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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SCHOOL SYSTEM EVALUATION: FRAMEWORK AND CRITERIA

BY

SYLVIA JOANNE LAARHUIS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

(FALL, 1988)

ISBN 0-315-45509-8

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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NAME OF AUTHOR: SYLVIA JOANNE LAARHUIS

TITLE OF THESIS: SCHOOL SYSTEM EVALUATION: FRAMEWORK AND CRITERIA

DEGREE: MASTER OF EDUCATION

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: FALL, 1988

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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 SYSTEM EVALUATION: FRAMEWORK AND CRITERIA submitted by Sylvia Joanne Laarhuis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Date: July 28, 1988

ABSTRACT

The Government of Alberta, in its Management and Finance Plan of 1984, initiated a requirement for evaluation in five major areas: student, teacher, program, school, and school system. Each type of evaluation becomes increasingly complex with school system evaluation being the most complex. While there has been ample study of each of the other four areas of evaluation, there has been a paucity of study on the subject of school system evaluation. School system evaluation has two components: central office administration evaluation and school board evaluation. This particular study focused on the latter: school board or school governance evaluation.

Evaluation, at the school governance level, is complex. Therefore, it is important that a process for conducting the evaluation be developed and followed. A process usually requires a framework to guide its development and conduct. The systems framework was used for this particular study.

Very little has been done in the area of school board evaluation. As a result, few criteria are available by which to determine the effectiveness of a school board.

Characteristics of effective school boards were identified from the data collected through several means: interviews, questionnaires, document searches, and observations. The concept of triangulation was utilized in order to describe the situation as fully and as accurately as possible.

Effective boards of education can be identified as being: responsive to the special needs of the many constituents; mutually supportive of other governing bodies; cognizant of the needs of the community; supportive of central office administration; cognizant of its function as a corporation; efficient in its use of time at board meetings; issue-oriented rather than personality-oriented in its decision-making; responsible and accountable to its electorate; reliant on its personnel for their technical expertise; cognizant of its role in planning, policy-making and evaluation as opposed to administration; committed to the collective welfare of all the students in the jurisdiction; and straightforward in dealing with controversy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Alberta Department of Education requires that "school systems . . . be evaluated to assist school authorities in the management and operation of their physical, human and economic resources for the optimal benefit of students within their jurisdictions." (Alberta Education, 1985)

Alberta Education's (1985) System Evaluation Policy addresses the process in terms of encouraging participants in the school system to draw on the expertise of personnel from Alberta Education, other school systems, the school system itself, the universities, and other educational groups. This means that the government expects the process to involve those who possess evaluation expertise and those who have a working knowledge of the school system being evaluated.

With regard to the component of criteria, the Department of Education's policy states:

> School system evaluations will be used to make decisions with respect to:
>
> 1. the maintenance, modification, or discontinuation of present fiscal, management, and program objectives of the system; and

2. ways in which the fiscal, management, and program components can be attained in a more efficient manner.

> Priorities for evaluations should be established which focus on major issues, the resolution of which is likely to contribute to specific improvements in the management and operation of the school system. (Alberta Education, 1984)

The Department of Education's framework, then, concentrates on two components which are: (1) the formulation of objectives, their achievement, and recommendations for improvement; and (2) the identification of issues which are in need of resolution. However, there need to be some criteria on which to base judgments about recommendations for improvement. These criteria have not been provided in the school system evaluation policy.

Evaluation may be based on adherence to a role description. The School Act has prescribed some of the functions of school boards, but as Kogan (1984:144) points out,

> . . . it cannot determine how they work. Governing bodies have to shape their own role or have it shaped for them, through their interactions with surrounding institutions and interests. Much, then, depends on what is seen as important at any one time, who sees it as important, and the strengths of particular interests within the governing body.

Zeigler (1974:148) stated this same idea in another way:

> The board's entire role . . . is simply an accretion of customs, attitudes, and legal precedents without much specificity. Many school board members move in a sea of confusion about their powers.

Very little information is available on the role of school boards or their effective performance of that role.

As Coleman (1973:408) pointed out:

> One of the consequences of the relative lack of attention which has been paid by social scientists to the role of the school trustee and the school board in the administration of education is that very little information exists, even of the simplest census-type data.

Engel and Achola (1983:55) reviewed the literature regarding "Boards of Trustees and Academic Decisionmaking" and came to a similar conclusion:

> The paucity of empirical and analytical studies of board decision-making is noted.

Many check lists and questionnaires are available for evaluating school boards. However, many of these have been produced in the United States and they provide a limited source of information. They do provide some of the criteria on which to judge the effectiveness of governance. But, as Gall (1983:750) points out, traditional methods do not address the politics of evaluation. The approach of the Management and Finance Plan, introduced in January, 1984 by the Alberta government was modified to address the political domain. More authority and responsibility were placed closer to the focus of delivery (Alberta Education, 1984).

A key area of this strategy included, "Enhanced partnership among school organizations and Alberta Education in the planning and evaluation of educational results" (Alberta Education, 1984).

The government's policy created a need for a framework and a set of criteria which school boards could use to evaluate the effectiveness of their governance function and

by which they could identify areas in need of improvement. Such a framework would have two major components: (1) a process which would engender commitment to implementing the findings on the part of those who were evaluated; and (2) a set of criteria by which to judge performance and identify areas in need of improvement.

The purpose of this study was to begin the process of developing a framework and a set of criteria to guide school systems in the evaluation of their effectiveness by identifying the characteristics of effective governance that emerged from an evaluation of the governance function in a particular school jurisdiction.

DEFINITIONS

Three major terms are key to this study: (1) governance; (2) evaluation; and (3) effectiveness.

Governance

The definition of governance points to the absence of a clearly defined role for boards of trustees. Governance is the process through which decisions are made in an institution, but the process differs from institution to institution and from decision to decision mainly in terms of who makes which decisions and under what conditions (Gollattscheck, 1985:83). Cresswell (1980:466) provides a more specific definition which is "the set of processes by which rules and structures are established and maintained

for the operation of schools." Webster (1965:361) defines "government" as "the complex of political institutions, laws, and customs through which the function of government is carried out in a specific political unit." For the purposes of this study, Creswell's and Webster's definitions were combined resulting in the definition of "governance" being, "the complex set of customs and processes through which a school board establishes rules and structures for the operation of its schools."

Evaluation

Alkin (1985:12) defines evaluation as "the activity of systematically collecting, analyzing, and reporting information that can then be used to change attitudes or improve the operation of a project or a program." This definition is consistent with one of the objectives of the government's System Evaluation Policy, and was, therefore, the definition used for this particular study.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness, according to Ratsoy (1983) is a multidimensional concept and he corroborates this assertion by referring to the work of Steers who combines three concepts in building a model of effectiveness: (1) the notion of goal optimization; (2) a systems perspective which takes into account factors in the organization and in its environment and their relationship to one another; and (3) an

emphasis on human behavior, which highlights the need for examining how the behavior of individuals and groups in the organization impact on the organization. For the purposes of this study, the definition of effectiveness will be limited to the second and third dimensions above.

GENERAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY

Background to the Study - A Larger Study

Immediately following the introduction of the Management and Finance Plan in 1984, school boards across Alberta were involved in formulating evaluation policies in five areas: (1) student; (2) teacher; (3) program; (4) school; and (5) school system. By the fall of 1985, a particular school board in Alberta had developed and implemented policies for the evaluation of students, teachers, schools, and programs. But, it had not developed an evaluation policy for its governance function nor its senior administrative component.

The board of this particular school jurisdiction decided to contract an external team to conduct the first evaluation. The person selected to lead the evaluation team was Dr. E. Ingram of the University of Alberta. The board asked that Mr. Fred Reinholt, Director, Grande Prairie Regional Office of Alberta Education, be a member of the team as well. Dr. Ingram selected three additional persons to be members of the evaluation team: (1) Dr. Frank Peters of the University of Alberta; (2) Janice

Jackson, graduate student; and (3) the author of this study.

The superintendent of the school system being evaluated requested the team leader, Dr. Ingram (1986:90, 91) to "audit the system's governance and central office level management." More specifically, the evaluation was to focus on:

1. the manner in which the Board of Trustees performs its governance role (i.e. organization for task accomplishment [committees], quality of decision-making process, execution of business, policy development process, planning, . . .).

2. the manner in which the central office administration performs its management and executive role (i.e. hierarchy, division of labour, operational procedures, leadership, maintenance of direction, . . .).

3. the degree to which the actions of the Board of Trustees and central office administration complement each other in accomplishing the system's business. Quality of communications and functionality of working relationships should be addressed during the evaluation of this interface.

Although these were the components of the larger evaluation study, the author of this particular study chose to address only items (1) and, to a lesser extent, (3) above. With regard to item (3), the author chose to study the effect of the governance function on the administrative function.

In order to accomplish the purposes established for the larger evaluation study, the Project Director, Dr. E. Ingram, established the following objectives (Ingram: 1986:2) for the project team:

1. the development of specific designs for the project with respect to

   a. indicators and standards to be used in assessing the two components being reviewed,

   b. data-gathering instruments and procedures,

   c. data analysis procedures,

   d. procedures for interpreting data and identifying issues,

   e. procedures for making evaluative judgments and conclusions,

   f. procedures for developing suggestions and recommendations, and

   g. formats and procedures for progress reports and for the final report;

2. the review of appropriate literature with respect to the governance and administrative functions of organizations, especially educational organizations;

3. the identification and review of documents from or affecting the school jurisdiction respecting the governance functions;

4. the gathering of information and opinions from appropriate people and groups relative to the governance and administration of the school jurisdiction;

5. the analysis of the data collected with respect to objectives (2) to (4) above;

6. the synthesis and interpretation of the analyzed data and the identification of any issue facing the [school jurisdiction] with respect to the governance and administration components of the system;

7. the development of suggestions and recommendations respecting the operation of the governance and administration components of the [school jurisdiction];

8. the preparation of a report on the project; and

9. the presentation of the report to the Board of Trustees of the [school jurisdiction].

Data were collected by the following means (Ingram, 1986:4):

1. Document Reviews. Relevant documents from the [school jurisdiction] and from external sources were examined. The documents from the school jurisdiction included (Ingram, 1986:111):

a. Demographics of administrators
b. Policy Handbook
c. Role descriptions
d. Minutes of six consecutive board meetings
e. Map of the school jurisdiction
f. Transportation records
g. Organizational chart
h. Superintendent's correspondence
i. Board correspondence

j. Studies, reports, submissions to and by the board or administration

k. Collective Agreement

l. Program documents

m. Reports from schools

n. System "learning" results.

Documents from other sources included:

a. School Act, regulations, and manuals

b. Newspaper clippings

c. Histories

d. Reports and statistics from the Regional Office of Alberta Education

2. Literature Review. Literature relevant to the governance function and administrative function of a school system was reviewed.

3. Questionnaire. A questionnaire designed to obtain the opinions of stakeholders with respect to the governance and administration of the school jurisdiction was distributed to board members, members of central office staff, principals, teachers, and a sample of parents from each school. Stakeholders were asked about the actual priority that was being given to various governance and administrative functions and the priority which they would prefer to be given to the foregoing functions.

4. Interviews. Interviews were conducted with most board members, most members of central office staff, principals, and a sample of teachers and representatives of various groups that interacted with the school jurisdiction.

5. Observations and Site Visits. Five members of the study team attended the May, 1986 board meeting. All members of the team visited central office and at least two members of the team visited each school.

6. Summary. The document, questionnaire, interview and observation data were analyzed and interpreted by the study team as a group to provide the most useful information to the evaluators.

Involvement of the Author in the Larger Study

The author of this report was involved in all stages of the larger evaluation study with the exception of the preparation of the Project Proposal which was undertaken by the Project Director, Dr. E. Ingram. More specifically, the author worked with the team in the following areas:

1. Document Search. The author formulated a checklist of the requirements for policy of Alberta Education's Program Policy Manual, 1985, and the implications for policy from the School Act (see Appendix A). The author then used this checklist to identify gaps in the policy handbook of

the school jurisdiction under review. The author also analyzed the six sets of consecutive minutes in order to identify the substance of board meeting decisions.

2. Literature Review. The author undertook the task of reviewing the literature relevant to the "governance" function portion of the larger study.

3. Questionnaires. The author attended meetings of the study team at which the questionnaires were discussed and developed. The author did not participate in the distribution, collection, nor analysis of the questionnaire data.

4. Interviews. Many of the interview questions with respect to the governance function of the school jurisdiction were formulated by the study team arising out of the author's review of the literature.

The author was a member of a two-person interview team. The Project Director, Dr. Ingram, conducted the major portion of the interviews of this particular team. The author recorded the responses and subsequently developed paragraphs describing the general nature of the responses arising out of the interviews. A second interview team consisting of a university professor and a graduate student engaged in a similar process. The Project Director combined the interview data from the author and the other graduate student into comprehensive paragraphs describing the complete picture.

5. Observations and Site Visits. The author attended the May, 1986 board meeting and wrote paragraphs describing

the board meeting based on a board meeting observation guide prepared subsequent to the literature review.

6. Summary. The author participated in the group analysis and interpretation of the document, questionnaire, interview and observation data. The author also attended the board meeting at which the Project Director presented the final report to the Board of Trustees.

Data Sources for this Particular Study

The foregoing data sources were drawn from the larger study for two reasons:

1. the author of this study had extensive knowledge and understanding of these particular data sources; and

2. these data sources provided information that achieved the purpose of the author's own study.

DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Delimitations

Delimitations were as follows:

1. The evaluation was conducted within a three-month time frame. This short time frame restricted the researcher's ability to determine whether the current situation was typical of the longer term governance of the jurisdiction.

2. The evaluation was conducted within a specific social, geographic, economic, and cultural context. The criteria which emerged may have little application to other school boards in other places or in other times.

3. The researcher was a member of the evaluation team. The research, therefore, was restricted to the framework used by the project evaluator.

Limitations

Limitations on the study were:

1. The researcher was one member of a team contracted to evaluate the administration as well as the governance of a school jurisdiction. This limited the amount of interview time that could be devoted strictly to governance.

2. A certain degree of subjectivity entered into the interpretation of the interviews. In order to minimize the subjectivity, an effort was made to corroborate the interview data with evidence from the questionnaire data and the document analysis.

3. Members of the board and central office administration had an opportunity to review the questionnaires and interview questions prior to their administration. This may have limited their ability to be completely candid in their responses. Discussions among interviewees about the "ideal" may have preceded the actual interviewing process.

4. The findings may be oversimplified or exaggerated in the researcher's attempt to achieve a "fit" between the evidence and the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As mentioned in Chapter I, there are two components of this study which are the characteristics of effective school boards and the process of evaluation. This chapter addresses these two components separately.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Role of the Board

The provision of education is a provincial responsibility, but the Minister of Education may delegate any or all of his powers or duties as described under Section 11 to a board, with or without restrictions (School Act, Section 12(1)). School boards are agencies of the province, but, at the same time, they must respond to the community's expectations for an educational program. Kogan (1984:11) says that much uncertainty is generated from the structural position that governing bodies occupy:

> Governing bodies . . . form part of complex social and political systems . . . They are, at one and the same time, legally part of a school yet organizationally at its boundary. They are part of the system of educational government, and a zone of

> political activity and movement. They may be partof the wider governing managerial structure and yet be a means through which there can be participation and representation of the community and client groups and action taken by educational professionals. Within government and politics there are no absolute autonomies; any group or institution which exercises its influence, power or authority has linkages with at least one other institution or group.

As a result, Kogan (1984:11) asserts that the work of governing bodies is unpredictable; it is outside their control; and it follows a pattern of reaction to the concerns of others. Governing bodies are placed at the intersection and under the shadow of two strong, highly visible institutions, the school and the provincial government (Kogan, 1984:143). In this position, the governing body can serve as an intermediary between the school and the Department of Education. It facilitates communication between department officials and individual schools. Schools are made aware of the government's policy and the governing body can make the education department aware of the needs of the schools (Kogan, 1984:29). School boards also stand at a point in the system where different forms of authority--professional, administrative, and political--meet. Thus, governing bodies are surrounded by a constellation of values and purposes from which they select a role of their own (Kogan, 1984:143).

Kogan (1984:143) also points out that:

> . . . the institutions and forms of authority that surround governing bodies are themselves structurally interrelated and seek to influence one another. Some of these influences are transmitted through, and mediated by, governing bodies. A considerable portion of their time, for example, is

> spent in making approaches to the [province] on behalf of their schools. By their nature such relationships contain a large element of uncertainty and their quality cannot be determined in advance. Rather, they develop from practice. Governing bodies forge their own patterns of relationship and the result is likely to be quite distinctive; a product of past experience, the issues that have to be handled and the skills of individual governors . . . in the reliance of governing bodies on relationships with other bodies, lies a further cause of uncertainty.

In addition,

> . . . various . . . interests in the local educational system develop their own relationships and do not have to relate through the governing body; or
>
> parents . . . may . . . enjoy a close relationship with the school, both collectively and individually through . . . the PTA, which remain[s] completely divorced from the governing body (Kogan, 1984:161).

