their schools. Administrators were asked about their efforts in maintaining existing programmes and about their roles in adapting to changes. They were also asked to rate their efforts to promote programming that met the needs of all their students.Table 5-20 shows the perceptions of their actual level of involvement in these roles. Table 5-21 shows their desired level of involvement.

Student View

Graduating students from three of the high schools in the district were asked to respond to a series of questions submitted in a questionnaire in 1991. They were asked to discuss their experiences in their particular schools as related to the programme they encountered. They were asked to scale their level of satisfaction with respect to various aspects concerned with the programme in their school. The students were also asked about their future plans. In total 61 out of 223 potential graduating students responded to the questionnaire. The students represented the entire graduating class from Beta Rural High School (12 students); 18 students of the graduating class from Delta High School (5 were absent), and; 31 graduating students from Alpha High School (two English classes, one general and one academic). Alpha is the district's largest high school. When asked what they were going to do after graduation from high school, 47 of the students stated they intended to continue their education. Even though they were graduating,

five of these students said they would be returning the following year for purposes of upgrading. One student said she had only just "figured out " what she wanted to do, and had to

Table 5-20

Administrators' Role Related to Educational Programming (Mn Response)

Principals = P

Vice-Principals = V

All School Administrators	V.H. 7	H. 6	M. H. 5	Med. 4	M. L. 3	Low 2	V. L. 1
Maintains Educational Programme			P		V		
Fosters Programmes Meeting All Students' Needs			P	V			

Table 5-21

Administrators' Preferred Role Related to Educational Programming (Mn. Responses)

Principals = P

Vice-Principals = V

All School Administrators	V.H. 7	H. 6	M. H 5	Med. 4	M. L 3	Low 2	V. L. 1
Maintains Educational Programme		P		V			
Fosters Programmes Meeting All Students' Needs	P			V			
Adapts School To Environmental Change			P	V			

return for courses she required. Five students claimed they had already found employment, and six were actively seeking it.

The students were asked if they would have attended a different school if the opportunity had arisen Most of the students said they would have remained in their present school. From the two smaller schools, Beta Rural High and Delta High, three students said they would have preferred going elsewhere because of the small course selection in their own schools. Two students from Alpha said they would have left for social reasons: "The people at this school judge you and put you into a group; they favour athletes and other special groups."

For Alpha students the reasons for not transferring to another school were mainly related to reputation and status with respect to other schools in the district: "Alpha is exceptional; the best in the district. People take pride in the school." The fact that there were many course selections at Alpha also was a commonly given reason. A student from Delta High stated she had previously attended one of the larger schools but preferred this small town school because the smaller one was "more personal and easier to work in with less distractions." A student form Beta Rural said he was "too scared to leave." Another said it was "too far to travel."

The students were asked to list the strengths of the educational programme in their schools. Comments from Alpha students focused on teachers, courses, and environmental factors. The teachers were friendly and knowledgeable. There were many courses to choose from and there was a sense of freedom where you could "make your own decisions." The strengths at the two smaller schools centred around "knowledgeable, concerned, and friendly" teachers. Small size was viewed as a plus because

of small class sizes and individual help. One student commented: "Everyone cares about each other and tries to help." The semester system was also seen as a strength in both of these smaller schools.

Students were also asked to list what they perceived to be weaknesses in their programmes. Several students attending Alpha thought the large size of the school was a negative because of "overcrowded halls and classes." Some indicated that there was a lack of resources and not enough books to go around. A number of students felt that the teachers were a weakness. Teachers were "impersonal", "unprepared", "not interested", and "not open to new things." Several Alpha students complained about the "inadequate course selection" or about a lack of selection in specific areas. Small size and a lack in the variety of courses was seen as a weakness at Delta High. Another factor was the perceived lack of freedom: "senior high students are treated like a bunch of grade sixes." Course selection was a factor at Beta rural as well. Students also thought teachers didn't give them enough time to work and review. Having the same teacher for several courses was also seen as a weakness.

The students indicated how they felt about the high school programme they had experienced and to rate their degree of satisfaction on five aspects of that programme. They were also asked to give an overall level of satisfaction with their school. The rating consisted of a six point scale ranging from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied. Table 5-22 gives the mean responses of the total group.

The levels of satisfaction expressed by these students in the various areas are generally higher in the two smaller schools. The exception to this is when students were asked about the number and selection of courses that

were available in each school. Here the satisfaction levels are slightly higher at Alpha High School. However, it seems that most of the Alpha students, who were asked about the number of courses available were slightly dissatisfied with that selection.

Finally, students were asked to make recommendations that would improve the programme in their schools. Students at Alpha High felt there was a lot of room for improvement with the teaching staff. There was an apparent lack of understanding

Table 5-22

Student Satisfaction with Programme (Mn. Responses)

	Level of Satisfaction for All 61 Students						
	H. S. 6	M. S. 5	S. S. 4	S. D. 3	M. D. 2	H. D. 1
Programme prepared you for post-secondary plans				*		
Programme prepared you for employment					*	
Range and number of course options available					*	
Teachers knowledgeable and prepared			*			
Extra-curricular activities available			*			
Overall level of satisfaction with school			*			

about how teachers came up with marks. There was also a sense that there were great differences among teachers. Some students wanted more teachers and fewer students in the class. It was suggested that: "Students who don't want to learn should be forced to leave." With reference to suggestions made about certain groups of students leaving, some comments were directed towards the departure of special education students and IB students. The students at the other two high schools focused mainly on teachers as well. They wanted a greater variety of teachers. They also wanted their teachers to be younger. Both sets of students from the smaller schools thought there should be more courses.

Adult Education and Special Education

Special Education in the District

In the annual report made by the Special Student Services Committee in December 16, 1983, the Board announced that the Supervisor of Special Education had developed a "new Special Education Model for our School system for our estimated 850 special education students" (NCDSB, Annual Report: Special Student Services Committee, 1983, December, p. 1). The model was designed to be "preventative" in nature rather than just "remedial." In addition to this, the committee reported the purchase of The Verge House for $ 100,000. This building would support a group of highest needs adult students who were still associated with the district.

The special education model held that all students should be a part of the regular classroom situation until they were unable to cope with conditions that existed in the class. Special educational needs that required support

beyond the classroom fell along a continuum that ranged from special materials for use in the regular class to placement in special settings. Whenever it was possible, students with special needs would be served in the regular class. As it became necessary students would receive a protected educational setting in proportion to need. A return from a protected educational setting to a less protected setting was a consistent goal built into the model.

At the first level of the continuum the regular teacher retained responsibility for a student's individual programme and progress. The student would be a full-time member of the regular class with special instructional materials. The next level would add consultative services from central office, but the regular teacher retained full responsibility for programme. If this level proved inadequate to cope with the need, an itinerant teacher or special tutor would visit the class to provide assistance. The regular teacher would still be responsible for maintaining the individual programme. Beyond this point the model introduces resource support on a part time basis, and the development and provision of an individual programme would be the joint responsibility of regular teacher and special education teacher. A student who was still unable to cope with the regular class would be placed into a full time special class, and the regular teacher would no longer have any responsibility for the education of that child. This level of assistance was not available at all schools in the system and would require some students to be transported to schools within the district but outside their immediate locale. The last three levels of the model required students to be billeted in a special boarding school or a hospital. The last phase was home bound instruction.

The Special Student Services Committee reported in 1984 that the Verge House was operating as a school-home for ten highest needs students. Life skills was stressed as the major part of the curriculum there. It was also reported that the special education model continued to be implemented. Two "receiving centres" had been set up in schools at either end of the district where students were sent on the basis of need.