As well, community interests may be able to make their views known to the government through the political party system without ever seeking to use governing bodies for transmitting their demands (Kogan, 1984:161).

Kogan (1984:147-157), in addressing the interaction of school boards with the other institutions in its environment, has developed four models of governing bodies.

These models can serve as the basis for descriptions of the orientations of governing bodies. These four models are:

1. Accountable Governing Body;
2. Advisory Governing Body;
3. Supportive Governing Body; and
4. Mediating Governing Body.

1. Accountable Governing Body. The accountable governing body functions as a subcommittee of the department of education. It is given minimal authority. Its primary role is ensuring that the policies and prescriptions of the department of education are being carried out and alerting the department to any deviations or special needs that require attention. The governing body expects the province to provide the school with adequate resources to carry out its expectations; and to provide the governing body with the policy and guidelines necessary for monitoring the school's activities. The governing body, thus, becomes accountable for the school's performance. In order for the governing body to reassure the government that the school is meeting prescribed expectations, there is a need for a reporting system - usually an annual report. The annual report also serves to advise the local community that the school is serving community needs as well. This adds another dimension to the role of the accountable governing body and that is its relationship to the community. The governing body is accountable to the local community and, therefore, must express community needs. The governing body could, then, expect the province to consult with it regarding the substance of the province's policies.

Pressures from the environment tend to require school boards to assume a certain role. During the past decade, school boards in the United Kingdom, the United States, and here in Alberta have experienced increasing pressures to

become accountable. The world economy has experienced "hard times" which is characterized by a downward spiral of the economy and consequently of the resources available to education (Kogan, 1984:7). Out of this has arisen two consequences:

a. there is a greater demand for efficiency which requires more public accountability and justification for the way in which resources are expended in the form of standardized reports; and

b. there are decreased employment opportunities for those who pass through the education system which results in public demand for meeting standardized requirements and passing standardized examinations (Kogan, 1984:7).

The descriptors of the accountable governing body appear to describe the situation in Alberta today in that:

a. school boards are required to evaluate students, teachers, programs, schools and school systems (Alberta Education, 1984:47);

b. school boards are required to make their Annual Reports public and provide two copies to Alberta Education (Alberta Education, 1984:53); and

c. there has been a return to student examinations administered by the department of education.

2. <u>The Advisory Governing Body</u>. This type of governing body's purpose is to provide a forum in which school activities are reported to the laity and tested against their ideas of what the school should be doing. This model

is based upon the necessity of trusting the professional. Today governments must delegate a considerable amount of freedom to professionals, but they must also listen and respond to the public interest. Lay advice on issues concerned with school management, such as the maintenance of the estate, has generally been accepted. Issues concerned with educational practice, such as with the curriculum, teaching methods or class control, have long been considered the domain of the professional.

At the same time as there are increasing pressures from the government for school boards to become increasingly accountable, there are new voices in the local community demanding a say in school government. These are exemplified by the terms "partnership" and "parent power" (Kogan, 1984:7). Many such voices argue that each school is a unique institution and school government must respond to the unique needs of each local community (Kogan, 1984:70).

3. <u>The Supportive Governing Body</u>. As the title suggests, this governing body's purpose is to provide support for the school in its relationship with other institutions and interests in the local educational system. Although this type of governing body also centres its activities on the school, it is looking outwards to influence the activities of other bodies rather than inwards on the activities of the school. The governing body sees its role as helping the school, whose professionals are to be trusted and supported.

The extent to which the governing body is supportive of the teachers can become a source of potential conflict. Teachers view themselves as professionals. In the true sense of the word, the "professional" acts autonomously in interactions with a client and is subject only to the moral and ethical considerations determined by the professional group; ordinarily, professional decisions are not appealable to an "outside authority" (Coleman, 1973:410).

Zeigler's (1974:176) view of professionally oriented boards is similar to Kogan's (1984:29) view of the board as a system of support: "the governing body's main function is as a system providing moral support to the school and [it] . . . will display a strong attachment and loyalty to the . . . school." Kogan (1984:93) describes two types of governing bodies at the opposite ends of a continuum: those with a professional orientation and those with a fiduciary orientation. Those with a fiduciary orientation will be discussed in another context later. Characteristics of the professionally oriented boards include:

a. a concentration on running the system;

b. agreement that the professionals decide on how the schools are run;

c. professional definition and explanation of the issues;

d. board members' reliance on professional expertise; and

e. professional determination of action as a result of lay (or board member) reactions.

Cistone (1975:57) cites the 1964 work of Kerr who found that certain features of school systems cause board members to accept and legitimize the superintendent's recommendations instead of representing the community to the school. The absence of clearly defined constituent demands combined with new school board members' unfamiliarity with school board activities and the educational program caused new board members to conform to the established norms and practices of the incumbent board members and the superintendent.

Zeigler (1974:167) found that boards with a "professional" orientation or who see themselves as representing the administration's program will support the superintendent's choice of educational program even when it is in conflict with the expectations of the community. It should also be noted, however, that American school boards tended to perceive no conflict between their responsibility to the public and their allegiance to school administrators (Zeigler, 1974:166).

Lutz (1980:459) points out that the vast majority of boards "respect--even revere--the superintendent as the professional expert, looking to the superintendent almost exclusively for recommendations and information and for the implementation of the policies they exact upon his or her recommendation."

Brown et al (1985:207) found that, although superintendents' opinions are important, contextual variables such as the nature of the issue being considered may also affect

the school board's reactions. Trustee reaction patterns of decision-making varied in terms of the time required, the need for additional information, reliance on their own knowledge, or the need for advice depending upon the situation. The situations included the importance of the decision, the presence or absence of superintendent support, and the setting of the program. These factors interact with each other which means that patterns of decision-making in schools must be examined with particular contexts in mind rather than across all decision types (Brown et al, 1985:218).

However, as Wirt and Kirst (1972:85) point out ". . . it is likely that the superintendent would act in accordance with the school board's wishes on many issues. . . The board hired the superintendent and it is natural to assume that board members would hire a [person] whose values were similar to their own. In effect, the board's impact on specific decisions may be more indirect than direct, but they are real, nevertheless."

4. The Mediating Governing Body. This type of governing body provides a forum in which the various interests can be expressed and negotiated. Educational policy emerges from a process of negotiation between organized interests. Several different interests have a stake in education and they have a voice in how it is provided through the mediating governing body--the provincial department of education, the professionals in the schools, parents and community interests.

The work of March and Miklos (1983:2) corroborates the notion that "there seem to be ever more actors who wish to become involved in decision making or to exercise some influence over the process." Superintendents in the four western provinces reported that:

a. The main control over the majority of 32 educational decisions was distributed among the school board, the superintendent's office, and the school principals;

b. Teachers held the highest degree of control for only one item which was awarding final marks;

c. The department of education held the highest degree of control over selecting textbooks and determining the broad curriculum;

d. The school board was perceived to have the lowest degree of control over curriculum, textbooks, and final grades;

e. The major areas in which decreased control by school boards was perceived to be or projected to become related to the management of physical facilities and finance at the school level; specific decisions involved allocating funds to schools, distributing those funds within schools and selecting equipment and furnishings. Some decrease in control was also indicated in the personnel area, particularly in relation to selecting teachers and principals. School boards were perceived to be increasing their control over decisions relating to the evaluation function (both

students and instruction), selecting text books, developing special educational programs, establishing school-community relations, determining school size, and other operational matters; and

f. Although the department of education and school boards may have reduced control over some decision areas, there was an increase in "quality control" decisions particularly relating to the assessment of students and educational programs.

In this discussion of the mediating governing body, school governing bodies have been viewed as being vulnerable to the demands of the many constituents for whom or to whom them are responsible. Zeigler (1974:175) asserts that a board's view of itself in relation to its responsibilities will determine what it does. Boards either have a fiduciary or a professional role orientation. The professional role orientation was discussed in terms of the supportive governing body. Those with a fiduciary role orientation see themselves as a mechanism through which various segments of the community can participate in educational policy (Zeigler, 1974:175). This view would correspond with Kogan's (1984:29) notion of the board as a forum for local accountability: "The governing body aggregates and transmits [the views of the local community] to the school and provides for a dialogue between the professionals and the laity on the governing body."

Kogan (1984:71) argues that "the origins of governing bodies reflected a belief that the public should have a

voice in the way in which individual educational institutions were conducted." He quotes a study by Baron and Howell which demonstrated the failure of governing bodies to provide the laity with much influence. Recent moves to include parents in local committees has lead to a resurrection of the influence of the laity (Kogan, 1984:71).

Boards with a fiduciary orientation would be characterized by:

a. a broad concern with the education system;

b. professional and lay conceptions of how the school should be run;

c. professional and lay definitions and explanations of the issues;

d. board members defining and reacting to issues as representatives of interest groups; and

e. action determined by debate between professionals and board members.

Kogan (1984:94) cautions that the professional groups still have the advantage in this second type because they provide the board with the technical information on which it makes its decisions.

Thus far, there have been descriptions of the various roles that boards can undertake and some of the underlying reasons for their assuming these various roles. There was also a discussion of the board's behavior in terms of its orientation as a supportive or "professionally-oriented" board or a mediating board with a "fiduciary" orientation.

There are a couple of additional behaviors which characterize boards. The first of these is the behavior that the board exhibits in the boardroom. Lutz (1980:460) calls these two types of behavior elite and arena council behavior. These two behaviors can be described as follows:

> Elite councils think of themselves as trustees for and separate from the people. They reach consensus in private meetings and enact those decisions in public meetings by unanimous vote. The superintendent, who usually has actively participated in formulation of the decision, carries out that decision. As a result, some groups feel disenfranchised, unrepresented, or governed by others, and that decisions favour the interest of others.

Gleazer (1985:45) contends that this orientation is essential to effectiveness. He says, "A trustee's responsibility is to the general good of the institution; no trustee should represent a specific constituency or special interest."

Lutz (1980:460) goes on to say:

> Arena council members believe they are delegates of specific groups that have elected them and that they have the obligation to express the values and desires of those groups in public debate. The council makes decisions in public through debate and counter debate. Policy is enacted in public, usually by a majority as opposed to a unanimous decision. Decisions are carried out by an administrative office separate from council. The antagonistic framework generates hostility and mistrust. Board members are often unhappy and choose either to retire before their term is finished or not to run again.

Cistone (1975:70) would add that elite councils tend to act in limited decision-making areas whereas arena councils tend to act in broad areas. Elite councils also tend to be administrative as well as legislative and judicial in

nature whereas arena councils leave the administrative functions to an independent school system (Cistone, 1975:70). Cistone (1975:70) adds that school board effectiveness can be classified along this continuum with elite behaviour being classified as a more traditional mode.

Lutz and Iannoccone (1978:119) found that elite council behaviour tended to occur more often in boards which were located in districts where the socio-economic status of the citizens was homogeneous whereas arena-like council behaviour was more prominent in districts of heterogeneous citizenry. However, the general public in all districts studied desired somewhat more arena-like behaviour than their boards typically exhibited (Lutz and Iannoccone, 1978:119).

The Institute for Educational Leadership extends these board behaviors one step further to a board's comprehensive view of its role and the relationships that result with the board's chief executive officer. The terms given to two ideological orientations are: trusteeship and representativeness. Those who see themselves as trustees are concerned with the general public interest. They view the school system as a single unit. In other words, they embrace and practice the concept of the board as a corporation. They see themselves as monitors or overseers who rely on the superintendent to operate the system. They place a great deal of responsibility on the superintendent and they hold that person accountable. The superintendent develops the board's agenda, reports on the school system's progress and recommends policy for board adoption.

On the other hand, those who hold the representative view are concerned about the details of operating a school system; they respond to an upset parent, a careless bus driver, an unkempt janitor, an unfair teacher, a shabby school, and leaky roofs. These people continue to run the schools like their forefathers before professional administrators were hired. They tend to represent a particular school or a particular interest group. This behavior conflicts with trustee-oriented board members and many school administrators who expect board members to respect the corporate notion of boardsmanship. Divisiveness is common in a board in which several push for disparate interests or demands (Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986:6).

Greenleaf (1979:6) asserts that "the most important qualification for trustees should be that they <u>care</u> for the institution, which means that they care for <u>all of the people the institution touches</u>, and that they are determined to make their caring count." He denounces trustees selected to represent constituencies in the institution as being highly politicized and thus diluting the "trust" placed in them.

<u>Functions of the Board</u>

The foregoing is a description of the many influences on the board, some of the ways in which the board may define its own role, and the behavioral indicators of how the board defines its role. But, the board is elected to do something or to fulfil certain functions. The following

are some of the functions of a board indicated by the literature. These are:

1. planning;
2. policy-making;
3. evaluation; and
4. implementation.

1. Planning. An important function of the board is planning. Trustees ask the questions that lead to institutional goals being set and strategic plans being made (Greenleaf, 1979:7). Trustees are the long-range thinkers whose ideas culminate in the plans for the school system.

Kenneth R. Andrews (1980:30) talks about the formulation of corporate strategy which he defines as:

> the pattern of company purposes and goals--and the major policies for achieving those goals--that defines the . . . kind of company it is to be.
>
> Corporate strategy reconciles what a company might do in terms of opportunity, what it can do in terms of its strengths, what its management wants it to do, and what it thinks is ethical, legal, and moral.

Andrews (1980:32) cites four reasons for having corporate strategy:

a. The board needs specific evidence that its management has a process for . . . choosing among strategic alternatives . . .;

b. Knowledge of strategy makes intelligent overview feasible [for directors who have no previous personal experience];

c. Knowing the company's strategy can give the board a reference point for separate decisions that come before it and insight into what matters should be presented to it; and

d. The best criterion for appraising the quality of management performance . . . is management success in executing a demanding and approved strategy.

Gleazer (1985:50) confirms the idea that planning is an important function of a board, in this case, of a college board:

> Clarification of institutional mission, approval of long-term plans, and approval of the educational program are high on the list of board obligations, but trustees show more interest in physical plant, finance, community relations and collective bargaining than in the larger issues of mission, policies, objectives, and strategy; trustees direct more attention to means than to ends.

2. Policy-Making. The board is assigned the legal authority to make policy for the school jurisdiction, and has the formal power to employ the superintendent, but it does not always emerge as the dominant decision-maker (Zeigler, 1974:148). One reason that has been frequently cited for this is the inability of the school board to skilfully employ its rank authority to dominate the technical authority of the superintendent (Zeigler, 1974:148).

Coleman (1983:426) believes that the disparity in training levels between administrators and trustees is responsible for some of the difficulties experienced by trustees

in performing their roles. In part, this is because trustees do not understand the difference between policy-making and administration or because some refuse to accept the responsibility for policymaking (Coleman, 1983:426).

Gleazer (1985:45) identifies several characteristics that make trustees more effective. One of these is an understanding of the role of the trustee. As Gleazer (1985:45) says:

> Effective trustees, regardless of the success they may have achieved in other fields, must be willing to be educated in their roles and responsibilities as trustees. A New Jersey study by Griffiths, 1979, identified problems that have surfaced in a number of states: The boundary line between the board's responsibilities and those assigned to administrators . . . is not always easily established . . . this problem may be because many trustees have not been sufficiently instructed on how to function as a trustee.

Board members are elected to govern, not to encroach on the day-to-day management of the system.

3. Evaluation. The work of Kogan points out that the board is accountable, to varying degrees, to other institutions - the province, the local community and the school. In order to fulfil this role it must evaluate the effectiveness of the school system - itself, its personnel, its programs, and its students. Greenleaf (1979:23) extends the notion of evaluation to determining the extent to which the institution (in this case, the school system) meets the goals or plans it has established at a reasonable level of excellence with the students it has and with the resources at its disposal.

4. Implementation. A parallel can be drawn between governing boards of public institutions and those of private corporations. This is a valid comparison in that Section 29 of the School Act says that members of a school board are a corporation. Boards of directors have specific responsibilities for managing their corporations. Whether they are public or private corporations, they engage the services of a chief executive officer who acts only upon those powers they delegate. According to Louis W. Cabot (1980:41), Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, boards must be "diverse, objective, independent, and free from the day-to-day pressures of business." In other words, they leave the day-to-day operations, or implementation of policy, to the chief executive officer. Implementation can be defined as the day-to-day execution of plans, including administrative initiative and response to situations (Greenleaf, 1979:9). Implementation is the concern of administration.

Areas of Responsibility

The work of March and Miklos cited earlier indicates the areas of responsibility that are within the realm of the board or the schools or the province. To reiterate, these include:

1. Evaluation of Students;
2. Textbook Selection;
3. Curriculum;
4. Physical Facilities;

5. Finance;

6. Personnel; and

7. School-Community Relations.

The Alberta School Act and the Program Policy Manual are also instructive in this regard. Appendix "A" lists all of the areas of responsibility of school boards indicated by the School Act. The following can be added to the foregoing list:

1. Board Operations;

2. Transportation;

3. Pupil Services; and

4. Evaluation of School Systems, Personnel, Programs, and Schools.

Standards by Which Boards Operate

To this point, there has been an examination of the various roles of the board, the functions of the board, and the responsibilities of the board. But, what are the standards by which to determine the effectiveness of a board? Zeigler (1974:5) tells us that, "In a democracy, the degree to which the governors are responsive to the governed is the sine qua non of whether democracy in fact exists."

Zeigler (1974:4) points out that the degree to which a representative board is responsible to the public for decisions is an indication of the degree to which that body is operating within the parameters of democratic theory. Three

theories dominate the field of school governance: the continuous competition theory, the decision output theory, and the dissatisfaction theory (Rada, 1984:234). Continuous competition theorists hold that the essence of democracy is continuous and universal participation in political decisions (Lutz, 1980:453). However, Lutz (1980:454) argues that the essence of democracy is freedom to choose to participate. Few people vote in school board elections and even fewer are involved in the decision-making process because every effort is made to make less public those issues that do surface (Lutz, 1980:453). In addition, campaigning in school board elections is very limited; candidate visibility very low; the contest rarely based on specific policies; and elections seldom provide board members with a mandate to pursue a particular policy (Wirt and Kirst, 1972:63). School boards find themselves struggling with the notion of universal and continuous participation of the public only when they are asked to respond to special interest groups because these require specific responses as opposed to generalized responses (Lutz, 1980:453). Boards also find themselves having to representatively reflect competing values, and to develop policies that are responsive to these different views and demands (Lutz, 1980:453).

Decision output theorists use a systems approach to measure the nature of demands on school boards (inputs) against board decisions (outputs) (Lutz, 1980:454). Citizens have the opportunity to make inputs at school board

election time, but few take advantage of this opportunity (Wirt and Kirst, 1972: 66). Even when it wishes to respond to a demand from an individual or group, the board must generalize the response so that it serves the needs of all the pupils with the result that the output often falls short of the input demand (Lutz, 1980: 455).

Rada (1984:234) tested the third theory, the dissatisfaction theory of governance, which predicts that when a community's dissatisfaction with its schools is great enough, the following occur:

1. input from the public demanding different or new policies or procedures reaches a high level;

2. the number of split votes by the school board reaches a high level;

3. the rate of school board member turnover increases; and

4. involuntary superintendent turnover occurs.

Events predicted by this theory might take several years to occur so data were collected for four years prior to, and four years after a community dissatisfaction was manifested in a labour dispute. Data were collected from (1) minutes of school board meetings; (2) newspaper reports, letters to the editor, and editorials; and (3) interviews with school officials (Rada, 1984:235). Any statement directed to the school board that expressed a person's beliefs or desires about a school related issue was considered a demand input.

The magnitude of input from the public was measured using an index which allotted points for (1) number of people making a demand; (2) individual or group representation; and (3) presentation of a petition. School board minutes revealed the number of decisions that were not reached by a unanimous vote.

When these three measures (number of inputs, magnitude of inputs, and number of non-unanimous decisions) were high, board behavior became arena-like. If these three measures were low, boards tended to exhibit elite council behavior.

A high level of non-unanimous voting most often occurred the same year in which an incumbent school board member was defeated. The neophyte board member replacing the incumbent was responsible for dissent at least 50 percent of the time (Rada, 1984:243).

Mr. Louis W. Cabot (1980:41), Chairman of the Board of Cabot Corporation and Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, suggests that a board would be more effective if the unwritten rule that board agreements should be unanimous were abolished. He contends that the expectation that everyone should agree is a practice that can stifle the board's effectiveness.

However, Zeigler (1974:197) believes that when school board conflict becomes too polarized characterized by split votes, it may markedly decrease the ability of the board to utilize its resources in the formation of educational policy.

The measurements for demand inputs, rate and magnitude, were viewed as being a reflection of community dissatisfaction with schools rather than as indicators of decision-making style of school boards (Rada, 1984:240).

The dissatisfaction theory postulates that as dissatisfaction and conflict increase, voters become more active and one or more incumbents fail to be re-elected; within three years a new superintendent (usually an outsider) is chosen; and then school policy changes become more in line with the demands that created the dissatisfaction (Lutz, 1980:456).

Lutz and Iannoccone (1978:78) say that "the most important hypothesis advanced by the dissatisfaction theory of democratic control is that school policy change tends to be episodic (that is, abrupt and infrequent) rather than gradual or continuous. The researcher pursuing this hypothesis encounters problems. First, there are variables other than citizen dissatisfaction that result in superintendent turnover; and policy changes are not always attributable to incumbent defeat. Studies have demonstrated that new superintendents, especially those from outside the jurisdiction, make more policy, personnel and programmatic changes in their first two years than at any other time (Lutz and Iannoccone, 1978:80).

Secondly, there has been no research to investigate the total duration of either the episodes of instability or the periods of quiescence and policy stability (Lutz and Iannoccone, 1978:80). And, a study by Garberina revealed

that there was higher dissatisfaction in districts with declining socio-economic status characteristics than in those where socioeconomic status levels were increasing. Lutz and Iannoccone (1978:81) concluded that it is necessary to consider the direction and magnitude of change in socio-economic status in any study that examines the relationships of board decisions to citizen interests.

Zeigler further (1974:125) postulates that the degree to which the governors and the governed have a similar agenda is an indicator of substantive representation. The agenda reflects priorities and potential commitment of resources; therefore, it is important to determine the degree of congruency between the board members' agenda and that of their constituents (Zeigler, 1974:125).

The question of how board members would solve the problems they cited compared with their constituents' solutions to the problems is also an important indicator of representation (Zeigler, 1974:131). One of the major criteria in evaluating representativeness is whether board members reflect the majority sentiment of their constituents on specific issues (Zeigler, 1974:136).

How do Boards Spend Their Time?

School boards operate as a corporation. Therefore, their work occurs when they meet as a corporate body in a board meeting. The board meeting is a visible indicator of the board's effectiveness and efficiency. In terms of effectiveness, Engel and Achola (1983:58) contend that

lists of trustees' functions should be judged in relationship to the educational mission. They say that, "in some way and to some extent board decisions should complement the teaching and learning that take place. It is necessary to find out what boards do that has or is likely to have direct bearing on academic matters" (Engel and Achola, 1983:59). They cite the work of Paltridge which classified board decisions into ten types and three levels. Decisions found in board minutes were grouped in the following types: (1) business and finance; (2) physical plant; (3) educational programs; (4) personnel; (5) external affairs; (6) internal affairs; (7) ceremonial actions; (8) student affairs; (9) administrative organization; and (10) miscellaneous (Engel and Achola, 1983:67). Engel and Achola (1983:68) criticize these categories as being disturbingly vague and suggested that the characterization of decisions by level were more explicit: policy or legislative decisions which focus on broad questions of values, morality and ethics; administrative or management decisions dealing with interpretations, procedural rules, and directives for the eventual implementation of policy; and operational decisions outlining specific steps for the implementation of given policy objectives. The findings of Paltridge and others who replicated his study were that educational programs constituted a very small share of the decisions made by boards and that these were more often left to the administration and faculty (Engel and Achola, 1980:68).

Kogan (1984:110) also categorized the items on a governing body's agenda as:

1. procedural concerns such as the accuracy of the minutes, and arrangements for special and regular meetings;

2. education policy of a local and national nature such as bilingualism and parental access to students' records;

3. school objectives such as a community school proposal;

4. primary management concerns such as the appointment of teachers, creation of a special class, and special needs of the student population; and

5. secondary management concerns about the day-to-day administration of the school such as school medicals, school lunches, visitors to the schools, dogs in the playground and renovations.

A careful examination of the work of Kogan, Paltridge, and Engel and Achola, reveals that the decisions of the board meeting are similar to two concepts previously examined: the functions of the board (planning, policy, and operations or implementation); and the areas of board responsibility (business or finance, facilities, programs, personnel, student services, community relations, and administrative organization). The elements missing from their descriptions were the evaluation function of the board, the board's attention to its own affairs, and the board's responsibility for transportation.

The way in which boards utilize their time is an indicator of their efficiency and their attention to their responsibilities.

Kogan's (1984:107) research revealed two main types of governing body modes of work--continuous and spasmodic. The continuous governing body is characterized by:

1. regular meetings and special, intervening full meetings to deal with particular matters, or to discuss particular issues more fully;

2. sub-committees to tackle particular tasks; and

3. regular visits to the school for the purpose of keeping well informed.

A spasmodic governing body concentrates all of its corporate work into the regular meeting and only the chairman has a sense of a continuing role.

The board meeting itself is a visible indicator of the board's efficiency. Grimshaw (1981:21) has developed an attention curve for meetings. As shown in Figure 1, the maximum attention period for most meetings is about 1.5 hours, seen in the "crown" of the curve. After 1.5 hours, participants' concentration drops drastically.

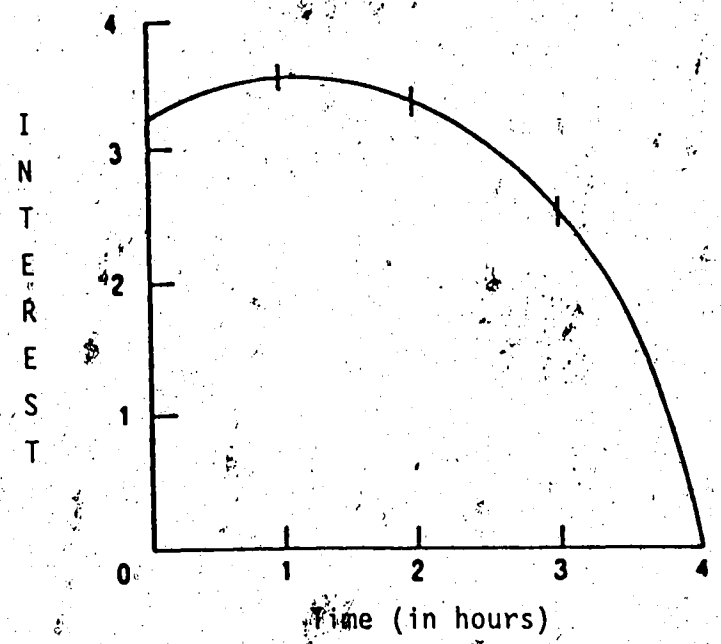

Figure 1. Attention Curve

Routine items are best handled early followed by items requiring the highest level of concentration and consideration. Grimshaw (1981:20) also recommends strategic positioning of agenda items so that members' attention is first focused on a long-range perspective, one embracing the total educational program. This causes members to pursue goals and to have a policy perspective in which to make subordinate decisions at the same meeting or at subsequent meetings.

EVALUATION RESEARCH

Evaluating the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Board

School systems are highly complex. It follows that the evaluation of their efficiency and effectiveness would also

be a complex task. It should also be noted that each school system is unique. It has a unique history, demography, and economy. Thus, as Patton (1981:23) points out, "Every evaluation situation is unique."

Patton (1981:23) points out that methods decisions dominated the process in the early days of evaluation research. This research was conducted within the natural science methodology of testing hypotheses. In other words, according to Patton (1981:24), evaluation research methodology involved quantitative measurement, experimental design, and a multivariate statistical analysis.

Currently, evaluation research, according to Patton (1981:25), stresses flexibility and multiple methods approaches. Evaluations emerge from the special characteristics and conditions of a particular situation which encompasses the people, history, politics, values, needs, interests and resources of that situation.

However, in order to conduct an evaluation, there needs to be a framework for guiding the collection of data and for reporting the results.

An effective framework for conducting an evaluation is the social systems model. This general framework has the advantage, according to Wirt and Kirst (1972:38), of allowing the researcher to examine a variety of research subjects without stopping to specify each concept. Owens (1982:25) points out that school boards operate as systems --dynamic systems in which all of the parts are so interrelated that one part inevitably influences the other

parts.

Scribner (1964:205) classifies school boards as political systems. He ascribes the following four generic properties of systems to school boards:

1. School board members comprise an interdependent unit. When a change takes place in one part of the system, such as an election or appointment of a new or additional member, the relationship between all other members will be affected.

2. When conflict arises because of internal or external pressures, the board exhibits a tendency to resolve such conflict and to maintain equilibrium.

3. The school board is characterized by a systematic comprehensiveness . . . Its authority and functions ultimately extend to the executive, judicial and legislative branches of state government, the state educational bureaucracy . . . political parties, and special interest groups . . .

4. The boundary of the system, determined by its membership, differentiates it from all other systems. That is, the school board consists of . . . members who meet the statutory requirements for school board membership and it is only at a legally constituted meeting that a board member acts as part of the school board system.

Wirt and Kirst (1972:39) identify the components of the systems framework as:

1. Inputs (Demands and Supports). Demands are pressures upon the government, the requests for justice or

help, for reward or recognition. Those making demands mobilize resources in order to affect other private groups and so influence the disposition of the political system. Supports . . . take the form of a willingness to accept the decisions of the system or the system itself.

2. Transactions. The political system processes . . . inputs, sometimes combining or reducing them, sometimes absorbing them without any reaction, but sometimes converting them into public policies--or outputs.

. . . not all demands are converted into policy . . . what gets through depends upon which values the conversion process reinforces and which it frustrates, and upon the values of the political authorities as they operate in this flow of inputs.

3. Outputs. Outputs, in influencing the society, can generate another set of inputs to the political system through a feedback loop.

This framework defined the broad parameters for collecting and analyzing data.

FRAMEWORK

The framework used for this particular study relied heavily on Kogan's description in which school boards were described as finding themselves at the centre of three different, yet interrelated, institutions - the school, the province, and the local community. Each of these institutions may interact with another, independent of the board,

or, the board may become the entity through which they interact. This is depicted graphically in Figure 2.

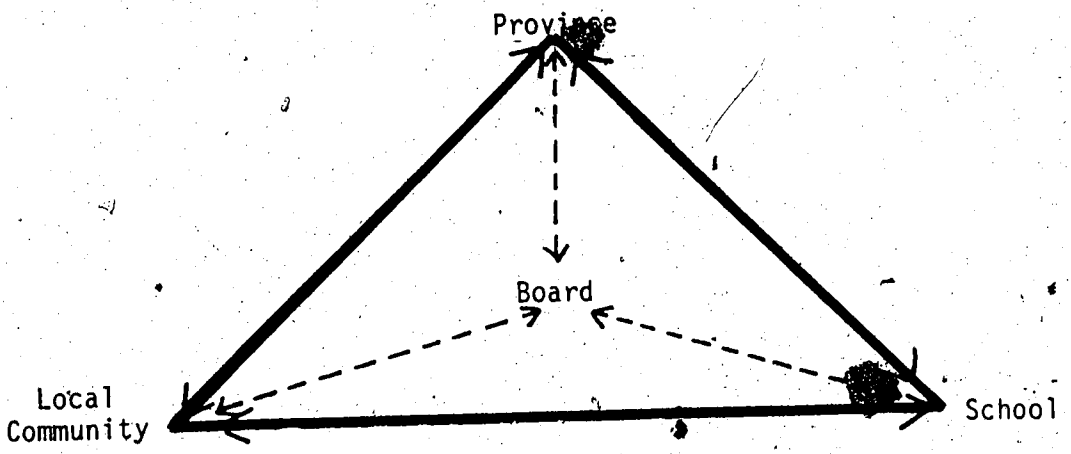

Figure 2. Interaction of Institutions

Functions of the Board

The board undertakes several functions, some of which are prescribed either explicitly or implicitly by the province.

Scribner (1964:206) suggested that the functions were legislative, executive, and judicial. For the purposes of this study, the legislative functions will be called the policy making function; the executive function will be the implementation function; and the judicial function will be translated into an evaluation function. One other function will be added which is the planning function. Scribner (1964:207) indicates that a system tries to maintain a sense of equilibrium. The planning function enhances the system's ability to maintain its equilibrium over time.

Those functions which have been explicitly stated by the province are the functions of policy-making, planning and evaluation.

1. Policy-Making. Section 72, School Act states, "A board shall make rules for the administration, management, and operation of schools." While this statement does not use the word "policy", it is generally understood that this is the intent of the Act. This notion of policy-maker was reinforced with the introduction of the Management and Finance Plan in 1984 and the accompanying document, the Program Policy Manual. The board, then, is the locally elected decision-maker for the jurisdiction. The board is the body through which the expectations of the province are expressed for the jurisdiction. The province's expectations are stated in terms that are broad enough for the board to interpret in light of the expectations of the local community and the schools (personnel and students).

2. Evaluation. The Management and Finance Plan of 1984 explicitly required boards to evaluate most components of the system but more specifically, teachers, students, programs, schools, and the school system. The board became the vehicle by which the province's expectations would be fulfilled. The board became accountable for evaluating its own performance, its systems of delivery, and its outputs.

3. Planning. The government explicitly requires planning for:

a. the length of the school year and school day;

b. financing (establishing a budget);

c. capital construction or renovation; and

d. enrolments.