The 1986 Board document White Paper stated that the district had requested the Department of Education to evaluate the provision of special education in the jurisdiction. The report was received by the Board in August 1987. It was a positive review of the conditions found in the district. Recommendations were made to improve "assessments, placement procedures, staff in-service planning, and the development of a written policy" (NCDSB, Annual Report:Programme Committee, 1987, December, p. 3). Following this report work was started on the development of a handbook to help guide district endeavors in special education.

At the secondary level students with special educational needs were accommodated through the use of alternative programmes. At the junior high level several adjusted programmes were available in schools prior to consolidation, and were continued after the new district was formed. At the senior high school level *general* courses were available in most schools depending upon their ability to provide them.

Gifted Education in the District

The 1986 White Paper commented that there had been many briefs presented to the Board on the topic of "education for the gifted". At that time, the board admitted that it had few programmes for gifted students at the elementary and junior high levels. Senior high students had the

International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme at Alpha High School. In addition, some of the high schools offered *honours* courses. Only Alpha, Beta, and Delta high schools were able to provide honours courses with any regularity from year to year. Only Alpha High School was able to offer high school students honours courses in all three grades in any given year.

A committee of teachers prepared a report for the district in 1987 on education for the gifted. An elementary principal, who was seconded for a two month period, attended sessions at the University of Connecticut, and he also prepared a report on gifted education. By 1988 the Board had adopted a philosophy of gifted education and committed itself to "the development of a comprehensive programme for the discovery and education of our gifted and talented students" (NCDSB, Minutes, Appendix D, 1988, August, p. 1). The programme was to include: (a) Philosophy and Objectives; (b) Student Identification (Discovering them); (c) Organization and Operation; (d) Teacher In-servicing , and (e) Curriculum. Currently the programme has not been implemented across the district at the junior high school level. Programme enrichment is available mainly at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Adult Education Programme

The researcher spent an entire morning interviewing and talking with the Supervisor of Adult Education. At the time of the interview he indicated that he would be retiring the next spring. He had been in charge of adult education since the beginning of the district. Prior to 1982 there had been five adult education administrators in the county each working for the five separate school boards. Because of the population base, the majority of programmes at that time were being carried out in Gammatown.

The supervisor felt that consolidation and the subsequent centralization of adult education was very important. He was quick to point out that even though consolidation " centralized the distribution of classes; it didn't limit the distribution of classes to any one area." He believed that before 1982 people from the smaller areas were reluctant to go to an adjacent town to take courses because they didn't feel "entitled" to take them. The reason was that the location of the course being offered lay outside the school board jurisdiction where their children attended. Now with the new district, they felt entitled. The expansion of the district also meant more access to facilities which in turn provided more equipment and materials.

There is no apparent Board policy or philosophy that applies directly to adult education. The supervisor is also responsible for driver education, summer schools and community relations. He reports to the superintendent and to the assistant superintendent in charge of programme.

The primary objective of the adult education programme is providing basic education and upgrading. The supervisor commented:

> The most important part of our entire programme, and this is not the view held by all adult education administrators in the other 21 school boards, but it is very definitely held by me . . . the most important programme we have is the General Educational Development (GED) for anyone over 19 years of age who wants to go back to school. They come to me and say 'Look I've only got a gradefour, what can you do for me'?

The programme runs three terms a year. Courses vary according to the needs. In the past, adult education also consisted of interest courses. This type of course is now the responsibility of the County Recreation

Department. The supervisor works closely with five recreation directors who provide interest courses in the district, but their programmes are not counted in the district's numbers. Adult education is promoted through the media that run advertisements a week or so prior to each session in the fall, winter, and spring. Course instructors register classes and collect fees.

The supervisor was very adamant to assert that the programmes offered are not there to "develop employment opportunities or to create people for employment." Adult education exists to allow people who are working or otherwise occupied to improve their education and associated skills. Canada Manpower puts on programmes to get people ready for work. His responsibility, he said: " Is to increase educational opportunities so people can expand their own employment opportunities. It's for them."

Upgrading exists at three levels. First, there is a junior high programme for people over 17 years of age who have discontinued school. Students are screened for grade placement. After following a 12 week course of study in English, science, math, and social studies, exams are written. District certificates are given that attest to levels of attainment. Second, the GED provides senior high school upgrading. The province provides testing and certification. The supervisor estimated that on average 250 students follow the GED programme annually. Third, university credit courses are offered in co-operation with St. Mary's University, Universite' Ste-Anne, and Teachers College.

Central office staff felt that the district had been very supportive with adult education. In the first year of operation there were 1739 students who took a total of 138 courses. In the following year even more students took courses. The Board was very enthusiastic:

> Under the leadership of . . . an outstanding programme has been developing on a rapid scale since amalgamation. As 1983 draws to an end, over 2000 adults have taken one course or more during the calendar year through our Board sponsored programme. This is truly an outstanding School Board achievement which has earned us many well deserved compliments throughout the district. (NCDSB, Annual Report: Special Student Services Committee, 1983, December, p. 3)

Since the beginning the enrolment in adult education courses has averaged about 1500 students a year which required approximately 50 teachers. The supervisor hired everyone on his staff, and the training was his responsibility. He set aside funds for in-sevice training when necessary. The major cost of the adult education programme was the cost of instructors. Most of the teachers were provincially certified public school teachers. The supervisor had very little turnover in teaching staff. He tried to introduce as many as possible from outside the system, but approximately 50% were teachers from the district. He felt that for those teachers from the district the job was: "A shot in the arm to them when they go back to their day time job. At night you have a student who is attentive and who is there for a purpose. A student who has paid money doesn't cause you any problems. "

The supervisor attributed the continued success of the programme not to poor economic conditions, but to a "hands on approach." He claimed to have personally passed out certificates to every graduate at the close of every course. He was proud to say: "I still knock on every door and say how are you making out, any problems? If you don't do that you will never find that out. I publish my home phone number the same as I do the district number.

It drives my wife crazy."

Summary

In its first year of operation the Nova County District School Board was governed by a new and expanded school board membership, which consisted of elected members from various and diverse regions from within the county. The board also included a member appointed by each municipal council and appointees of the provincial government. The central office administration was an amalgamation of former central office administrators. The superintendent had previously been the superintendent of the largest component of the county district. Former superintendents from smaller components were assistant superintendents in the new district. In September, 1982 most of the school administrators, teachers, and students returned to the same schools and positions they had vacated in June.

The rationale for school district consolidation was to increase educational opportunities for all students. Essentially the equalization of educational opportuntity was seen as access to a wider range of programmes and good instruction. Most respondents believed that the district was successful in providing these opportunities. The structure of the district widened the physical boundaries and thus widened the range of programme opportunities. It was held that the larger size of the district enhanced staff development endeavors and as a consequence improved instruction.

There continued to exist a disparity in the programme offerings amongst the secondary schools. Large schools were able to offer a wider range of options than the smaller schools. However, all secondary schools were able to provide a basic academic programme. The size of the schools had an

influence on teaching assignments. Teachers in smaller schools were responsible for a wider range of subjects and subject levels. Secondary students were generally dissatisfied with the range of programmes offered to them in their respective schools. This perception of dissatisfaction was shared by most students whether they had a limited or a wide selection of courses from which to choose.

Much of the professional development for administrators was in the form of evaluation. In the first ten years there was little and infrequent change in administrative personnel. Central office staff, school administrators, and department heads tended to be middle-aged males. Evaluation was also viewed as an important aspect in the development of teachers. The Teachers' Centre was a focal point for many other developmental efforts. Over the years, the average classroom teacher changed. Teachers were older, had more classroom experience, and were better educated. Although the representation of women teachers in the junior high sector and in counselling increased, the number of women teaching science and math remained extremely low in the senior high schools.