The work of Kogan points out the need for boards to determine the direction for their school systems out of the many expectations being placed upon them by those who govern them (the province); those who elect them (the public); those they employ (staff); and those they serve (students).

4. Implementation. The one area in which the board is not expected to engage is the day-to-day operation of the schools or the implementation of policy. Responsibility for carrying out policy lies with the administration. Nevertheless, it is the board's responsibility to ensure that its policies are implemented as they intended. This, however, is an evaluative function.

Adding these four functions to the original model creates the diagram which appears in Figure 3.

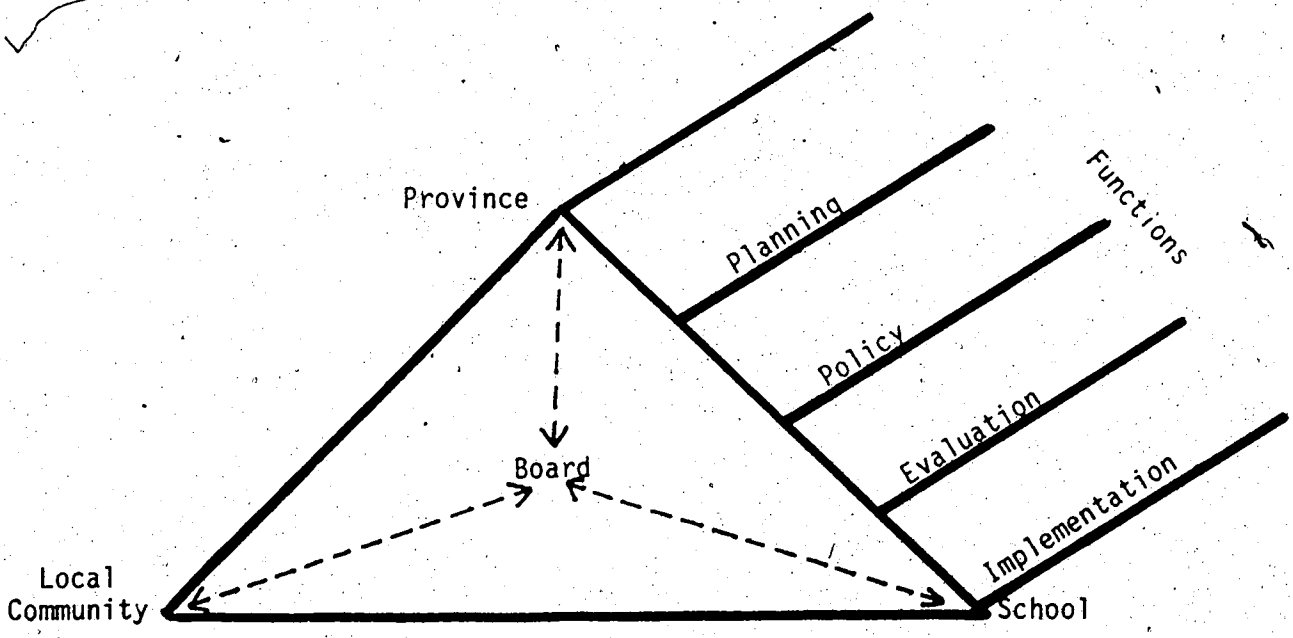

Figure 3. Interaction of Institutions with Functions

Areas of Board Responsibility

The School Act outlines the areas of responsibility for school boards. The list developed for this particular study (Appendix "A") outlines the following:

1. Personnel. Boards require administrative personnel (superintendent, secretary-treasurer, and principals), teaching personnel, and support personnel.

2. Transportation. Boards are responsible for providing transportation for students.

3. Board Operations. Boards are required to conduct their own business in an open, honest manner according to specified procedures.

4. Property. Boards are expected to keep all of their real and personal property in good order.

5. Instructional Programs. Boards are required to provide various programs outlined by the department of education.

6. Student Services. Boards must provide certain services that ensure the health and safety of students.

7. Financial Management. Boards are required to submit financial statements and forms to the department of education.

An eighth area, not explicitly stated in the School Act, is the area of communicating with the local community. The Program Policy Manual addresses this area in that boards are expected to report to the public and to make written reports. The clients of the school jurisdiction are an integral part of the local community. This aspect

of the board's operations has been explicitly stated in the literature reviewed.

These eight areas of responsibility can be added to the diagram as shown in Figure 4.

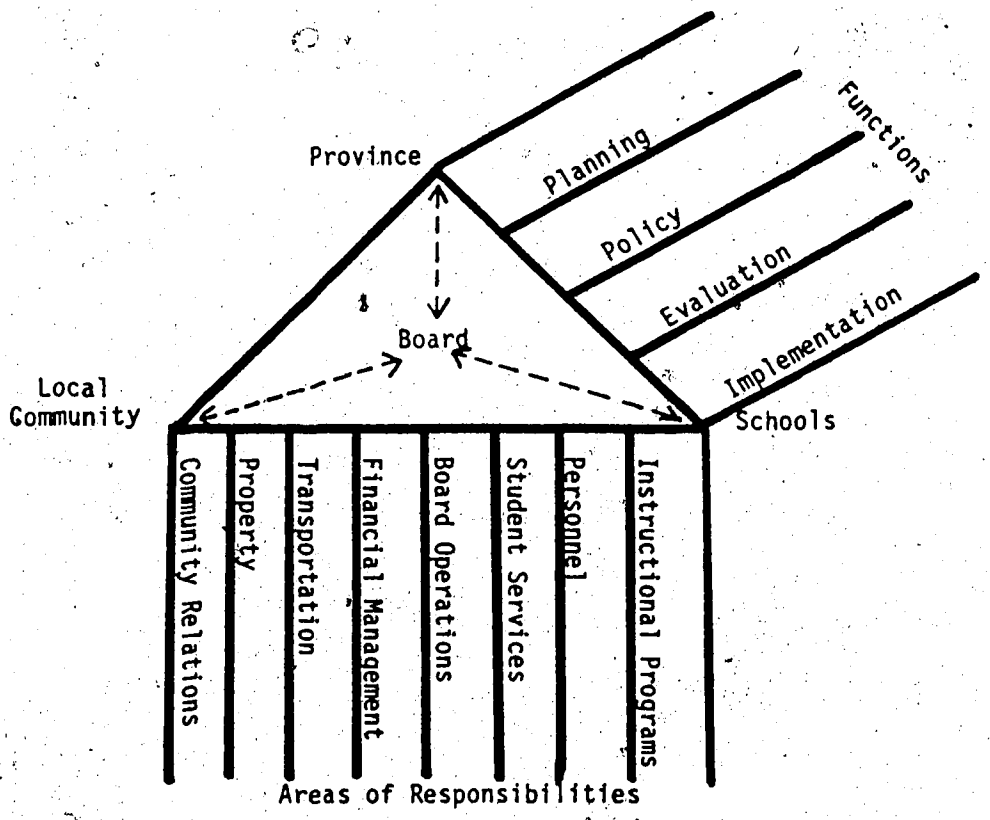

Figure 4. Interaction of Institutions with Functions and Areas of Responsibility

Expectations of the Board

Finally, there must be some standards by which to judge the effectiveness of the way a board carries out its functions. The province has established standards in its legislation (School Act), policies (Program Policy Manual), and regulations. The courts have also set standards in terms of their decisions on cases brought before them.

The local community has certain expectations of the schools. These expectations develop out of their own experiences. Some expectations develop out of the history of a jurisdiction. Others are based on their understanding of what is happening in other jurisdictions or what they would like to happen. This added dimension completes the diagram which appears in Figure 5.

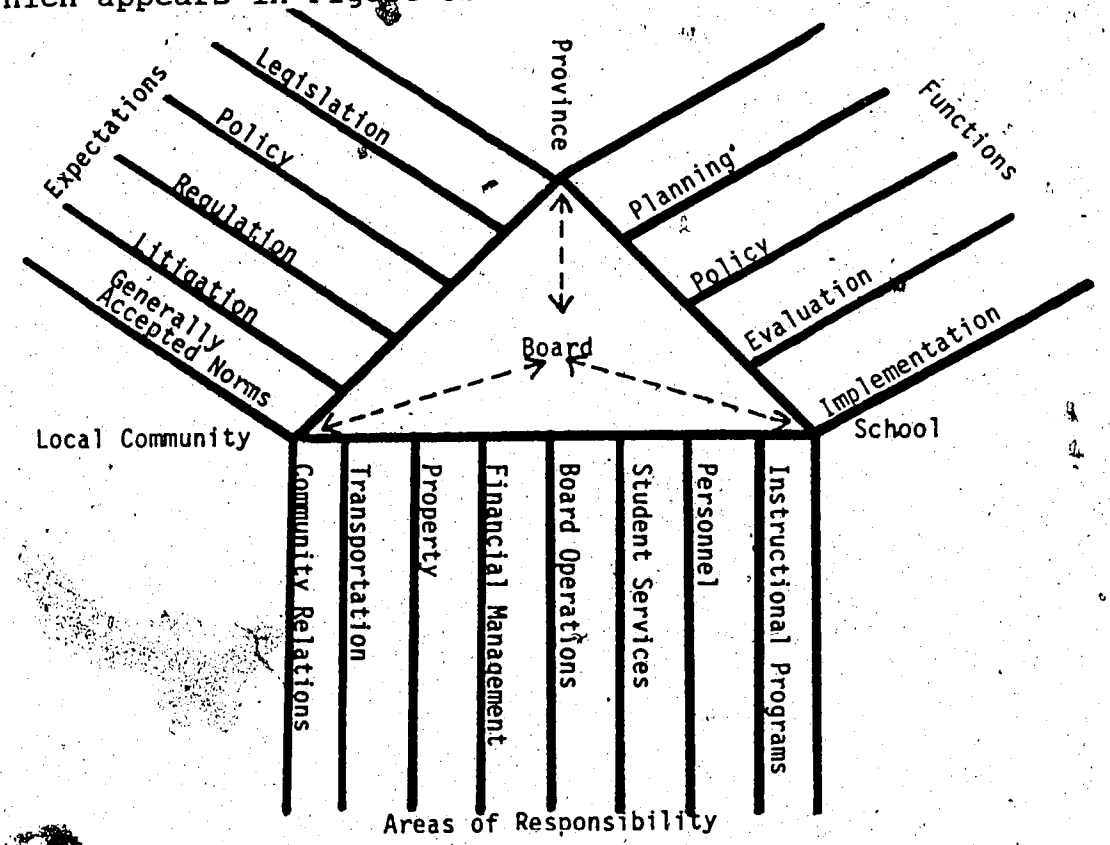

Figure 5. Interaction of Institutions with Functions, Areas of Responsibility and Expectations

Using the Systems Framework

The components of the systems framework are: (1) the context; (2) inputs; (3) transactions; and (4) outputs. The context is the environment of the school system. Kogan's work pointed out that the environment was the province, the local community and the school itself. These three

dimensions are depicted in the diagram of the framework for this study, shown in Figure 6, as the three points on a triangle.

Inputs are the demands placed upon the local government. Demands are placed upon the school board by the government and the local community. These demands are in the form of expectations deriving from legislation, provincial policy, litigation, and the views expressed by local people. The left component of the framework, expectations, serves to depict inputs.

The political system processes the demands or inputs either by ignoring them, deferring them, or acting upon them in the form of policies or programs or actual activities. The transaction takes place at the board, which appears within the centre of the triangle on the diagram. Within this overall framework, the transactions portion can be broken down into the areas over which a board has decision-making responsibility (board operations, community relations, student services, instructional programs, personnel, finances, facilities and transportation).

Those demands which the board chooses to act upon become the board's outputs: plans, policies, and operations (or implementation). The board also processes demands for accountability. These become the outputs referred to as evaluations.

The political system processes the demands or inputs either by ignoring them, deferring them, or acting upon

them in the form of policies or programs or actual activities. The transaction takes place at the board within the centre of the triangle. Within this overall framework, the transactions portion can be broken down into the areas over which a board has decision-making responsibility (board operations, community relations, student services, instructional programs, personnel, finances, facilities and transportation).

Imposing the systems approach on the framework completes the diagram shown in Figure 6.

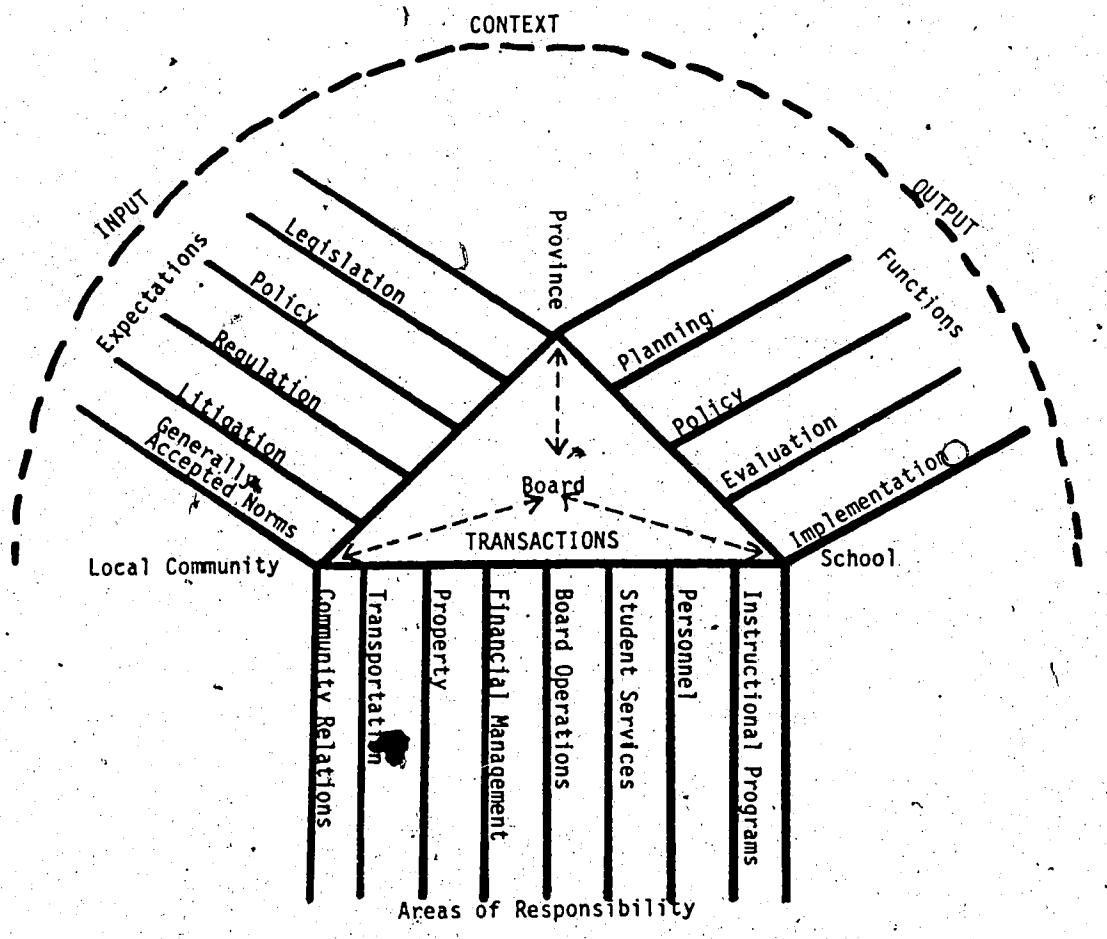

Figure 6. Interaction of Institutions with the Systems Approach Imposed

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions growing out of the framework for this study can be grouped according to the four broad categories of the social systems model: context, inputs, transactions, and outputs.

Context

1. What characteristics of the community affect the way in which the board carries out its responsibilities?

2. What is the board's relationship with the provincial government?

3. What is the board's relationship with the community?

4. What is the board's relationship with the educational system (superintendent and other personnel)?

Input

1. What are the expectations of the provincial government?

2. What are the expectations of the local community?

3. What are the expectations of the educational system (superintendent, administration, personnel, and students)?

4. In what ways and to what extent are the demands expressed to the board?

Transactions

1. How does the board organize itself?

2. What structures does a board construct to facilitate the effective organization of the school system?

3. How does a board spend its time?

4. What is the nature of [redacted]cisions made by the board?

5. How do board members interact with one another?

6. Who has the most influence on a board's decision-making?

7. On whom does the board rely for information for its decision-making?

Output

1. On what type of issues does the board spend most of its time?

2. How does the board define its own role?

3. Whose interests do board decisions serve?

4. How responsible is the board to the expectations of the local community?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Each evaluation situation is unique. Also, each evaluation situation is highly complex, especially when it is the evaluation of a highly complex institution such as a school system. The work of Kogan pointed out that the school system is affected not only by the local schools, but by the entire community and the province. Further, an evaluation is limited to a particular point in time. In order to obtain as accurate a picture as possible within the constraints of time, it is advisable to use multiple methods, not only to reach as many of the actors as possible, but also to validate the findings. The use of multiple methods, according to Jick (1979:602) has been given many names which include convergent methodology, multimethod/multitrait convergent validation, multiple operationalism, and the more recent term, "triangulation." The term is borrowed from navigation which uses multiple reference points to locate an object. The notion of collecting different kinds of data to identify a common phenomenon has been borrowed by social scientists. The use of triangulation can be traced to 1959 when Campbell and Fiske used

more than one method in the validation process to ensure that the variance reflected that of the trait and not of the method (Jick, 1979:602). For the purposes of this study, Denzin's definition of triangulation was used which is, "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Jick, 1979:602).

The methodologies that were used included:

1. the questionnaire;
2. the interview;
3. document search; and
4. observation and site visits.

The use of these many methodologies would have been a tremendous task for one person. The researcher was a member of a team of researchers assigned the task of evaluating the governance and administration of a school system. The researcher participated in the larger study but chose only those elements pertinent to governance for this particular study. There were four dimensions to the framework which guided the collection and analysis of the data and the assessment of system governance and administration (Ingram, 1986:3). These components were:

1. Operational Components. The governance and administration of a school system include responsibilities for: (a) community relations; (b) student personnel services; (c) staff personnel relations; (d) program development and delivery; (e) financial management; (f) facilities management; (g) transportation management; and (h) the coordination of all of these responsibilities.

2. Aspects to be Examined. Any component of an organization can be described by examining its: (a) inputs; (b) context; (c) transactions; (d) outputs; and (e) the interrelationships among these aspects.

3. Functional Categories. The functional categories of governance and administration include: (a) goal and policy development; (b) planning; (c) implementing and operating plans and programs; and (d) monitoring and evaluating system operations.

4. Criteria and Standards. The criteria for judging an operation must be determined, as must the standards for making judgments. These should be based on: (a) the goals and objectives of the organization; (b) the knowledge base in the field; and (c) the context of the operation.

The researcher relied extensively on the framework of the larger study for the purposes of this particular study.

The foregoing operational components were aspects to be examined. Functions, criteria and standards developed by Ingram (1986) were used but a somewhat different configuration as outlined in Chapter II was adopted.

The foregoing model guided the collection and analysis of data for the larger study. This particular study utilized those aspects of the larger study that were pertinent to the governance function.

DATA COLLECTION

For the larger study, data were collected by the following means (Ingram, 1986:4):

Document Reviews

Relevant documents from the school system, from the local newspapers, and from other community publications were examined.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire designed to obtain the opinions of stakeholders with respect to the governance and administration of the school system was distributed to board members, central office staff, principals, teachers, and a sample of parents from each school. In the questionnaire, stakeholders were asked about the actual priority given to various governance and administrative functions as well as about the preferred priority for each of these functions (Appendix "B").

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with board members, most members of central office staff, principals, and a sample of teachers and representatives from interest groups in order to obtain information and opinions about the administration and governance operations of the school system (Appendix "C").

Observations and Site Visits

Five members of the team attended a board meeting. A form was prepared by which to evaluate the board meeting (Appendix "D"). All members of the review team visited central office and at least two members of the team visited each school.

DATA SOURCES

The researcher organized the data collected in the larger study for the purposes of this particular study around the broad aspects of the social systems model: (a) context; (b) inputs; (c) transactions; and (d) outputs.

Context

The interviews were the primary means by which the research team determined which characteristics of the community affected the way in which the board carried out its functions. In fact, this was one of the questions asked in the interview. Similarly, the board's relationship with the community and the educational system were determined from the interview responses.

Input

Inputs were determined largely from document searches as follows:

1. the expectations of the provincial government were determined from a review of the School Act and the Program

Policy Manual; and

2. the expectations of the local community and the educational system were determined to some extent by a review of the board meeting minutes. The nature of issues brought to the board and the persons bringing those issues to the board were identified in the minutes.

Inputs were also determined from the questionnaire data in that all stakeholders were asked what priority they would prefer the board to give to its functions and areas of responsibility.

To a lesser extent, the interview served to provide some information in terms of the expectations the stakeholders had for the way in which the board carried out its functions.

Transactions

Transactions were determined mainly from the interviews but also from a review of the board minutes and from the observation of a board meeting. The interviews were a source of information about how the board organized itself; the structures that the board had in place to facilitate the effective organization of the school system; the interaction between board members; and the identity of groups who had the most influence on the board's decision-making and on whom the board relied for its information for decision-making.

The board minutes were useful in ascertaining the nature of the decisions made and the way in which the board

members spent their time during meetings. The observation of the board meeting provided similar information to that gathered in the review of the minutes but it also added the dimension of providing a graphic picture of the operation of the board and the climate in which decisions were made.

Output

Information on output was gained from the minutes in that they indicated those functions that the board afforded its attention.

The questionnaire was also useful in that it identified the priority that various stakeholders believed the board assigned to the functions of planning, policy-making, evaluation and implementation with reference to its areas of responsibility. The questionnaire also asked respondents to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the system. This was another indicator of output.

The interview revealed the board's response to the demands of interest groups and to changing needs and conditions.

SELECTING THE SAMPLE

Interview

All board members, central office staff and all principals were interviewed. A teacher, selected at random from each school, was interviewed; in the larger schools, two teachers were interviewed. In many cases, the parents who

had been selected to complete the questionnaires requested interviews and their views formed part of the study data. There were also individuals selected from the community such as those representing other governing bodies and the news media for the interviews.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed to all board members and central office staff, to all principals and teachers, and to a random sample of the parents with children in each school. Approximately 345 questionnaires were distributed and 234 completed surveys were returned. A breakdown of the questionnaire respondents by group is shown in Table 1 (Ingram, 1986:12).

TABLE 1

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS BY GROUP

	NUMBER DISTRIBUTED	NUMBER RETURNED
Trustees	7	3
Central Office	14	11
Parents	100	81
Teachers	211	126
Principals	13	13
Totals	345	234

Document Search

The minutes of six consecutive board meetings, including the meeting at which the budget was adopted, were requested from the school system. The agenda package for the board meeting that was observed was also reviewed.

Observation

One board meeting was observed. This board meeting occurred during the time that the review team was visiting the school system for interviewing purposes.

PROCEDURES

Interview

An interview guide was designed whereby all interviewees were asked the same basic questions in the same order. Whenever an interviewee expressed interest or concern about the answer to a particular question, the interviewers would ask follow-up questions.

Questions from the interview questionnaire were identified as being applicable to governance. The responses to those questions were reviewed and were grouped according to themes which arose out of the individual responses. Also, interviewees were asked to identify three strengths and three weaknesses in the school jurisdiction. These were listed according to categories of interviewees: trustees, central office, principals and teachers.

To increase reliability, perception checking occurred between the two people on the interview team immediately after a series of three or four interviews. The two teams met each evening to discuss the themes that were emerging out of the interviews. The findings that emerged were reviewed by the superintendent and board chairman for accuracy.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires were developed which compared "what is" with "what should be." The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Stakeholder expectations were determined from the part which addressed the priority which they would like the board to assign to its four functions (policy making, implementing, evaluating and planning) and eight decision-making areas of responsibility (community relations, financial management, personnel, facilities management, transportation, instructional programs, student services, and board operations). Stakeholder perceptions of what was actually happening were determined from the part which addressed the priority that they believed the board was actually assigning to its functions and areas of responsibility.

The mean score for each item on the questionnaire which was provided by each of the groups surveyed (parents, teachers, central office personnel and principals) was calculated. The means indicated the actual priority that these groups, on average, believed the board placed on various aspects of their role and the degree to which these groups preferred the trustees to pay attention to these areas of responsibility and functions.

Document Search

The review of the minutes provided most of the information with regard to transactions. Transactions were classified according to the four functions (policy making,

evaluation, operations and planning) and the eight areas affected by decisions (board operations, community relations, financial management, transportation, personnel, instructional programs, facilities and student services). The unit of analysis was the board motion.

The policy handbook was a major indicator of outputs in that it indicated the board's compliance with Alberta Education's expectations. A check list was formulated to compare Alberta Education's policy expectations as implied by the School Act and as stated more specifically in the Program Policy Manual and this check list was used to identify gaps in the current policy handbook.

The board minutes also indicated the demands for action or inputs in terms of the person who initiated the agenda item or persons who brought their concerns to the board as delegations.

The contents of the policy handbook were analyzed in terms of:

1. compliance with the legal requirements as laid out in legislation such as the School Act, 1980, the Remembrance Day Act, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and policies of the provincial government; and

2. the similarity between the contents of the jurisdiction's policy handbook and the contents of other school systems' policy handbooks with which the researcher was familiar.

The eight responsibility areas in the research framework were used as the broad categories for the policy analysis: board operations; community relations; student services; instructional programs; personnel; financial management; facilities; and transportation. One additional area was considered: philosophical commitment.

Observation

Five members of the research team attended the May, 1986 board meeting and observed the proceedings. There is a description which constitutes a synthesis of those observations.

The observation of the board meeting corroborated the data gathered from the board minutes and also allowed the researcher to describe the climate in the board room; the efficiency of board operations; and the responsiveness of the board to input demands. A checklist was developed for the review of the board meeting (Appendix "D").

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

The findings will be described under the four headings of: (1) context, (2) inputs, (3) transactions, and (4) outputs.

CONTEXT

The school system under review is situated in northern Alberta. The school system is long and narrow. Within its boundaries there are four distinct attendance areas with their own sets of unique demographic characteristics. These include (Ingram, 1986:8-10):

1. The western attendance area. The four schools in this area serve approximately 650 students, mainly of French origin who live on relatively prosperous farms.

2. The west-central attendance area. Approximately 1,050 students attend the four schools in this area. Employment is derived from government, education, human service sectors, and farming.

3. The east-central attendance area. The two schools in this area serve approximately 330 students.

4. The eastern attendance area. The three schools in this area have a total enrolment of approximately 1,300 students. There is a large native population and many of the other residents in this rapidly expanding area rely on the oil and gas service industry for their livelihood.

Employment sectors in the region in addition to those already mentioned include lumbering and fishing.

In 1981, the board, which had served one year of its three-year term, was dissolved by the Minister of Education and replaced by a public trustee (Ingram, 1986:10)

The context or history of this school jurisdiction had determined the current board's actions to a considerable extent. It was reported that the board constantly made comparisons with the past; it had made a conscious effort to identify problems of the past and to rise above them. None of the former board members were left and there were no vestiges of the former power struggles which had occurred, in part, because of the demographics and geography of the jurisdiction. There had been separatist tendencies over the years. The population of French at the west end had expressed a desire to separate to form a French-speaking jurisdiction. However, some members of the community saw the advantages of remaining in the existing school system.

The board offices are in the town situated in the centre of the jurisdiction. The town's population is diverse as in many rural Alberta towns. Near the other end of the jurisdiction is a large settlement of native people

who are surrounded by industrial and oil service people. This town has been growing rapidly. Because of its booming economy, it has been taxed highly. Residents have expressed concern that an inordinate amount of their taxes was supporting the rest of the system. Interviewees indicated that most people were cognizant that the demographic and geographic diversity created the potential for separation. However, since the current board had been in operation, or for three years, the separatist issue had not arisen. This was attributed to the "trusteeship" stance of the new board. Respondents from within the school jurisdiction and those who interacted with the school system indicated that current board members consciously avoided the parochial tendencies of the former board. They tried to look at the whole [redacted]. One interviewee said, "It used to be a balancing act."

Some respondents believed that the board had become too preoccupied with uniformity. Board members, themselves, used the term, equality. Others commended the board for being more equitable ~~in~~ its dealings with the schools. In their concern for treating everyone equally, however, board members prevented themselves from thoroughly examining all of the details in certain situations. Interviewees pointed out that the school jurisdiction was neither socially nor economically uniform and, therefore, uniformity of thinking was counterproductive.

The board extended the notion of uniformity to its own operations. The former board was constantly bickering.

The new board had made a conscious effort to reach a consensus. Board members were quick to point out, however, that this did not mean that they were always in agreement initially but, following their deliberations, they did try to reach a consensus. When this board was first elected, it tried to avoid any disagreement but there had been more open dissension immediately prior to the review. Trustees reported that once decisions had been made, good rapport continued among board members. One trustee said that the board's philosophy was "to function as a unit." Another respondent outside of the board said that unity seemed to be a priority not only with the board but with the board and the central office. Here again, past practices had made board members highly conscious of avoiding pulling tricks on the superintendent; the board was highly supportive of the superintendent and central office administrators.

The former board was also split into voting cliques. The new board vehemently stated that they had no such cliques. There may be some discussion among trustees prior to attending the board meeting but they avidly stated that they avoided making deals. Nor did they ever meet in private prior to a board meeting so that they could give the impression that they operated harmoniously all of the time. They openly discussed every issue at the board meetings. If an issue did arise between board meetings, all members participated in a conference call. The observation of the board meeting confirmed this. In fact, the chairman

insisted that the board room doors to the foyer stand open at all times except when the board was engaged in properly constituted in-camera sessions.

In order to achieve its objectives of uniformity, stability, equality and fairness, the board had established a policy-making structure that had "slowed down" inconsistent decision-making. The former board was always fighting brush fires whereas the current board had long-term policies to prevent brush fires from starting. Interviewees indicated that there was an enormous improvement in this area. Policies were seen as being very clear, providing direction, and making it easy to find the answers. This board was also conscious of the part that precedent plays in ensuring consistent decision-making.

The board's commitment to careful financial control was also attributed to past experience. The jurisdiction had gone from a deficit to a surplus financial position and had been able to maintain the supplementary requisition at the same rate for three consecutive years. There was also less borrowing. The 1985 audited financial statement revealed an 11.6% contribution of the budget to debt servicing. There were those who felt that finances were overriding everything in decision-making. The school staffs were concerned that the central office administrators were unable to fulfill their curriculum assistance and evaluation roles because of the board's expectations for them to be devoting a lot of time to the budgeting process.

The previous board used to meet with the public only at the annual ratepayers' meeting. They were described as being "very hot" meetings. At the time of the review no ratepayers attended. But, the new board encouraged delegations to attend board meetings whereas the former board discouraged public delegations. The minutes confirmed this attendance as did the board meeting that was observed. Trustees indicated that delegations were not the result of issue conflict but of individual and often private matters such as home schooling requests, appeals of staff or student suspensions, and special education requests. The issue of school closure was also dealt with according to the provincial policy which allowed delegations to present their concerns to the board.

Another area of improvement that the board members were aware of was the conduct of their meetings. They said their meetings were now streamlined because they received their agendas, in advance of the meeting and they all read the materials very carefully and were well prepared. Their preparation for the meeting that was observed was evident. Questions raised were for information that did not appear in the agenda package. However, their meetings were long - at least six hours.

Other improvements mentioned were better relationships with municipalities, fewer busing problems, and considerably better maintenance.

There was one area that had remained relatively unchanged and that was the organization of the central

office. Assistant superintendents' roles and responsibilities were retained from the previous structure even though the board's expectations for careful financial management and for information on which to base its decisions had increased immensely.

One other contextual factor of which respondents were aware was the provincial emphasis on accountability. The board was commended for having its own operations evaluated consistent with expectations that those within the system be evaluated as well.

The comments of one interviewee summarized the position taken by the board in relation to its historical context and that was, "People are very proud of this board; they see great improvements."

Trustees expressed their belief that they were responsible to the people. In this regard, they talked to as many people as possible before making their decisions. They attended public meetings at the request of their communities to obtain input. One trustee pointed out that people sometimes expressed different opinions in a group than they did in private conversations. This particular trustee talked to individuals after a meeting to obtain a more complete picture.

Board members saw their role as being similar to that of a jury. They must weigh all the facts and all the opinions and then try to make a decision that would be in the jurisdiction's, and ultimately, the children's best interest.

The board was reported to have a good relationship with the A.T.A. local. The A.T.A. local took the board at its word and the board's expectations were communicated very clearly. If questions arose over the interpretation of a certain issue, the board would indicate its position and try to reach an understanding before a grievance was negotiated. With regard to collective bargaining, the board's stance was described as being very open. It was quick to release fair and complete information for the teachers to use in bargaining. The board preferred not to have a bargaining agent. The board was described as being cooperative in the negotiation process and, as a result, negotiations occurred within an atmosphere of trust.

INPUTS

The results of the questionnaire were instructive with regard to both inputs and outputs. The questionnaire asked what priority the various stakeholders would like the board to assign to various functions with respect to its areas of responsibility. These expectations are synonymous with inputs. The stakeholders were also asked to identify the actual priority that the board was perceived to be giving to its functions with reference to its areas of responsibility. The actual priority was an indication of the responsiveness of the board to the expectations of stakeholders. This responsiveness could be interpreted as outputs.

Questionnaires

The results of the questionnaire follow. These same results are depicted graphically in Appendix "E".