Most school board members, central office staff, and school administrators believed the new district had many desirable features. The primary advantage was perceived as a general improvement in the quality of education provided to all the students. Some school board members felt that the efficiencies created by the increased size were offset by the greater amount of time that had to be spent on matters not directly related to education. Owing to the political nature of their position, school board members had difficulty in developing a district ethos. In contrast, central

office staff, school administrators, and teachers developed a sense of district with greater ease. Many felt that the Teachers' Centre was a significant influence in creating a link for these employees.

The literature on educational opportunity indicated that special efforts were required for those people with special needs. In this area of compensatory education, the district was able to utilize its resources to reorganize the delivery of special education and to establish an effective county-wide adult education programme. Special education opportunities were primarily realized by making facilities available to students previously restricted by school board boundaries. The expansion of adult education in the county was attributed directly to consolidation and the subsequent centralization of efforts and facilities.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion

Introduction

In the 1970s and 1980s two major Nova Scotia studies made recommendations concerning how public schooling should be organized and operated. Both of these studies were in response to the real and the perceived difficulties that local school boards were experiencing in delivering relevant and equitable educational opportunities to their constituencies. The Graham Commission of 1974 recommended wide sweeping changes that would place the operational focus of public education at the school level. Accordingly, each and every school in the province would be governed by a school council consisting of teachers, parents, and a principal. Not only would the proposed council govern the school, it would also be concerned with the actual operation of each school. The Walker Commission in 1981 took a more traditional approach to equalizing educational facilities. The Walker Report recommended the formation of consolidated school districts that would be coterminous with county boundaries. The Walker recommendations were a logical extension of an earlier amalgamation process that had been initiated in three counties in Nova Scotia in 1971. This proposed recommendation was consistent with the general trend in the consolidation of smaller school jurisdictions across North America (Tompkins, 1986).

The purpose of this study was to examine one county-wide school district that was consolidated in 1982, and to determine if the educational opportunities for students were indeed improved by consolidation. The findings in Nova County support the notion held at that time that the

linking of smaller school boards into a larger, centralized organization would equalize, enhance, or maintain educational opportunities for secondary students. In terms of student enrolment and the number of teachers, Nova County was at the optimum range for operational effectiveness as suggested by Faber (1966).

Nova Scotia is essentially a rural and somewhat conservative province, and this may explain why the wide-ranging and innovative recommendations of the Graham Commission were not implemented. A change in provincial government in the late 1970s may have been another. Regardless of the reasons for putting many of these recommendations aside, those dealing with consolidation were promoted, accepted in principle, and ultimately implemented. The rationale for consolidating all school boards was increased funding to school districts, and the belief that educational opportunities for all students would be expanded thereafter.

Equal Educational Opportunity

Small Schools and Equal Opportunity

It is certain that some of the original five jurisdictions in Nova County could not have provided many of the opportunities that resulted from consolidation. At the individual school level there was a perception that some schools had lost and not really gained anything from the restructuring. The schools, which were located in towns, had a larger population and thus a larger financial base. These schools did not benefit significantly in tangible ways such as more teachers and programmes. The public was well aware of this situation, and within two years of consolidation, the parents in one municipality made serious efforts to

withdraw their schools from the district. Ultimately the schools remained in the system, but the perception remained that the new district had not been a benefit with respect to providing adequate programming.

The smaller schools located in the rural areas did gain from consolidation. It was in the small schools where educational opportunities needed to be equalized. As suggested by Bumbarger and Ratsoy (1975) in their Alberta study, if there was not a need for the small schools, then they would not exist. In Nova Scotia, funds are allocated by the Department of Education on the basis of student enrolment. Nova District reallocated these funds disproportionately to these smaller schools to compensate for the smaller numbers. Thus the smaller schools supported a teaching and administrative staff that was larger than could be justified purely on the basis of student enrolment. As a result, students in smaller schools have had access to more programmes and more teachers than could have been provided without district intervention. This disproportiante weighting of resources was recommended in the Alberta study (Bumbarger and Ratsoy, 1975), however in that case it was suggested that the funds be allotted directly from the province and not the district jurisdiction.

Nova District enabled two of its high schools, which meet the criteria of small-school classification, to remain in operation for the decade that followed consolidation. The small rural high school was eventually closed and its students moved to a new facility, which opened in 1992. However, the students from this small school did not begin to attend the new high school until September 1994. The move was delayed because of strong community support for the small school to continue its operation.

The school board held a public meeting at the school in question to allow

parents, teachers, and students to make submissions concerned with the proposed school closing. The submissions that were made to maintain the school's operation at this meeting consisted of many of the arguments presented in the literature on small schools and will provide the focus for discussion in this section.

In particular, appeals were based on the perceived quality of education, which was manifested in the advantages of small class size and close student-teacher relations. Beckner (1983), Dunn (1977), and Nachtigal (1982) recognized the value of small schools in terms of morale, teacher/student interaction and instruction. The community held that small class size was an asset for their students. Glass (1982) believed there was a positive relationship between achievement and small class size, which he attributed to the flexibility in the use of programmes which were modified to meet individual needs. The close relations between teachers and students and the general positive feeling about teachers and school were expressed by students from both small schools in Nova District in the student questionnaires.

Wood and Kleine (1987) felt that making generalizations from one community to the next may not be possible. When students from the largest high school were asked to express their views about their school, the focus was on teachers, courses, and environmental factors. A wide selection of courses was equated with a sense of freedom. Choice and decision-making were important aspects of the school with respect to personal freedom. Some of the students in this school felt that the large size was a weakness because the school felt overcrowded. In addition to this overcrowding, the teaching staff was perceived as being impersonal and

uninterested in the needs of the student.

In contrast students from the two small schools referred to a sense of friendliness and caring that was an important part of their school experience. At both small schools students complained about the lack of freedom and of being treated like children. The overall level of satisfaction for students was higher at the two smaller schools than at the large school. The "feel good" aspect of the small school that was evident in most of the literature reviewed by Alberta Education (1984) and Marshall (1985) dealing with size and effectiveness was evident in both the small rural and small town schools in Nova County.

Presentations concerning the proposed school closing also made direct reference to the success of former students in post-secondary institutions and in the work force. The literature that relates to educational outcomes and school size is inconclusive. Alberta Education (1984) and Forsythe (1983) reported no significant differences in standardized test scores; Larson and Reiter (1985) and Rogers (1986) found a greater rate of graduation in small schools and higher scores in achievement tests respectively.

Achievement tests are given to all grade 9 and grade 12 students. The results of these tests are made public in the spring of each school year. Educators and the public can use these test results to compare schools, and school districts to provincial norms. When the achievement test results are published there are usually two reactions. If a school does well, the reaction is generally self-congratulatory; when the results are below provincial norms, the tests are criticized. The main criticism of these achievement tests is in the selection of the content that they are designed to test. Teachers must follow provincial guidelines when preparing their courses, but the

guidelines are in many respects quite general. Teachers are free to emphasize particular aspects of a given curriculum on the basis of facilities, resources, and student interest. The content of the achievement tests is not restricted to just CORE subjects. As a consequence, a grade 12 student who has not taken a high school course in physics would be less prepared to answer questions in that content area than a student who has already completed the grade 11 physics course. Thus the argument is made that poor test results sometimes occur when certain courses were not selected by students or because they just were not available. This problem surrounding access to information was pointed out by Eddington and Koehler (1987). They suggested that student background be considered whenever test results are compared. The implication is that rural students do not have equal access to information with their urban counterparts. This is not just a small school - big school problem, but rather a significant rural - urban difference. In terms of the concept of fair competition it could be inferred that the playing field is not level.

Central office administrators in Nova District recognized the diagnostic value of the achievement tests and encouraged school administrators to use them for that purpose. They realized that school comparisons on the basis of these annual test results were not practical. For example, the number of students writing these tests varied from 20 in one high school to over 200 in another. In 1992 when achievement test results were first published for public consumption, it was reported that the smallest high school in Nova County had ranked 11th in the province in science. Indeed this ranking far surpassed any of the other high schools in the district. Journalists made the claim that a small, rural school was able to do a better job with less money

and fewer facilities than the large high schools in the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. What did the high ranking really mean? It could have meant that with such a small group of students, a few excellent students had positively affected the scores of the whole group. It could also have been attributed to the positive aspects of the small school and good teaching.

The proposed school closing brought forward many arguments about the close ties between school and community. This supports Forsythe's (1983) assertion that social arguments concerned with the long-term interests of children and community will be used when small schools are threatened by closure. School closure is a policy problem. There are really only two options open to policymakers and school district administrators. Schools can be closed and the students bused to other schools. The alternative is to keep them open and operate them effectively. This situation illustrates the difficulties associated with the definition of equal educational opportunity. This point was recognized by Cuban (1990) with respect to equal opportunity in a democracy. Faction is part of the democratic process. Special interest groups have both rights and responsibilities. The school board in Nova County put off the closing of one school for ten years in deference to a small community group and their perception of what educational site was best for their children.

In spite of the controversy the school board decided to close the senior high sector of the school in question and move the students to a different facility. The decision was based upon the extra costs of staffing and transportation. This supports Coleman and LaRoque's (1986) and O'Donaghue's (1971) claim that because of staffing costs, small schools were inefficient to run. The transportation costs cited by the school board are

supported by Guthrie (1980), but he believed the whole subject concerned with cost savings was too ambiguous.

It was easier in the political sense to base decisions on the relative numbers of students, teachers, and courses than on the seemingly vague concepts of benefits derived from the notion of small school climate or culture. In a democracy decisions are made by consenus or by some formula of majority rule. When, as suggested by Husen (1979), the aims of education are in conflict it is difficult to develop a position from which to create and implement a policy regarding equality. This situation also shows the difficulties in transcending local politics.

Access to Programmes

A specific question that the study sought to answer was whether there were variations in programme offerings among the district's schools in the years following consolidation. The implication would be that a significant disparity in high school courses would mean unequal access and thus unequal educational opportunities for the district's students. By definition access to a minimum programme would fullfil the first requirement of equal educational opportunity.

As pointed out in Chapter 3, the programme at the junior high level is limited and the CORE is fairly clearly delineated. Access to an equal programme at this level is not as problematic as it is at the senior high level because of a restricted course selection. The inequities that do exist are at the senior high level and inequities in access to programme are the result of school size.

The question that asks whether a wide choice of programme offerings is really important is similar to the question asked by the English social

philosopher, Herbert Spencer, who asked "What knowledge is of most worth?"(1882, p. 27). If at the senior high level there are more than 100 approved courses that can be offered, can they all be of equal worth or importance? One answer to that question could be that the individual should be able to judge the value of each course and decide on the basis of what is perceived to be best for them. Some decisions would be made in a practical and rational way. If a student wishes to become a biologist, then there are specific courses that would guide the student towards that objective. Thus decisions could be made on the basis of the educational and/or occupational goals held by a given student. This freedom would be consistent with the expressed view of equal educational opportunity made by the Department of Education in its efforts to establish a CORE Programme in the 1980s. It is also consistent with the view held in the 1960s when the government introduced its plans for the Comprehensive School Programme. Equality occurs when each student finds in their respective schools the appropriate programme on the basis of interest and ability.

Many students however, don't know what they want to do, and some students don't want to do anything. For these reasons the Department of Education has a programme of required courses. As we have seen the list is rather general and leaves the student with considerable latitude to follow individual interest.

Irrespective to the choice of programme that was made available to them, most of the students expressed a belief that there was not enough choice. In spite of this belief these same students recognized in common nine course selections that were perceived as being of most worth. It would seem that satisfaction was related more to factors other than programme

opportunities. Students said that a wide selection of course offerings was important, but knew that only a few were really necessary.

It is generally held by the Department of Education that access to a wide range of programme offerings will result in greater educational opportunities. Government officials consistently sought to expand the number of required courses for graduation. The Department of Education clearly stated that it was "mandatory for school boards to provide a range of options" (Education Nova Scotia, 1989, p.5). The area of responsibility rests squarely in the school jurisdiction. How do we determine the optimum range of course offerings? The student as a consumer of programme offerings would desire an unlimited range of opportunities. This attitude toward the range of courses was expressed by the students respondents in this study. A very minor part of this range would increase occupational and/or post-secondary opportunities. The complaints voiced in the Report of the Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education (1985) from both the business community and post-secondary institutions were aimed at narrow curricular shortcomings in communication (English) and in math-science.

The public schools do not have to provide programmes that are exclusively of extrinsic value. In fact they don't. However, all students need to have access to a CORE of course offerings that are seen as a minimum requirement for fair competition. Primarily fair competition means the opportunity to gain entry to and attend post-secondary educational institutions. To achieve this all a student needs to do is complete 17 high school courses to a certain a degree of competency. The degree of competency that is required depends upon the post-secondary institution.

The range of competency for entry into most post-secondary institution programmes rests within the CORE offered at all high schools in Nova County.

Access to Teachers and Administrators

Taking into consideration the differences among teachers in terms of individual ability, creativity, and motivation, the teachers in the larger schools of Nova District had a greater opportunity to become more proficient at what they did. They were responsible for fewer subjects and fewer levels. They had the opportunity to teach the same subject to several sections and thus "fine tune" their preparation and instruction. If a particular approach was a disaster in the classroom, they could eliminate it from the next class. In the smaller schools, teachers often had one section of each subject or level. Some teachers had classes that ranged from grade seven to grade twelve. Not only did this require significant content adjustment, it also meant essential changes in pedagogy from one class to the next.

It is reasonable to suggest that over time those teachers with more difficult teaching assignments will not do as good a job as those with more manageable assignments. A teacher with a particularly difficult assignment is well aware of colleagues in other schools who have relatively easier jobs. Unless there are specific problems, teacher transfers are voluntary. Teachers do not generally make requests for transfers to smaller schools. New teachers coming into the system usually fill vacant positions. Vacant positions are filled first from within the system. At present the union contract with teachers does not allow the district to transfer teachers unless there is some specific staffing problem. This could be renegotiated with the

local teachers' union, but at this point it is unlikely that agreement would be met.

There was a suggestion that one of the schools had difficulty in getting and holding on to quality staff. When it came to hiring new staff or to filling vacancies from within the district, this school had difficulties in filling positions. This school also seemed to have difficulties in holding on to the staff that it did have. It was pointed out by a central office administrator that this type of situation was in evidence at another school as well, but not to such a large degree. It appears that central office had little influence in hiring and maintaining quality teachers at these two sites. It was anticipated that teacher transfers would be facilitated in the larger consolidated district (Journal of Education, 1970). Shapiro (1971) reported that in Alberta teacher turnover declined as district size increased. In the above mentioned example meaningful teacher transfer was not facilitated in Nova County.