TABLE 2

QUESTIONNAIRE MEAN RESPONSES

ACTUAL PRIORITY COMPARED WITH
THE PREFERRED PRIORITY TRUSTEES PLACE ON EACH

	ACTUAL PRIORITY[1]				PREFERRED PRIORITY[2]			
	Parents	Teachers	Cen.Off.	Prin.	Parents	Teachers	Cen.Off.	Prin.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS								
1. Developing policies dealing with Community Relations;	3.5[3]	4.2	4.8	4.7	5.6	5.1	5.2	5.0
2. Planning and developing particular Community Relations programs;	3.2	3.6	4.2	3.5	5.4	5.0	4.9	4.7
3. Carrying out Community Relations activities;	3.1	3.6	4.5	3.5	5.5	5.0	4.9	4.8
4. Monitoring and assessing the Community Relations programs of the School Division;	3.3	3.5	4.1	3.8	5.5	4.8	4.8	4.8
STUDENT SERVICES								
5. Developing policies dealing with services to students;	4.0	4.6	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.5	6.0
6. Planning and developing particular student services;	3.8	4.1	4.8	5.1	5.7	5.7	4.6	6.3
7. Actually providing direct services to the students.	3.4	3.7	5.1	4.4	5.7	5.5	5.0	5.8
8. Monitoring and assessing the services which the School Division provides to students;	3.8	4.2	5.1	5.5	5.8	5.5	4.8	6.1

[1] The Actual Priority deals with the emphasis which the Trustees were seen to place on the item in the question.

[2] The Preferred Priority deals with the emphasis the Trustees ought to place on that particular item.

[3] 7=A Very high priority 1=A very low priority

	ACTUAL PRIORITY				PREFERRED PRIORITY			
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS	Parents	Teachers	Cen.Off.	Prin.	Parents	Teachers	Cen.Off.	Prin.
9. Developing policies dealing with the instructional program;	4.0	4.4	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.2	5.8	5.8
10. Planning and developing instructional programs;	4.2	3.8	4.9	3.9	5.2	5.1	4.5	4.5
11. Conducting the educational program;	3.8	3.9	4.8	4.2	4.9	4.8	4.3	4.5
12. Monitoring and assessing the the educational program;	4.0	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.5	4.8	4.5	5.5
PERSONNEL								
13. Developing policies regarding personnel;	4.2	4.8	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.3	5.2	5.8
14. Developing programs dealing with personnel;	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.2	5.5	5.1	3.7	5.1
15. Carrying out programs for or concerning personnel;	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8	5.5	5.0	3.8	4.8
16. Monitoring and assessing the performance of personnel and the operation of personnel programs;	3.9	4.4	5.0	4.8	5.8	5.0	4.5	5.5
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT								
17. Developing policies for the financial management of the School Division;	5.0	5.9	5.6	6.5	5.8	5.5	5.8	6.2
18. Planning and developing financial management programs and procedures;	4.8	5.6	4.7	6.4	5.7	5.4	4.8	5.7
19. Managing the finances of the School Division;	4.9	5.8	4.7	6.4	6.1	5.5	4.7	5.7
20. Monitoring and assessing the manner in which the School Division is operated from a financial standpoint;	4.8	5.7	5.4	6.5	6.1	5.5	5.7	6.2
FACILITIES								
21. Developing policies dealing with the School Division facilities;	4.3	4.9	5.4	5.9	5.6	5.4	5.6	5.9
22. Planning facilities and/or the use of these facilities;	4.1	4.8	5.1	5.7	5.7	5.4	5.2	5.9
23. Managing and operating the facilities of the School Division:	4.2	4.8	4.1	5.3	5.4	5.2	3.9	5.4
24. Monitoring and assessing the operation of the School Division from the standpoint of facilities;	4.1	4.7	4.4	5.7	5.6	5.3	4.4	5.6

TRANSPORTATION								
25. Developing policies dealing with transportation;	4.4	5.2	5.2	5.9	5.8	5.5	5.1	6.1
26. Planning the transportation arrangements and services for the Division;	4.4	5.0	3.7	5.5	5.6	5.2	3.8	5.9
27. Implementing the transportation arrangements within the School Division;	4.2	4.9	3.8	5.3	5.3	5.2	3.7	5.6
28. Monitoring and assessing the transportation arrangements in the School Division.	4.2	4.7	4.6	4.7	5.8	5.3	4.4	5.7

Two types of comparisons were made using the questionnaire data. Comparisons were made within groups; that is, how close was the preferred priority to the perceived actual priority? Comparisons were also made between the responses from the different groups - parents, teachers, central office and principals.

The responses indicated the following:

1. In nearly all cases, the preferred priority for every function within every area of responsibility was higher than the perceived actual priority. The exceptions, or where actual priority was higher than the perceived priority, were in the following areas:

   a. Central office administrators preferred less attention to developing policies, planning and developing services, providing services, and monitoring and

assessing services, for the responsibility area of student services.

b. Central office administrators preferred somewhat less attention to the following functions of instructional programs: planning/ developing programs; conducting the programs; and monitoring and assessing the programs.

c. Central office administrators preferred slightly less attention to the following personnel functions: developing policies; developing programs; implementing programs; and evaluating or assessing the programs. Principals shared the feeling of preferring less attention to the development of personnel policies.

d. Teachers and principals preferred slightly less attention to the following functions of financial management: developing policies; developing programs; managing; and assessing.

f. Central office administrators preferred slightly less attention to managing facilities and monitoring their operation. Principals shared the preference for less attention to the monitoring of facilities.

g. Central office administrators preferred slightly less attention to developing transportation policies and monitoring transportation. Principals preferred less attention to implementation of transportation arrangements.

2. From the questionnaire data some general pictures emerged:

a. Central office administrators' actual priority compared with their preferred priority showed little difference.

b. Principals followed in terms of there being little discrepancy between the actual and the preferred priority.

c. Teachers followed closely behind principals.

d. The largest discrepancy between the actual and the preferred priority was evident among the parents.

3. Those areas in which the groups preferred a higher priority to be assigned included:

a. The areas of responsibility which the central office administrators preferred that the board assign a higher priority included community relations (all functions).

b. The areas of responsibility which the principals preferred that the board assign a higher priority were: (1) community relations (all functions); (2) student services (all functions); and (3) personnel (developing and planning, implementing and monitoring).

c. The areas of responsibility which the teachers preferred the board to assign a higher priority included: (1) community relations (all functions); (2) student services (all functions); and (3) personnel (developing programs and implementing programs).

d. The areas of responsibility which the community preferred the board to assign a higher priority

included (in descending order): (1) community relations (all functions); (2) student services (all functions); (3) facilities (all functions); (4) instructional programs (all functions); (5) transportation (all functions); (6) personnel (all functions); and (7) finances (management and monitoring).

Interviews

Interviewees had certain expectations of the board. First, the board must adhere to the requirements mandated by the province and its own policies. The superintendent expected the board to solicit public input prior to making policies or decisions and to make decisions which were fair and free of political bias. The superintendent also expected the board to be fully informed of his actions. If the superintendent diverged from policy, the board was to be consulted and asked to approve the divergence.

It was reported that the board was flexible, cared a lot about students, was very sensitive to what people were saying, well informed, very understanding, and very fair in its decision-making. More specifically, it was said that the board was very fair in terms of granting educational leaves, personal leaves, family medical leaves and student hearings. One interviewee said that "there is a human kind of relationship between the board and the staff." The phrase, "they understand education," was mentioned in several interviews. Teachers as a group were very happy that

the board considered their feelings before setting policies. They believed that they had an avenue of expression to the board if they wished to make a presentation.

Teachers indicated that the procedures established for teacher and school evaluations were open and fair. They had input into the school evaluations and were pleased with the outcomes.

Although it was said that the board had an "open door" and that individual board members were very open to discussion and ideas, the timing and location of the board meetings were such that teachers could not be in attendance. Nor did the board make it a practice to visit the schools other than to attend awards ceremonies and graduations. As a result, teachers had very little contact with board members. They knew what was happening by reading the minutes. Central office administrators and principals were of two minds on this issue. Although all interviewees who expressed concern over this issue agreed that board members should be in the schools so they could see where the needs were and so that they could get to know people better, such a practice would have its drawbacks. There was the fear that trustees in the schools would be seen as interference. This board was commended for not meddling at the school level. As well, it was said that the board, by not being involved at a personal level, could make decisions on the basis of issues rather than on the basis of personalities. A review of the minutes revealed that names of individuals did not appear on information presented to the board for

decisions. Students and staff were identified only by a number and the name of the school.

Many interviewees indicated that the board actively solicited input from the electors. Various structures had been established to solicit input in addition to personal contact such as parent committees and Local Advisory Boards. However, the board had discontinued its practice of meeting in each community. This had set the board apart from localized concerns. However, parents who came to one school to complete the questionnaires said that they were not interested in what was happening in the "upper echelons" as long as their children were given the opportunity to receive a good education. The board did meet with the parents of the schools that were recommended for closure. Parents, in this instance, believed that they had an open and fair hearing with the board.

Some interviewees indicated that most people did not know anything about the board or the individual trustees. But one group of parents expressed strong feelings about what the board was doing. They said that the jurisdiction did not have clear-cut policies on programs. The statement was made that the board was more concerned with good money management than with the welfare of children. They cited several examples in support of their position. The special education teachers did not seem to be selected for their expertise in special education. Many programs had been dropped while the board had purchased computers which were underutilized. The parents were aware that provincial

grants had been available for computer purchases. They saw a real need to offer vocational education by establishing working relationships with vocational centres or expanding the jurisdiction's own programs.

Another expectation was that the board would ensure that the jurisdiction was run smoothly and amicably. Those who had contact with the board (the municipalities and the separate school system) got along with the board very well. There was a general perception that there was a very positive attitude among board members. The people within the school jurisdiction and those who had dealings with it held the board in high regard. Interviewees indicated that their own thoughts were shared widely; one said "it is a good board with lots of professional people who make sound decisions after they listen very carefully."

Adjectives frequently used to describe the board included, "responsive, sensitive, responsible, reasonable, open, and co-operative."

TRANSACTIONS

The board members, in their decision-making, recognized the corporate unity of the board. As a result, they tried to find out the public will before making a decision. They did represent their own local area's needs to the board but it was the good of the entire jurisdiction which determined the board's final position. Trustees tried to look at the global perspective rather than at their own constituents'

needs. This philosophy was reported to vary somewhat depending on the trustee, but one trustee expressed it from the perspective that "if you are unwise in recognizing and helping others, the others are not going to be concerned about the needs of your area." The term "representative government" was also used. A trustee must look at the system as a whole and do what the voters want, especially if that trustee wants to be re-elected. If there was a choice to be made in making decisions, it was reported that the parents had more influence than the teachers. Trustees reported that they usually had a unanimous vote and seldom did anyone request a recorded vote. This was confirmed in the review of the minutes. Again, this points to the earlier statement that unity was a priority - the board worked well as a group toward the welfare of the entire Division.

The board was also reported to be "issue oriented." In other words, it did not allow personal feelings to interfere with decisions that would resolve issues. At the same time, it was reported to be oriented towards the needs of people.

When asked who had the most influence over decision-making, the positions of chairman and superintendent were mentioned the most frequently. The chairman was very strong and influential. Similarly, the superintendent had a clear view of the direction he wanted the jurisdiction to take. In fact, others said that the superintendent's vision was to make the jurisdiction the best in northern

Alberta. He had an overall perspective of the system. However, the power of the chairman and the superintendent were not reported to constrain the actions of the trustees. They said they felt free to speak up and were not directed in any way by these individuals.

When asked whose interests were uppermost in the decision-making, the most frequent response was the educational needs of the children. A few parents, however, said that the emphasis on finance outweighed the welfare of children.

Interviewees were also asked about the process for conflict resolution. The board surveyed the public before attending meetings; and the public were welcome to bring their concerns before the board in the form of delegations. There were also procedures and channels in place for dealing with individual problems. Teachers knew that they could discuss their concerns with the following individuals in the following order: principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent and the board. Parental complaints directed to the central office were referred to the school where the problem originated.

Prior to making any decisions, the board actively solicited input from various groups. The board also expected a great deal of information to be prepared for them by central office administrators so that they had extensive data on which to base their decisions. Formal structures and processes had been created by which to ensure maximum input

from all those affected by a policy or a decision. Interviewees were able to describe processes that corresponded with those outlined in the procedures of the policy handbook for input into:

1. Long Range Planning
2. Pupil Expulsion Appeals
3. Policy Development
4. Budget Procedures

Diagrams of these procedures appear in Appendix "F" as they were described by interviewees.

The board's policy-making structure received praise. Staff and parent groups were given an opportunity to have input into the policies through both formal and informal structures. The Administrators' Association discussed policies, and proposed policies or policies to be reaffirmed appeared on the agendas of staff meetings. This process was described as being valuable in that it made people aware of the board's expectations. Lines of communication were defined very clearly in policy. As well, it was reported that the Superintendent would entertain proposals for policy changes provided that these proposals were supported by good reasons.

The interviewees were consistent in their descriptions of the steps involved in these processes. For example, most interviewees believed that the board would give serious consideration to their suggestions following circulation of the policies to the schools. Most people were also aware of the three policy readings. Trustees felt

that there should be more feedback on the policy proposals. Some of them expressed frustration over the fact that they advertised the policies but received little feedback.

Central office administrators expressed satisfaction with the reporting structures that were in place. The board also expressed satisfaction with the reporting processes. For example, they said that the report which they received on the budget was timely and subsequently proved to be consistent with the auditor's report.

With regard to the Budget Procedure, the central office maintained a Budget Book which was open to the Executive Council, the board and central office support staff. It contained details of revenues generated and the costs in terms of description and the reasons for expenditures. The board reviewed it in August, October and November.

Board Meeting Minutes

The board meeting minutes indicated the nature of the decisions made by the board and how it utilized its time.

The six sets of minutes indicated that each meeting lasted an average of just over seven hours, ranging from the longest of nine and a half hours to a comparatively short meeting of five and a half hours. It was noted also that there was at least one in-camera session at each of the six meetings and no more than three in-camera sessions.

The minutes were analyzed according to the four functions. These were defined as follows:

1. Planning. Adoption of plans, proposals, goals, including adoption of the budget plan, and referral of issues and programs for study and recommendation.

2. Policies. Adoption of policies and by-laws.

3. Operations Implementing. Approval of items for immediate action such as approval of agendas, minutes, expenditures, leaves, supplies, instructional materials, changes of bus routes, changes of individual student programs, etc.

4. Monitoring/Assessing. Receipt of evaluation reports, audits, and surveys.

Table 3 indicates the number of decisions made according to functions and areas of responsibility and the percentages of decisions devoted to each.

TABLE 3

Types of Board Meeting Decisions

September, 1985 to February, 1986

	Planning	Developing Policies	Operating/ Implementing	Monitoring/ Assessing	Totals	Percentages
Community Relations	0	0	2	0	2	1.1
Student Services	0	11	9	0	20	12.0
Instructional Programs	3	7	3	2	15	9.0
Personnel	0	10	14	0	24	14.4
Financial Management	0	2	21	1	24	14.4
Facilities	2	1	15	0	18	10.7
Transportation	0	1	4	0	5	3.0
Board Operations	2	14	39	4	59	35.4
TOTALS	6	46	107	7	167	100.0
Percentages	3.6	27.7	64.4	4.3		

Table 3 illustrates that a great deal of the board's time was spent in the operational or implementation function. The board was constantly developing policies as indicated by the 27.7 percent that was assigned to developing policies. Very little attention was devoted to monitoring and evaluation and even less to planning.

In terms of its attention to its areas of responsibility, the board addressed the following in descending order of priority:

1. Board Operations. The board spent a great deal of time on implementation in this area but that is understandable since a board must make operational decisions such as approval of its agenda and minutes. The board was also actively involved in developing policies for its own operation.

2. Financial Management. The board spent a considerable amount of time on operating and implementing financial decisions.

3. Personnel. In the area of personnel, the board divided its attention between policy making and implementation.

4. Student Services. Numerous policies were made in this area and there were many operational decisions.

5. Facilities. The board was also making numerous decisions in the operational function with regard to facilities.

6. Instructional Programs. The board made several policies in this area.

Very few decisions were made with regard to community relations and transportation.

Board Meeting Observation

It was noted that the meeting that was observed was called to order on time and that the agenda for the meeting, along with the relevant attachments, including the motions for all action items, had been circulated to trustees prior to the meeting. There was no predetermined adjournment time, however, nor was the order of the agenda slavishly followed. Trustees gave clear evidence of being well prepared on all of the original agenda items, and when these were being dealt with, the meeting proceeded in a business-like, efficient manner. Parliamentary procedure was followed, and ample opportunity for discussion was provided. Board members interacted with others through the chair. Discussion flowed freely.

Resource people, in the persons of central office staff, were available at the meeting and were called on, at times, for information. It was noted that there was a copy of the Policy Handbook and a copy of the collective agreement at the meeting. The presence of a recording secretary allowed the secretary-treasurer to attend the meeting in a "resource" capacity.

The climate at the meeting was pleasant, amiable, and even jovial at times, although it was clear to all present that the chairman was in complete control. Delegations

were made to feel welcome: courteous greetings and introductions were extended to them, and they were provided with ample time for their presentations. Trustees questioned delegations in a non-threatening, information-seeking manner.