In recent years more school administrators were being transferred around the district to different schools than ever before. This is the result of a district policy conceived in part by the school administrators themselves. The decision to impose a transfer policy on the principals was made at the board level. Then the problem was passed on to the principals who would be most affected. The principals were asked to create a fair process through which the transfers would be made.

Prior to this policy the transfer of school principals had been rare. This transfer policy would move around the good administrators, but it would also move around the less effective ones.

Since consolidation the teaching staffs in the district's high schools have

become older and more experienced. Prior to 1982, 60% of all teachers had 10 years of experience or less. In 1990 only 11% of the total secondary teaching staff was under the age of 30. The number of younger teachers joining the district to teach in the high schools has diminished.

In terms of accreditation there have been no significant changes except at the lower end of the scale. There are no longer any teachers in the district who hold a TC2 or TC3 rating. There are fewer teachers holding TC4 certificates. A TC4 certificate usually indicates a teacher who has graduated from the Nova Scotia Teachers' College. The number of teachers at the upper level of the scale has remained virtually unchanged. Most high school teachers have not made great changes in their formal educational status for the purpose of raising their teaching licenses since consolidation, however; there has been a general slide up the accreditation scale.

Do all students have access to schools that are staffed by equally proficient administrators and teachers? If more experienced and better qualified teachers are more proficient in delivering education than less experienced and qualified teachers, then the answer in most schools is, yes. Corwin (1975) had found that innovativeness in schools was positively related to the education and experience of the schools' administrators and teachers. Coleman (1966) and Hawkridge, Tallmadge, and Larsen (1968) reported that educational outcomes were also positively related to experience and education.

It was assumed that a better trained and better prepared group of teachers and administrators would increase opportunities for students of the district. This view was supported by Bidwell and Kasarda (1975) who acknowledged the relationship between expertise in teachers and administrators with

more education and specialized training. An objective of this study was to examine what efforts the district made to develop the professional staff. The effectiveness of these efforts as perceived by school board members, central office staff, and school administrators was also sought.

The professional development at the central office level was perceived as being the most neglected. This perception was held by the staff at central office. The fact that professional development at this level tended to be voluntary may account for this view. School board members believed that evaluation was a method of ensuring the quality of central office staff. This was particularly true with respect to the evaluation of the Superintendent. Most of the school board members preferred to have had a much greater role in the evaluation process of central office personnel than they currently did.

The three key elements to the professional development of school administrators were the IDEA programme, the Vice-Principal Training Programme, and the comprehensive evaluation process for principals.

The IDEA programme for school administrators was taken on by the district for the purposes of increasing communication among administrators. Improved communication was viewed as both a means and an end. The programme would foster communication skills, break down barriers between administrators, and develop communication links that could be used to solve problems. The ultimate objective was to utilize the skills acquired during the training sessions and apply them to school improvement. The problem solving aspect is consistent with the teaching of adults as conceived by Knowles (1973). This type of staff development was aimed at the transformational aspects of learning and practice as suggested

by Fenstermacher (1978), which ultimately promoted the implementation of techniques rather than the backsliding to tried and true methods. The idea of action as the subsequent result of belief is also consistent with the idea of "dissonance" as put forth by Festinger (1957) and the "reconstruction of experience" as suggested by Dewey (1966).

Central office staff believed that the teaching staff had improved greatly over the years. Prior to consolidation teachers were in "professional isolation". Centralized in-servicing was an improvement over what had existed in the smaller boards. Lundsgaard (1983) referred to the special problems facing staff development in rural areas. Distances between schools and and the lack of full-time staff consultants were two of the problems; the expense of bringing in outside consultants was another.

The view that in-service education was often seen by teachers as a waste of time was expressed by Edelfelt (1977). In-servicing was part of the professional development plan of the district, but not the major one. Every school year three or four days are assigned as required in-service days. For many years central office organized these days so that all teachers in the district would get together in one or two central locations. The relevance of these sessions were continually questioned by teachers and school administrators who felt these days would be better spent in the individual schools dealing with specific topics or problems specific to the school. In the last five years the district has slowly complied with these wishes. There was a gradual shift in policy. Now all of these days are used at the discretion of the school administrators and teachers to deal with local issues.

Central to the board's view of teacher development was the Teachers' Centre. Board members felt that the cost of maintaining the Teachers'

Centre was high, but worthy of the expense. Compared to similar expenditures in other districts across the province, Nova District's commitment is extravagant. The centre is an example of the district commitment to the profession.

The most ambitious and comprehensive district-wide effort at staff development was the result of the planned implementation of Junior High 2000. The development of teaching staff was a cornerstone to the implementation of this programme because it would require a major shift in teaching style from content- centred to child-centred. At the very start of this Junior High 2000 effort the board had elicited input from many constituencies about making improvements in the district's junior high schools. The teachers were asked for recommendations. Once the implementation was begun and school teams formed, central office put themselves at arms length from the process to allow each school to move at its own pace to its own schedule. Central office still maintains a presence. Follow up in-servicing and monitoring continues. It has been what Griffin (1983) categorized as a systematic approach to changing pedagogical belief and practice.

The relationship of this junior high endeavour to educational opportunity is in the area of lifelong education. It was an effort to develop in the student a recognition of an intrinsic value in learning. It was intended that the values learned in the junior high would be carried forward to senior high and beyond.

Compensation

Access to an appropriate programme is the second tier of educational equality, the compensation for some inadequacy that is the result of a lack of

ability or lack of preparedness. If it is true that greater educational opportunities are realized when students receive compensatory action because of their particular individual needs, then Nova District provided a structure that enhanced these opportunities. This was especially true in the case of Special Education. If students were assessed to have special needs, they would be compensated. The district had limits on these provisions, and would make decisions on the basis of assessed needs and relative priorities. Most student assessments are made at the elementary level when problems are first identified. Assessments are performed at the secondary level, but they are often too late in the student's development for the student to derive much benefit. In addition, students in the high schools who are identified as having special needs are often on their way out of the system.

From the very beginning efforts were made by central office to establish a model which would guide and coordinate special education programmes in the district. A building was purchased and converted into a school-home for highest needs students. Two schools were selected from each end of the district to serve as receiving centres for students who could not be accommodated at their own school. In 1986 the board requested that the Department of Education evaluate the district's special education system. The government's report was positive, but strongly recommended the development of a concise written policy to coordinate and guide efforts at the school level. A policy was quickly developed by central office staff and implemented with relative ease.

Peters (1967) through the principle of distributive justice argued that people be treated equally within given categories because the inherent differences in people make equal treatment of all, inequitable. The district

special education model attempts to keep all students in the mainstream of a given classroom. When children are unable to cope they are given special treatment on the basis of the degree to which they cannot cope. The attempt is made to categorize students accurately according to need with the ultimate aim of returning them to the mainstream. In theory these actions are consistent with the fundamentals of equal educational opportunity.

The provision of programmes for the district's gifted students had always focused on the IB Programme at Alpha High School. In terms of the low number of students and high proportion of teachers involved, this programme was expensive to operate. The board, however, has continued to give the IB Programme the financial support it requires. In other parts of the district the only practical approach to compensate gifted students was to provide these students with access to honours courses. The content of these courses is more intensive and it is delivered at an accelerated rate. Class size tends to be much smaller than the regular class. However, only the larger schools were able to schedule honours courses with any regularity. In this particular case with honours courses failure to provide access is the failure to provide compensation for students who need special attention.

A study was initiated and a report with recommendations was presented to the board concerning the implementation of a comprehensive programme for all the gifted students in the district. However, for the most part, programme enrichment for gifted children has remained the responsibility of the classroom teacher.

In Nova District the number of female students taking academic courses in mathematics, physics, or chemistry is very low. This is not a problem of access to programme, but rather one of guidance to the selection of

programme. It is a case of an inequality that still requires compensation. The percentage of female students in the district engaged in these studies has fallen since 1984. The only academic science taken by a large number of female students is biology. Other than computer studies it has not been district policy to encourage students to take specific courses. It is the policy, however, to encourage students to pursue a programme that is challenging and will provide future opportunities.

How can the district encourage female students to study these academic areas without actually streaming them? One answer would be to provide role models in the classroom. However there is not an equal representation male and female teachers in either the senior high or junior high sectors. There is an over-representation of male teachers in the high schools and in certain subject areas within the schools. In some of the schools there have not been any female teachers of math and/ or science. In some instances the number and percentage of female teachers in these subject areas have actually decreased over the years.

Lifelong Education

The provision of adult education programmes designed to improve the education of those people in the county who had left the public school system was greatly expanded within the framework of the new district. Not to be confused with the interest courses given by the county's Recreation Department, the school board has enrolled an average of 1500 students per year in courses that permit students to complete their interrupted secondary education or improve associated skills. The Supervisor of these services for the county was a Nova County District administrator. He believed the new district brought people into the programme from outlying regions of the

county who would not have previously considered enrolling. In a sense the new district reduced the risk which many former students associated with going back to school. In spite of the increased size of the enterprise, the administrator maintained a personal, hands-on approach to students and teachers.

When the Coordinator of Adult Education retired in 1992, the position was merged with that of Elementary Curriculum Consultant. The reduction of one central office administrative position shifted this area of responsibility to someone who already possessed a full-time responsibility elsewhere. The board decided to blend the two positions into one in order to offset a budgetary shortfall. Central office administrators drew large salaries, and the elimination of one position was a significant financial saving.

In spite of the apparent success of adult education in the county, the operation of the programme was not discussed by school board members, central office staff, nor school administrators. Information concerned with efforts made by the district in this area was provided solely by the Coordinator of Adult Education and through board documents.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications

Nova County was formed by consolidating five school jurisdictions. Some of these jurisdictions had inadequate funding and consolidation was a benefit The new amalgamated board of which Nova County will be a part, will consist of a total of six county-wide school districts. The rationale in 1996 is essentially the same as it was in 1982. There will be more and better

opportunities for Nova Scotia's students. The anticipated savings from the amalgamation are intended to go directly into the classrooms. The Department of Education expects that streamlined central office administration, fewer central offices across the province, will save money.

Why is the Department of Education restructuring the delivery of education in the province? One of the reasons that is given is because the present structure cannot meet the financial demands of programmes. Another reason is service costs such as student transportation and maintenance.

One of the topics discussed in the case on Nova County was the delivery of educational programmes at the high school level and the relationship to educational opportunity. Educational opportunity was put forward as having access to what was needed, being compensated for special needs, and being able to develop a lifelong, intrinsic appreciation for learning. It was shown that some students in Nova County did not have access to what was wanted, but did have access to what was constituted a minimum requirement. It was further shown that this narrowing in the freedom of choice that restricted wants to needs had longterm beneficial results. Specifically, female students took science and math courses rather than interest courses because there was no other choice available to them. There was no immediate benefit visible to these students at the time. However, after completion of these courses future educational and occupational options were opened. Whether these opportunities were realized or not is not as important as the fact that they were created.

Relativism is the view that truth or what is believed to be of value is relative and may vary from individual to individual, from group to group,

or from time to time, having no objective standard. The Department of Education in Nova Scotia has approved over 100 high school courses for the public schools. This is a response to the demands of many constituencies for a relevant programming. Does a programme need to be of interest in order for it to be relevant? Many of the financial burdens of programme are imposed by the Public Schools Programmes' view of educational opportunity, however; only 17 courses are required for graduation, in spite of the fact that there are a 100 more available for the asking.

There is some confusion in the public's conceptualization of equal opportunity. This misconception is also held by educators, both teachers and administrators. There is a basic economic principle called "opportunity cost." Essentially what opportunity cost means is with finite resources: What are you going to give up in order to get what you want? This principle is no longer being applied to public education in the right way. With respect to equal educational opportunity, lifelong education has been substituted for access. In other words, whatever topic a student is interested in learning about becomes a relevant programme or the component of a relative programme that the student should have access to. It is held that if a student or group of students is interested in studying "life management"or "geology," then courses should be designed, piloted, and made available in the school system for those students who hold that particular interest.

In one of Nova County's small high schools, five teachers were able to provide 33 different courses to 80 senior high students. Some of these courses were general courses designed for students with difficulties. This was not a "back to the basics" programme, but a relatively diverse selection of courses at three levels that enabled students to gain access to university,

community college, technical, and vocational schools. The students did not have much freedom in the selection of courses. This school was able to operate because the district compensated for the low enrolment by adding one and a half teaching positions at the expense of a larger school. The small school may have gained courses in physics, calculus, and general English. The large school may have lost courses in geology, life management, and Latin. The point is : What are you going to give up in order to get what you need?

Because educational resources are finite, some priorities need to be established to avoid unnecessary waste. The financial demands of programmes would make an excellent starting-off point. There is obviously a need for a relativist view to human rights. All children in the province have a right to obtain an education. In terms of behavior, that right is abrogated when an individual begins to interfere with the rights of others in their attempt to get an education. In terms of a student's access to an interesting and relevant programme, the same principle should apply. This does not include compensation to students because of special needs. It means access to a meaningful programme. Relativism cannot be applied to the term "meaningful"to the extent that it has now been permitted to reach by the Department of Education. Some objective standard is required to narrow the number and diversity of programmes to a manageable level; to a level that is affordable.

In the near future School Advisory Councils will be making important educational decisions concerning programme, staffing, and budget expenditures. The new amalgamated boards, such as the one Nova County will belong to, will have twenty to thirty thousand students and a small

central office staff. Schools, which have been under the tutelage of a central office since 1982, will now in many respects be on their own.

School administrators and teachers have become accustomed to going to central office for help. In the case of Nova County, the assistance was provided by an experienced and responsible staff of professional and knowledgeable educators. Central office administrators were familiar with the schools and staff under its jurisdiction. The size of the district in terms of enrolment fell within the parameters of what the literature on school district size has established as optimum for operating a public school system. The new structure, which is scheduled to replace the existing district concept, will eliminate some of the safeguards to educational opportunities that have been in operation in Nova County.

The district concept as established in 1982 has maintained and enhanced equal educational opportunities for students in Nova County. In addition, there is evidence that the small schools in the county have provided a valuable and nurturing educational experience for their students.

It has been shown that policy can intervene and influence students with respect to relevant course selection. If it is in the best interests of the students in terms of fair competition for entry to post-secondary institutions or to the workplace, then there is a need to encourage or foster an interest in these courses. The study specifically points to the need to encourage female high school students in this district to be more representative in the area of math and science. It suggests that there may be other lost opportunities that have not been identified.

In a similar way and in conjunction with the above, it is within the district's capabilities to influence students by providing suitable role models.

It has been shown that there is a dearth of women seeking out or obtaining teaching positions in the senior high schools in the science and math departments. Though often viewed as being objectionable, a short term utilitarian principle such a quota could equalize male/female teacher representation in the high schools.

Direct initiatives for professional development in the district have been responses to perceived need at the board and central office level. Some of them such as the IDEA Programme, Education 2000, and the Vice-Principal's Training Programme appear to have been effective efforts to improve groups of the professional staff. It seems worthwhile for the district to take on the intensive, longterm projects for small groups of employees and to leave the rest to school-centred initiatives or to variable leave for those individuals who are motivated enough to go through the process of applying for it.