Although the board did entertain questions from representatives of the media, there were no special arrangements for them. They were not seated in a convenient location to hear or observe the meeting, nor was a table provided for them to facilitate their writing or note-taking.

While the vast majority of decisions were unanimous, ideas and opinions were expressed freely. At times, the Superintendent participated in this exchange. His views were not always endorsed by the board.

Most decisions at this meeting centred on policy or adherence to policy. It was noted that an inordinate amount of time was spent dealing with those items which were added to the agenda and for which information packages had not been made available. In some cases, trustees appeared to move from their businesslike role to a less careful, more personal approach when dealing with these items.

OUTPUTS

Outputs were determined, as already mentioned, from the questionnaires, the interviews and the policy handbook.

The board set aside the first section of its handbook for its foundations and philosophical commitments. However, this entire section was blank. In establishing the sections of the policy handbook, there was recognition of the need for a philosophy. Formation of the philosophy, or mission, is the first step in developing policy. The philosophy articulates the underlying assumptions that the board, in expressing the will of the constituents, holds for its decisions regarding the jurisdiction. The philosophy provides a focus for the formation of policies. But, in this jurisdiction, this underlying philosophy had not been articulated.

There was little evidence of an orientation to planning in the policy handbook. The board had not formally defined its mission nor had it articulated its philosophy or goals. In other words, the school system had not defined the direction it wanted to take. The board's focus on policy, however, was a first step. One interviewee indicated that policies expressed the long-term plans of the board. Individuals were reported to have expressed their own mission for the school system and one of these was that the Superintendent openly stated that he wanted it "to be the best school system in northern Alberta." Although not written, there were several indicators of the board's philosophy implicit in its actions observed by the constituents.

Although board policies and the policy-making structure were identified as being an excellent feature of the school system, there was one other area of the policy handbook

that had not been completed. The first area was financial management. The financial management section of the policy handbook was very thin consisting of one policy on textbook rentals. One principal reported that this lack of policy had caused problems when there were new secretaries. They often guessed at the proper procedures to follow, especially with regard to purchasing. However, the board indicated that the financial section of the handbook was being developed and that the financial section, including a policy on purchasing, from the former board's handbook was being used as a reference until the new section was completed. Despite the fact that this section of the handbook was very thin, everyone who was interviewed indicated that there was very good financial management. Comments were made to the effect that the board's financial management made the taxpayers happy, and the municipalities were informed of the supplementary requisition well in advance of the time at which they calculated the mill rate. The school system, under the direction of this board, had gone from a deficit position to a surplus position. The board had done very well lately in cleaning up financially and maintaining its buildings. Although the board was described as being overly conscious of its money management, it was applauded for trying to "get every grant available for us." Principals expressed a desire to know the amounts of money that were available for various expenditures such as for capital and specific programs. However, the board was described as being approachable for funding requests

and giving good reasons whenever it denied requests.

The board had addressed the following areas of responsibility in this policies: board operations; student services; instructional programs; personnel; facilities; and transportation.

The policy handbook contained no community relations policies. Also, home schooling was a recurring issue at board meetings. No policy had been developed to provide guidance to the administration in dealing with home schooling applications.

Position descriptions for the senior administrators did not appear in the handbook. However, these were on file and made available to the review team.

The board had clearly defined roles and responsibilities of individuals in the central office either in policy or in job descriptions. Job descriptions had been approved by the board. The incumbents described their job descriptions as being flexible, yet clear enough so that everyone understood the lines of authority. There were comments to the effect that, even though the policy handbook was thick, it had to be that way so that everyone knew exactly what was expected. It was described as serving as a form of insurance. Most of the interviewees indicated that the policies provided a broad framework within which people could work. The policies clearly gave direction, it was "easy to find the answers," and people knew who to contact. A few interviewees felt that there was a proliferation of

policy which tended to dehumanize the system. One individual said that the policy structure should facilitate the operation of the system rather than prescribe decision-making.

Another area which did not appear in the handbook was terms of reference regarding board committees such as purposes, budget, membership, and frequency of meetings. It should be noted that the board meeting attended by the evaluation team was conducted in a businesslike manner until the last item which was the scheduling of board committee meetings. A great deal of chaos surrounded the setting of dates for these meetings.

It was clear, however, from the interviews that the board had defined its own role in relation to the role of the Superintendent and the central office. The board made a conscious effort to stay out of administration; board members constantly articulated their role as a policy-making body. It was the board that instigated the formation of a policy committee. Personnel throughout the school jurisdiction were aware of the board's expressed role for itself. They were also very conscious of the board's support of central office and especially of the Superintendent. The board left administration to the Superintendent. If board actions diverged from this philosophy, the Superintendent was quick to point out the error of their ways and they listened to him.

Personnel saw the board and central office as working well together. One principal said that the board was

conscious of the need to be supportive of central office staff. He went on to say that "unity was a priority with this board as well as stability." Most said that the board had established a good balance in the central office as far as the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer were concerned. The Superintendent was the educational leader. The Secretary-Treasurer's expertise and judgment in financial matters was solicited and appreciated by board members and school jurisdiction personnel alike.

Concern was expressed by several respondents about the role of the assistant superintendents or, more specifically, their adherence to their role description. Teachers and principals believed the role of these persons had been defined as being evaluation and curriculum support. These employees expected more curriculum assistance, and more evaluations. Many said that the assistant superintendents should be visiting the schools more often. The written job descriptions confirmed this view held by teachers and principals.

At one time, central office personnel were more interested in offering curriculum assistance. However, the persons making these observations did concede that the programs had become much more diverse, making it difficult for the assistant superintendents to spend adequate time in giving curriculum assistance. Although some teachers expressed a desire to have more advance information about curriculum change, there were others who indicated that the

inservice that was provided was very good and very supportive.

The board was highly committed to equality. Although the majority of interviewees commended the board for its fairness, they were concerned that equality defined as equal treatment of unequals could cause problems. "The school jurisdiction is too diverse for uniformity" was a comment offered by one interviewee. It seemed that policies were made which were acceptable in the schools in the jurisdiction's geographical and political centre. However, the needs of the students in this urban agrarian-based centre were different from the needs of students in an industrial community in another area of the jurisdiction and they also differed from the small rural schools which educated native children and those which educated French children. For example, the board tried to implement French language instruction uniformly across the jurisdiction. This created a backlash. There were indications that the board needed to provide specialized programs for each group: French, Ukrainians, natives, and the English. The board was viewed as being unresponsive to the needs of the cultural minorities. At the time of the study, the French in one community had been asking for specialized programs. The board had adopted a "wait and see" attitude. They asked the provincial government to make a decision for the entire geographical region which surrounded them. At the same time, some of the French people in the jurisdiction were taking their own survey. But, the board's "wait and

see" attitude may have been a reflection of the public will. People in the community that was affected had two major concerns. They believed that they had suffered because they were not fluent in English. As a result, they wanted their children to have opportunities that were not available to them. Secondly, they did not want their community to become disintegrated. The English minority were fairly vocal in the community and the French, although they formed a large majority, did not want to antagonize the English. The board did not want to antagonize the English minority either. Some community members supported the board's "wait and see" attitude. However, other interviewees believed that the board would be making a mistake if it continued to deal with the French issue at arm's length. A Local Authorities Board had been established in the French community to ensure that there was a balance between the French and the English. This appeared to be the major role of this body.

The board's commitment to equality had manifested itself in a centralization of control. In an effort to ensure uniformity across the jurisdiction, the board had given the central office the power to make decisions regarding staff selection, course offerings, programs, timetables, exam schedules and capital purchases. There had already been some minor conflicts over the board's predilection to centralized decision-making. Those who had experienced conflict said that there would be even more problems

unless the board made a commitment to changing the authority structure. Authority had to be given to the schools which were facing their own unique sets of problems and needs. If there were decentralized decision-making, interviewees believed that there would be less chance of the diverse groups from the three geographical cultural areas wanting to separate from the jurisdiction. However, one interviewee said that decentralization would have to be preceded by careful study of the impact that it would have. Expectations were that the board would give broad direction but would not meddle in the schools. So far, any decision-making that had been delegated to the schools had not been tampered with either by the board or central office.

Respondents to the questionnaire and interviewees were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the system.

Strengths

The strengths of the system were identified as follows:

1. Sound Financial Management. Respondents from each group quickly identified sound financial management, good accounting practices and the budgeting process as strengths of the system. Principals expressed appreciation for the equitable funding of the schools and they shared with the teacher respondents the perception that there was "ample

funding" for teachers, support staff, equipment, instructional materials and maintenance of the facilities. Interviewees were happy to have money to accomplish their objectives. The representatives of the municipalities were impressed with the fiscal management because the supplementary requisition had not changed in three years.

2. Governance. Respondents from each group indicated that the governance of the jurisdiction had improved greatly. Trustees mentioned a sense of collegiality among themselves. Central office personnel said that they had a very knowledgeable board that was highly supportive of central office; a principal used the adjective, "progressive," in describing the board; teachers said it was a good board, supportive of teachers; and community members said that the board treated people fairly, that it listened to the parents and cited the board's treatment of delegations as evidence of its openness. The trustees, themselves, believed that they had the confidence of the community.

3. Leadership. The board members said that the central office administration was one of the jurisdiction's strengths. Central office administrators referred to the strong sense of teamwork in central office. Those outside of central office - principals, teachers and community groups - spoke of leadership and a sense of direction being provided by the board, and sometimes, more specifically by the superintendent and Chairman.

4. Organizational Structure. People within the organization were pleased with the structures that had been

established to encourage their involvement in the decision-making process. Discussions between teachers, administrators and the board could be conducted in a trusting and respectful atmosphere. People believed that decisions were fair and honest. As a result, they identified co-operation and sharing among staff as strengths. They also indicated that there was good communication within central office as well as between central office and the schools. School personnel were pleased with the courtesy extended to them and the efficiency exhibited by personnel in central office.

5. High Morale. The board was very happy with the teachers and believed that they had a good group of teachers. The morale in the jurisdiction was reported to have improved 100 percent because direction was being given. People knew what was expected and what to expect. Satisfaction of the staff of the entire jurisdiction was high. Evidence of this was that there was very little turnover of teaching staff and no strikes. Schools were reported to be administered smoothly. The climate of the school system was repeated in the schools in a positive climate for learning. The students received academic, athletic, band, and drama acclamations.

6. Policy Orientation - Respondents from every group believed that the board's strong focus on policy and its policy-making structure were commendable. A detailed and comprehensive policy manual was in place.

Areas for Improvement

Representatives of various groups had a tendency to cite similar examples of strengths. However, they did not have such a strong tendency to have similar perceptions with regard to improvements for the jurisdiction. However, they were in agreement on one item, and some groups identified additional items.

1. Expansion of the School Program. Central office administrators said the financial circumstances constrained the extent to which they could offer specialized programs for the disadvantaged and special French and native programs. Principals and teachers said that there was need for French, Cree, non-academic and handicapped programs. A community member suggested liaison with the vocational centres to address the jurisdiction's vocational education needs.

2. More Visibility. Parents and teachers would have liked to have seen more of the trustees. This could have been accomplished by having evening board meetings in the various communities so that teachers and working parents could attend.

3. Decentralized Decision-Making. Interviewees indicated that budgeting could be decentralized to the schools so that principals, together with their staffs, could allocate resources to those areas which they believed to be in need of improvement. Budgeting was just one area identified as in need of decentralization. According to the

respondents, decision-making, in general, should be decentralized which would, in effect, expand the role of the principal. Principals saw themselves as leaders of their schools; as a result, they saw the need to be given the authority to lead.

4. Positive Action for Small Schools. Many respondents were committed to retaining the small school as their centre of community life. At the time, concern with economic efficiency was taking priority over the preservation of the community. Respondents would have liked to have seen the board promote small schools instead of ignoring them until they could not function at all.

5. Evaluation. At the time of the study, evaluation of teachers was being conducted by central office administrators and principals. Representatives of these two groups, as well as the teachers themselves, were concerned with the lack of consistency in evaluation procedures and the variety of expectations that administrators had of the teachers. The suggestion was made that the teacher evaluation procedures must be clarified in order to ensure consistent procedures and expectations for teacher evaluation.

The board did not monitor the implementation of the teacher evaluation policies. In fact, trustees were uncertain of the degree to which policies were being implemented; this form of output required more monitoring.

6. Long-Range Planning. Some trustees commented on the board's shortcomings with regard to long-range planning. They were uncertain about the procedures they should

follow that would lead to effective planning.

7. Rotation. Interviewees among central office administrators, principals and teachers identified job rotation as a way of injecting enthusiasm into employees' approach to their work. Because of the economic circumstances affecting teachers' and principals' chances of finding employment elsewhere, the teaching staff had become relatively static and subsequently, in the opinion of some, stagnant. However, many expressed a willingness to exchange positions with another employee - teacher or administrator - within the school jurisdiction.

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Data were collected by a variety of methods - questionnaire, interview, document search, and observation.

Each of these methods provided data relative to one or more components of the systems model. The document search and the interview provided information about the context. The questionnaire was useful in terms of inputs and outputs. The interview was also useful in determining inputs, transactions, and outputs. The one component of the systems framework where all methods were used to provide an accurate picture was the component of transactions. All four methods were used to identify the board's functions (planning, policy-making, implementation and evaluation) in relation to its areas of responsibility (community relations, student services, instructional programs, personnel,

financial management, facilities, and board operations).

The findings can be grouped relative to these areas of responsibility and the methods used.

Community Relations

The interviews conducted with trustees and central office administrators indicated that the public was surveyed whenever there were important decisions pending.

The board's responsiveness to the public was illustrated in the board meeting that was observed. Principals and teachers, however, in their interviews, stated that they would like the board to be much more visible. The questionnaire data confirmed this opinion. The analysis of the board meeting minutes and the policy handbook revealed that there was no visible indication of the board's commitment to community relations.

Student Services

Although the minutes and the policy handbook indicated that adequate attention had been given to this area of responsibility, the questionnaire revealed that, from the parents', principals' and teachers' perspectives, it had not been addressed adequately.

Instructional Programs

The policy handbook and minutes revealed some attention to this area of responsibility. Central office administrators preferred less attention be assigned but, again from

the parents' perspective, it had not been addressed adequately. The interviews shed additional light on the need for increased attention to instructional programs. Diversity of programs to meet the diverse needs of the many constituents was a real concern.

Personnel

A great deal of the board's time was spent developing policies and dealing with personnel issues. Again, central office administrators and principals preferred less attention be given to personnel matters whereas parents preferred more attention.

Financial Management

The one area of responsibility where the board had virtually no policies was financial management. This was compensated for, in part, by the attention given to financial matters at the board table. Nearly one quarter (24 percent) of its time was devoted to financial issues at board meetings. The questionnaire and the interviews indicated exemplary attention to financial management.

Facilities

Interviewees indicated they were proud of their facilities and appreciated the improvements that had been made. There were policies in place and the board did spend time at board meetings making decisions about facilities. There was no great concern expressed, however, with regard to

facilities in the questionnaires.

Transportation

There were policies in place but the board spent very little time on this area of responsibility in board meetings. No concerns were expressed relative to transportation in either the questionnaire or the interviews.

Board Operations

Data relative to functions of the board were not as conclusive as those relative to its areas of responsibility. The questionnaire data did not reveal any major discrepancies between actual and preferred priority relative to planning, policy-making, implementation, or evaluation. The interview was somewhat more useful in that interviewees identified policy-making as a strength and planning and evaluation as functions requiring more attention. However, these views were not expressed by all interviewees.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The major finding of this research was that descriptors or characteristics of an effective school board could be articulated for a specific board in a specific location at a specific time. These characteristics and a short description of each follow. They are grouped according to the research questions which were asked in Chapter II. That is, they are grouped according to the broad concepts of the framework: context, transactions, and outputs with the exception of the questions asked regarding inputs. The inputs guided the study to determine the standards by which to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the board.

CONTEXT

What characteristics of the community affect the way in which a board carries out its responsibilities?

An effective board recognizes diversity within a community and responds to the special needs of its many constituents. This should not be confused with responding to special interest groups. Instead, it means offering those

programs and services that the local community requires in order to achieve a basic level of education. In the jurisdiction being reviewed, there were four distinct and separate communities - a rural French-speaking community, an urban English-speaking community, a community dependent on the oil service industry, and a native community. The children from each of these communities had different backgrounds, different knowledge bases from which to begin, and different expectations of what the education system could do for them. They could not be treated equally. Each group indicated that they required a substantially different program from all of the others in order to make effective use of their educational experiences.

Relationship with the Provincial Government

What is an effective board's relationship with the provincial government?

The members of the Legislative Assembly representing the school jurisdiction were not part of the interview or questionnaire sample nor were Alberta Education officials. Therefore, the relationship of the board to senior levels of government was not ascertained.

Relationship to Other Governing Bodies

What is a board's relationship to other governing bodies?