Some of the professional development in the district was essentially evaluation. Evaluation is one part of the conceptual model of staff development presented in this study (Orlich, 1989). There is a great reliance on it especially as it applies to school administrators and central office administrators. Part of the evaluative aspect of professional development is a needs assessment and systematic feedback. Without these criteria evaluation is a one-shot appraisal of a single point in time. This study did not determine whether evaluation in Nova District was related to professional development.

The value of the Teachers' Centre has been discussed at length in terms of what it has provided to teachers and in terms of its wide use by teachers. The assumption is made that over 700 visitations per month is evidence of

usefulness. There are few centres such as this one in the other districts of the province. The Teachers' Centre could be used by other districts as a prototype for the establishment of their own centres.

For over a decade the size of the Nova County central office staff, with respect to administrators, was larger than the combined staffs of the original jurisdictions. The districts of the new amalgamation exist in part because of the belief that there will be a reduction in central office staff and a subsequent financial saving. If the example of Nova District be used then consideration should be given to examining the respective central office staffs in these new districts to identify if the same pattern of enlargement has occurred.

Recommendations

This study has described the events of one consolidated school district in Nova Scotia, which was formed in 1982. The expectation was held that equal educational opportunities would be enhanced by the new and larger jurisdiction. The following recommendations arising from the study are put forward as possible topics for research involving school districts in Nova Scotia and equal educational opportunity.

1. It is not clear what constitutes or what should constitute a CORE programme or a compulsory course of study. It would be valuable for school districts in conjunction with the Department of Education to delineate a concise programme of compulsory courses to meet the general minimum needs of all students. Further this programme should act as a measure of minimum access for purposes of equal educational opportunity.

2. With respect to programme some students do not avail themselves of educational opportunities by omission. There are conscious omissions that

are the result of choice. Other omissions result from the lack of encouragement or direction. Research into the patterns of programme selection by students would add insight to the motivational aspects of selection. In addition information regarding the selection process would facilitate in planning strategies to correct and direct students to enter programmes that would elevate their level of "fair competition".

3. As a separate inquiry or in conjunction with the above, research into the decision-making that results in the placement of teachers with respect to sex and subject area in other districts would be of value to those wishing to equalize educational opportunities by the judicious placement of relevant role models. From a different point-of-view, it would be of interest to find districts or schools where there is a proportionate representation of role models to see if there are any significant influences on students.

4. There was evidence that the small schools in the district provided a valuable and nurturing educational experience. Research could be undertaken to examine other small schools in the province to determine successful operational strategies from the perspective of the school dealing with programme delivery and teacher preparation. An examination from the perspective of the central office would provide ideas concerned with the support and maintenance of small schools. For example, questions dealing with the possible use of technology as a supporting agency for schools could be approached.

5. The Teachers' Centre in Nova District is an exceptional example of what appears to be an under-used or unused resource in many other jurisdictions. Research that either surveys the status teacher centres in general or examines a few in depth would provide information that would

guide in the formation or operation of effective sites for the purpose of professional development.

6. Of the efforts made in the area of professional development, central office administrators were the most neglected. As educational leaders in the district this appears to be a significant oversight. Research into the professional development of superintendents and assistant superintendents would suggest possible strategies to address the needs of this group.

7. This study specifically examined one consolidated school district. There were 17 other districts formed in 1982 and three that were amalgamated in 1970. Although all these districts are co-terminous with county boundaries, they are not all the same size with respect to geography or population. A study that centres on another district that was either formed earlier or that has a different composition could bring out new information about the workings of larger school districts and the provision of equal educational opportunities. Such research may in retrospect be of value in view of the new amalgamation.

Postscript

At the writing of this final chapter, Nova County has been in operation for a few months as part of a larger school district. It took many years of discussion and research before the province-wide consolidation of 1982 was finally and fully implemented. By comparison the new amalgamation has been conceived and implemented in just over two years. The future of Nova County will be tied now to the events of the other counties that have joined it in much the same way the original five jurisdictions were joined to form Nova County in 1982. The future of educational opportunities for students in Nova County has also been linked to this event.

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APPENDIX A

NOVA COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Prelude

1. Purpose of Study

2. Methodology and Ethics

_____Interview Schedule Central Office Administration_____

1. Since the reorganization of the district, do you feel there has been a general improvement in the quality of education throughout the county? Are there any specific examples that come to mind?

2. What have been the most effective and desirable features of the larger district?

(a)

(b)

(c)

3. To what degree are all the secondary schools within the district able to provide an educational programme that is equal in terms of:

a) Breadth (scope)?

b) Teaching Staff?

c) Administrative Staff?

4. How would you rate the present educational programme in terms of how it meets the needs of all students for:

a) Employment Opportunities?

b) Post-Secondary Opportunities?

5. What long-range goals does the district have related to:

a) Educational Programme?

-
-
-

b) Staff Development (Administrative and Teaching)?

-
-
-

6. What has the Central Office done to promote the professional development of:

a) Central Office Administrators?

-
-
-

b) School Administrators?

-
-
-

c) Teachers?

-
-
-

7. Have there been changes in the demands that the community has placed upon district services over the years?

(a)

(b)

(c)

8. In terms of district goals and objectives, how would you define equal educational opportunity?

9. In what ways and to what degree has the district equalized educational opportunities within its jurisdiction?

(a)

(b)

(c)

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX B : Questionnaire School Board Members

1. Perception of School Board Role

The items in this section are related to your responsibilities as a school board member. The items represent the efforts you make as a school board member. For each item please circle the appropriate number to indicate:

1. the actual level of your involvement, and

2. the preferred level of involvement which **you believe should exist** in your school district.

7 Very High; **6** High; **5** Moderately High; **4** Medium; **3** Moderately Low; **2** Low; **1** Very Low; **0** Not Relevant or Not Apllicable

	Actual	Preferred
a) Evaluating Programme.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
b) Seeking community input and involvement in decision-making related to educational programme.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
c) Fostering and maintaining an educational programme that meets the needs of all the students.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
d) Hiring and placing members of central office administrators.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
e) Hiring and placing school administrators.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
f) Hiring and placing members of the teaching staff of schools.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
g) Evaluating the performance of schools.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
h) Evaluating the performance of central office administrators.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
i) Evaluating the performance of school administrators.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
j) Evaluating the performance of teachers.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
k) Encouraging the professional development of central office administrators.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
l) Encouraging the professional development of school administrators.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
m) Encouraging the professional development of teachers.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
n) Maintaining an educational system that allows students to meet entry requirements to post -secondary institutions.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
o) Maintaining an educational system that allows all students to compete for employment opportunities.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
p) Maintaining an educational system that provides equal educational opportunites for all students throughout the district.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

2. Please comment on the following questions in the spaces provided.

1. Since the reorganization of the district into a county-sized school system, do you feel there has been a general improvement in the quality of education throughout the county? Are there any specific examples that come to mind?

2. What have been the most effective and desirable features of the larger district?

(a)

(b)

(c)

3. To what degree are all the secondary schools within the district able to provide an educational programme that is equal in terms of:

a) Breadth (course offerings)?

b) Teaching Staff?

c) Administrative Staff?

4. What changes have occurred in the demands the community has placed upon district services over the years?

5. Has the role of the school board member changed since consolidation in 1982? If yes, in what ways?

6. In terms of district goals and objectives, how would you define equal educational opportunity?

7. In what ways and to what degree has the district been able to equalize educational opportunities within its jurisdiction?

8. What long-range goals does the district have related to:

a) Educational Programme?

b) Staff Development (administrative and teaching)?

9. How would you rate the current educational programme in terms of how it meets the needs of all students for:

a) Employment opportunites?

b) Post-Secondary Opportunities?

Please comment on the following statement: An elected school board member represents a constituency and as a consequence may be tempted to make decisions on behalf of that constituency before considering the needs of the district as a whole.

General Comments:

APPENDIX C: Questionnaire High School Administrators

School Data

Please check (x) the appropriate answer.

1. How many students are registered at your school in the following grades?

(1) Grade 7 ___ (4) Grade 10 ___

(2) Grade 8 ___ (5) Grade 11 ___

(3) Grade 9 ___ (6) Grade 12 ___

2. How many teachers are employed at your school?

(1) junior high (only) _____
(2) senior high (only) _____
(3) junior and senior high (combined) _____

Personal Data

3. What is your gender?

(1) female __ (2) male __

4. What was your age on 1 January 1991?

(1) under 30 __ (4) 50-59 __

(2) 30-39 __ (5) 60 or over __

(3) 40-49 __

5. How many years of experience do you have in the field of education? (Please
count this year as a full year)

6. How many years have you been employed by this district? __

7. What is your current position?

(1) principal __ (2) vice-principal __

8. How many years of experience do you have in your present position? __

9. How many years experience have you had in other positions?

(1) principal __ (4) teacher __

(2) vice-principal (in present school) __ (5) other (please specify) ------

---

(3) vice-principal __

10. Do you presently teach in the classroom on a regular basis? (1) Yes __ (2) No __

If the above question was answered "yes", please indicate teaching assignment:

(1) Jr. High: subject(s) and level(s) _____

(2) Sr. High: courses(s) and number(s) _____

11. How many years of post-secondary education (as assessed for salary purposes)
have you completed?

TC _____

12. Which graduate courses/programmes have you completed?

(1) no graduate courses ___

(2) some graduate courses (please specify field, i.e. administration, counselling)

_____

(3) diploma in education ___

(4) M. Ed. in Educational Administration __

(5) Ed. D. in Educational Administration __

(6) Ph. D. in Educational Administration __

(7) other graduate degree (please specify) _____

13. Have you enrolled at a university during the period 1986-91?

(1) No __

(2) Yes __

If yes, please indicate university and programme:

(1) Acadia __ _____

(2) Dalhousie __ _____

(3) Mt. St. Vincent __ _____

(4) St. F.X. __ _____

(5) Ste. Mary's __ _____

(6) other (please specify) _____

14. To which <u>one</u> position do you aspire in your long-term career plans?

(1) principalship __

(2) assistant superintendent __

(3) consultant or coordinator at central office __

(4) teaching position in school __

(5) teaching position in a college or university __

(6) superintendent/ chief educational officer __

(7) position in Department of Education __

(8) other (please specify) _____

1. Perception of Administrative Role

The items in this section are related to your responsibilities as a school administrator. The items represent the efforts you make as a school board member. For each item please circle the appropriate number to indicate:

1. the actual level of your involvement, and

2. the preferred level of involvement which **you believe should exist** in your school district.

7 Very High; 6 High; 5 Moderately High; 4 Medium; 3 Moderately Low; 2 Low; 1 Very Low; 0 Not Relevant OR Not Apllicable

	Actual	Preferred
a) Hiring and placing members of the teaching staff.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
b) evaluating teachers (summative).	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
c) Evaluating teachers (formative).	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
d) Encouraging the professional development of staff members	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
e) Organizing staff development activities that meet the specific needs of the school.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
f) Providing instructional leadership in the school.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
g) Maintaining an educational programme that fulfills the post secondary needs of your students	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
h) Fostering and maintaining an educational programme that meets the needs of all the students.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
i) Seeking community input and involvement in decision-making related to educational programme. administrators.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
j) Adapting the organization of the school (space, time, staff) to meet changing environmental conditions.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Opinions: Educational Programme and Staff Development

a) Do you believe the current educational programme (course offerings) in your school adequately provides students with the requirements needed to enter post-secondary institutions?

(1) yes __ (2) No __ (3) Undecided __

b) Do you believe the current educational programme available at your school meets the needs of:

(1) all the students __ (2) the majority of the students __

(3) some of the students __ (4) other (please specify)

---

c) In general, do you believe the community which the school serves is satisfied with the current educational programme?

(1) yes __ (2) No __ (3) Undecided __

d) Do you beleive your teaching staff is satisfied that the current educational programme fulfills the needs of the students?

(1) yes __ (2) No __ (3) Undecided __

e) What elements of the current educational programme are changes in your school's programme that have been made in the last two years?

---

f) What plans, if any, are being made to alter the current programme for the next school year?

---

g) List three strengths of the educational programme now available at your school.

---

h) What are the specific weaknesses in the current educational programme at your

school?

---

i) What level (s) of the student body are most affected by the weaknesses mentioned above?

---

j) In what ways does the central office help facilitate in the professional development of your teaching staff? (Please list specific district actions.)

---

k) List the ways in which the central office has helped facilitate your own professional development as a school administrator.

---

l) Specifically, what do you do as a school administrator to help facilitate the professional development of your teaching staff?

APPENDIX D

GRADUATING STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Data

Please check (x) the appropriate answer.

a) What is your gender

(1) female __ (2) male __

b) What was your age on January 1, 1992?

(1) under 18 __ (2) 18-19 __ (3) 20-21 __ (4) over 22 ___

c) Are you planning to continue your education by attending another institution
next year?

(1) yes __ (2) no __

If the above question was answered "yes", please indicate your probable
destination:

(a) vocational school __

(b) technical school __

(c) university (in Nova Scotia) __

(d) university (outside Nova Scotia) __

(e) other _____

If the above was answered "no", please indicate your probable activity:

(a) definite employment __ Employer: [_____]

(b) seeking employment __

(c) other _____

d) How many years have you spent at your present school?

__ years

PERCEPTION of HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMME

The items in this section are trelated to the way you view and feel about the high school programme at your school. For each item please circle the appropriate number to indicate your degree of satisfaction:

7 Neutral; 6 Highly Satisfied; 5 Moderately Satisfied; 4 Slightly Satisfied; 3 Slightly Dissatisfied; 2 Moderately Dissatisfied; 1 Highly Dissatisfied;

0 Not Relevant OR not Applicable

(a) The educational programme at your school has prepared you for the post-secondary plans you may have.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
(b) The educational programme at your school has prepared you for future employment.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
(c) The range and number of course options that were available at your school.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
(d) The teachers are prepared for and knowledgeable about their teaching assignments.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
(e) The kinds of extra-curricular activities that were available at your school.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
(f) Your overall level of satisfaction with your school.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Opinions

1. If the choice had been available, would you have attended a different school in the
district? Please explain your answer.

2. List 3 strengths of the educational programme at your school:

1.

2.

3.

3. List 3 weaknesses of the educational programme at your school:

1.

2.

3.

4. What suggestions could you make that would improve the educational programme at your school?

5. Please check off all the courses you have taken this year:

English	241 ( ); 441 ( )
French	241 ( ); 441 ( )
Math	241 ( ); 441 ( ); 442 ( ); 541 ( )
Biology	441 ( ); 541 ( )
Chemistry	441 ( ); 541 ( )
Physics	441 ( ); 541 ( )
History	241 ( ); 441 ( )
Economics	441 ( )
Geography	441 ( )
Law	341 ( )
Music	341 ( )
Art	341 ( )

Other courses taken but not listed above: _____

Please choose 3 courses from above that you believe will be of value to you now and in the future:

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

4. None of these courses are of value ___