The municipal governing bodies that interacted with this particular board believe that an effective board has a mutually supportive relationship with municipal governing bodies. A board relies on the municipality to collect its local supplementary requisition. It is important for dialogue to occur so that the board is aware of the financial constraints of the citizens in the municipality in order for it to be reasonable and practical in setting the supplementary requisition.

Planning is also an activity which requires interaction between the board and the municipality. New housing developments create increased demands for schools. Both governing bodies need to be aware of the other's intentions for expansion or reduction of services.

Relationship with the Community

What is the board's relationship with the community?

An effective board actively solicits input and advice from the community. In this particular situation, there were ample opportunities for the public to participate. They were free to participate if they chose to do so. Most participation was a reaction to specific issues such as home schooling and school closure. Nevertheless, the community perceived the area of community relations to be in need of the most attention. Effective community relations requires carefully planned programs, clearly articulated policies, actively implemented programs, and thoughtful evaluation of its implementation. Community relations

requires commitment on the part of board members and an exhibition of that commitment in the form of actively seeking public input as opposed to merely opening the doors for input.

In this particular case, the board literally had an "open" door in that the boardroom doors were swung wide open during the public board meeting. The board solicited input in its decision-making process. That is, people were made aware of policy changes and budgeting timelines and were formally asked for their input. Constituents were also visited or telephoned by board members in order for the board members to obtain an in-depth understanding of the constituents' concerns. Board members believed that individual contact was as important as attending public meetings in ascertaining the public's attitudes. The board did create opportunities and define processes by which constituents could come to the board as delegations with specific concerns but it was somewhat passive in this role.

Relationship with the Superintendent

What is the board's relationship with the superintendent?

An effective board is supportive of the central office administration. This view was expressed by both the superintendent and the board in this particular case. "Supportive," however, should not be interpreted as meaning "always in agreement." Nevertheless, it does mean that the board supports the actions of the central office administration

if those actions are within the parameters defined in the administrator's position description. For example, the board would not question the purchasing of supplies which clearly falls under the purview of the secretary-treasurer. The board and central office administrators do have an understanding with regard to the appeal process. They have clearly defined safeguards in place to allow those persons affected by a decision to have an appeal to a higher level of authority. The teachers, principals, parents, students and superintendents accept this appeal structure and accept the decisions made by the appellate bodies.

Relationship with Personnel

What is the board's relationship with other personnel in the school system?

An effective board gives teachers and others an opportunity to be heard. An effective board is open and candid with the local of the Alberta Teachers' Association. This view was expressed by the teachers who were interviewed. This particular board provided the Alberta Teachers' Association local negotiators with facts and figures relative to its financial position and the stance that it took in negotiations.

TRANSACTIONS

Organization of the Board

How does the board organize itself?

An effective board defines the roles of its own membership. The School Act defines a board in a school division as a "corporation" (School Act, Section 29). However, persons new to the board may not be fully aware of the implications of being a corporation. Board members in this particular case were very cognizant of their role as members of a corporate body. They had defined the legal authority of the individual board members within this context. A definition is necessary for the board chairman. A role description outlining roles and responsibilities for the chairman ensures that board members, as well as the chairman, learn how this role is somewhat different from their own. If the board has committees, it determines their purpose and extent of authority and responsibility.

Although it has been mentioned that the board functions as a unit and that it must operate as a single corporation, the operation of the schools under its authority is somewhat different. Although bound together by a shared purpose or mission, the schools often need to be given a great deal of autonomy. This seems to be somewhat of a paradox. Board members function as a unit and yet their schools function independently. In a jurisdiction that is diverse in its economic base, geography, and demography, this is especially true. As previously mentioned, each school must have the freedom to respond to the needs of its own student population. This necessitates some decentralization of decision-making particularly in the area of program offerings and distribution of the corresponding funding

needed for those programs. An effective board, then, allows for decentralized decision-making but holds the jurisdiction together by a sharing in the mission of the jurisdiction.

Structures for Effective Operation

What structures can a board construct to facilitate the effective operation of a school system?

An effective board has clearly defined decision-making processes that are known by all. Employees in the jurisdiction can cite the steps in the decision-making processes and identify the points at which they have an opportunity for input. These decision-making processes include: planning; policy-making; and budgeting. In this particular jurisdiction the descriptions of the processes matched the processes outlined in policy.

Board Time

How does a board spend its time?

Effective board members receive their agendas well in advance of the meeting. The agenda is accompanied by an appropriate amount of data and a rationale for recommendations. Board members thoroughly familiarize themselves with the agenda prior to attending meetings so that their questions are primarily for clarification instead of for additional information. They use their time to seek the opinions of other board members around the table and have spent time gathering opinions from their constituents prior

to attending board meetings.

An effective board spends its time in decision-making that will enhance the educational well-being of the students within the school system. It devotes time to planning - both long-term and short-term. Many of the board members in the jurisdiction believed this to be one of their weaknesses.

Boards formulate policy based on its plans, legislation, litigation, and good judgment. In order to make sound policy, an effective board ensures that it receives all relevant information and that it receives reaction from those affected by the policies. This type of decision-making is likely to withstand criticism because it has been made on the basis of two prerequisites: quality and acceptance. The quality of the decision is ensured through a careful study of the facts; acceptance is garnered by seeking input from those affected by the decisions. And, finally, an effective board spends time evaluating the effectiveness of its own policies and the effectiveness of all of the components of the school system: board operations; community relations; student services; instructional programs; personnel; financial management; facilities; and transportation.

Time in Meetings

How does a board spend its time in meetings?

During board meetings, an effective board concentrates

on those issues that will have the most impact on the education of its children. There is a prioritizing of agenda items so that those which are the most important will be addressed at the beginning of the meeting where they will be given the most attention in terms of time spent on them. In other words, there is a rational relationship between how long the board spends on an agenda item and the importance of the item.

This particular board devoted a great deal of discussion to facilities rather than to items that would affect the education of the children in the schools.

Nature of Board Decisions

What is the nature of the decisions made by the board?

An effective board is issue-oriented rather than personality-oriented. Instead of dealing with personalities, the board examines the circumstances of each particular case and makes a decision based upon the evidence. In this particular case, the board did not see the names of any student or employee cases which came before it. A number, known only to the superintendent and the confidential secretary, was used to identify each case.

An effective board sees itself as a jury. It must make the final decision based on all of the evidence on the particular case, free from biases built up over the past. This was the view expressed by every trustee who was interviewed.

Interaction Among Board Members

How do board members interact with one another?

An effective board recognizes the corporate unity of the board. Board members may disagree. Often disagreements result in clarification of the points of view of all participants. This disagreement should occur in the open - in the board meetings. This open and honest exchange of opinions creates a solid foundation of trust among board members. They learn to work together, to understand the concerns of others, to respect one another, and to reach a common understanding of the critical issues facing the board. A common understanding is essential to an effective board. Outside of board meetings, board members speak as one voice. Board members were of one mind on this issue. They acknowledged that the board is a corporation. Therefore, its members are bound by the corporate will of the board. They cease to express their own opinions on board decisions. They express the corporate opinion even if their own opinions should differ.

Influence on Decision-Making

Who has the most influence on a board's decision-making?

An effective board is responsible and accountable to those who elect it. Therefore, an effective board makes its decisions based upon the will of the majority of its publics or constituents.

An effective board looks after the system as a whole. Board members are representatives "for" the jurisdiction rather than representatives "of" one particular cause or school or group. They must view the organization as a whole and do what is best for the jurisdiction as a whole. This, again, was the view expressed by several of the trustees who were interviewed. The potential for overt conflict among board members is greater if it appears that voting factions or cliques are determining the decision-making in the jurisdiction.

Information for Decision-Making

On whom does the board rely for information for its decision-making?

An effective board relies on those who possess technical expertise for information for its decision-making. Therefore, it must employ persons who can be trusted to provide the information. An effective board relies heavily on the expertise of the chief executive officer. It requests thorough reporting so that it has as much information as possible on which to make decisions. The board must rely on the superintendent for information because in the superintendent and the administration lies the technical expertise. Trustees are free to seek opinions from others but their source of information is the professional staff. This view was primarily that expressed by the superintendent and the board chairman.

OUTPUT

Issues

On what types of issues does the board spend most of its time?

An effective board clearly defines its own role as being primarily planning, policy-making, and evaluation. In specifically defining its own role, the board makes a conscious decision to stay out of administration. The board members expressed this view as a result of their knowledge of previous unfortunate occurrences in the jurisdiction.

An effective board engages in a strategic planning process. That is, it determines the direction that the jurisdiction should take through a comprehensive study and analysis of the current and future needs of the students within the jurisdiction. This sense of direction will carry the jurisdiction through changes in personnel. It involves a sharing in the promise of the school system by all persons. Board members, for whatever reasons, change and so do administrators. Any one or all of these players can carry the vision for the school system. But, if they change, so does the vision. It becomes tied to personalities rather than being responsive to the needs of the students within the school system. It needs to be a shared vision in order to sustain changes brought about by changes in leadership.

An effective board spends much of its time developing policies. Policies are the basis on which those in the school system make decisions. They cannot make decisions independently. The needs and wishes of the local community must be considered. Board policy is an expression of community needs and wishes. In addition, in order to be fair, decisions must be consistant with past practice. Board policies inform the decision-makers of the precedents that have implications for decision-making.

An effective board assigns administration of the school system to its chief executive officer. In so doing, it is incumbent on the board to recruit and appraise the performance of the chief executive officer in two crucial areas: educational leadership and financial management. The board clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of its chief executive officer and ensures that job descriptions are in place for all personnel. The job descriptions are clear but broad enough to provide a framework within which the administrators can act. There is a clear separation of duties so that everyone within the jurisdiction knows who is responsible and accountable for a particular function.

An effective board has mechanisms in place for appraising its own effectiveness as well as the effectiveness of those areas which it assigns to its chief executive officer, the administration of the school jurisdiction.

An effective board devotes its time and energy to securing and distributing resources. School systems are dependent upon the provincial government for funding. They must

make every effort to secure all of the grants to which they are entitled. They also rely upon local taxpayers. Community understanding and support comes from involving parents and others in the schools. It is the board's role to garner that support. Board members are the locally elected stewards of education. They, therefore, become the primary advocates for education in their communities.

Interests served by Board Decisions

Whose interests do board decisions serve?

An effective board is committed to the collective welfare of all the students within the jurisdiction. All interviewees gave this response to this particular question. An effective board is an advocate for the needs of children. The board is committed to equitable treatment of students. This particular board was committed to the concept of horizontal equity which means that every student is to be treated exactly the same. That is, French language instruction must be offered to every student or the same amount of money for textual materials must be allocated to each student. Similarly, all students must have access to an academic program. The board did not consider the concept of vertical equity which treats individuals differently so that they all have the opportunity to begin from the same starting point. For example, some communities are predominantly native. Instead of offering them French, the board should consider enrichment in their own language and culture supplemented by remedial instruction in English.

Students in larger affluent centres may very well benefit from a program limited to the academic subjects. However, students in a remote rural setting or an industrial setting may benefit more from an occupationally oriented program. Equitable treatment is important but it should not be narrowly interpreted as being uniformity.

An effective board ensures that there is a comprehensive offering of programs to meet the needs of various student groups. Not all students are academically oriented either because of parental interests, ability or aspirations. Therefore, it is important to provide a broad enough program to meet the needs of most students. The special education needs in terms of both the gifted and the handicapped are one example of the diversity of programs required. Then there are special language needs, programs for the disadvantaged, and programs for those with vocational interests. While it may not be practical for a board to provide all of these programs within each school, it is important that the board recognize this diversity and make some efforts towards meeting it.

Responsiveness to Constituents

How responsive is the board to the expectations of its constituents?

An effective board deals openly with controversy. The board makes sure that all sides are heard and that the board's actions are considered and responsive. The board listens to the constituents but is careful not to appease

the narrow interests of special groups. Board members care for all of the school system, or more specifically, for all of the people in the system. In other words, an effective board has a very real "human" or caring attitude. Interviewees other than the board members themselves expressed this sentiment about their board.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is organized around the following concepts: (1) the process; (2) the framework; (3) the characteristics; (4) the delicate balances that exist; and (5) implications for further study.

THE PROCESS

This particular study was a descriptive study. It involved several research methodologies: questionnaire, interview, document search, and site observation. The use of several methodologies serves to confirm data collected from other methodologies but only for specific purposes. This study, for example, relied upon the social systems framework with its components of context, inputs, transactions, and outputs. All four methods were utilized to determine the inputs, transactions, and the outputs. One of the methods, interviews, was used to determine the context. Utilizing multiple methods, or triangulation, serves to provide a much broader, and more accurate, picture of the evaluation situation. The use of a single methodology,

the document search, for example, would have resulted in an inaccurate picture. The board had no financial policies, for example, but attention to financial management was identified as its greatest strength. This was ascertained from the interviews but was confirmed from the questionnaires.

This study was part of a much larger study - the evaluation of a school system. It was complex and because of its complexity, it required six participants and several weeks of work. Several meetings were held to develop the framework and to develop questionnaires and interview schedules consistent with that framework. The project also required several meetings with the superintendent and the board chairman to establish the terms of reference, to discuss methods and procedures, and finally to confirm the data that had been collected. There was also one full week of interviews involving the project leader, project assistant, and two university students. The project leader assumed primary responsibility for all of the foregoing developments and procedures.

The role of the writer was to review the literature relevant to the project; to conduct the searches of the School Act, Program Policy Manual, board minutes, and board policy handbook; and to record the responses to the interviews.

The sequence of events was roughly as follows:

1. The terms of reference were developed and approved;
2. The literature review was undertaken;

3. The project design was developed and approved;

4. The board minutes and policy handbook were reviewed;

5. The questionnaire distribution and interviews occurred concurrently;

6. The board meeting was observed;

7. The report was written;

8. The report was reviewed and edited by the evaluation team;

9. The report was reviewed by the superintendent and board chairman; and

10. The final report was presented to the board.

This sequencing of activities was very effective with the following exception. It would have been useful to have had the questionnaire data prior to the interviews. This would have allowed the evaluation team to determine why certain areas of responsibility were in need of greater attention. Another group that could have been added to the list of interviewees who received individual structured interviews would have been the parents. Parents, when they had strong opinions, were interviewed in groups rather than in individual sessions. The parents exhibited the greatest discrepancies between "what is" and "what ought to be" of any group responding to the questionnaire. The structured interviews may have given the evaluation team a better picture of the reasons for this discrepancy. This would have

been the ideal but it must be remembered that the evaluation team's resources were limited in terms of time and money. As it was, the questionnaires were distributed and collected at the same time as the interview teams visited the schools. A few parents at some of the schools requested interviews. This proved to be a substantial saving in time. No postage was required for the questionnaires.

This study definitely required a team approach not only in terms of the amount of work involved, but also in terms of the expertise and viewpoints that were shared. Team members included university professors, an official from the department of education, and three graduate students, one of whom was the author and also an employee of the Alberta School Trustees' Association.

THE FRAMEWORK

The author's purpose in being involved in the study was to begin the process of developing a framework and identifying the characteristics that emerge from an evaluation of the governance function in a particular school jurisdiction. The framework that evolved was largely developed from the framework created by the project leader, Dr. E.J. Ingram. The framework relied heavily on the components of the systems approach: context, inputs, transactions, and outputs. The framework served as a useful base of reference for developing the interview guide, the questionnaire, and the review of the minutes. It served as a referent

point for defining the methodology, outlining the findings, and determining the implications of the findings. It was a most useful base from which to develop the entire study.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

The second purpose of the study, which was to identify the characteristics of effective governance in a particular location at a particular time, was achieved. It was interesting to note the many authors who indicated the paucity of information relative to school boards. In spite of the expressed limited amount of information available, the literature review for this study was extensive.

ACHIEVING A BALANCE

The literature revealed that there are several delicate balances which boards must address. This study confirmed that those balances do exist but that there may be times and situations that require the board to tend more to one particular perspective than the other. The balances identified and this board's response to them are as follows:

1. "Representatives for" or "Trustees" versus "Representatives of" or "Representativeness." The board members defined themselves as trustees. They made decisions for the good of all participants in the school system. They did not make decisions on the basis of their own particular school or geographic area.

2. "Professional" versus "Fiduciary Orientation." The board must rely on its professional staff for information on which to base its decisions. Nevertheless, its decisions must, once again, be based on what is best for the school system, and ultimately, the community. In other words, the fiduciary orientation is the predominant force in decision-making. Decisions may very well be made for political rather than practical reasons. The board, then, relies on the professionals for the facts, but listens to the community when the issue is political.

3. Planning, Policy-Making, and Evaluation versus Implementation. A board's role has long been defined as being policy-making. Implementation or administration has been the domain of the professionals. This study revealed that the board did have a strong policy-making orientation but that it was also extensively involved in making administrative decisions. The board paid considerably little attention to two other important functions: planning and evaluation.

4. Equality versus Equity. This particular board was particularly concerned with treating every school equally. The jurisdiction's population was highly diverse. In order to be given the same opportunities, students required programs that were responsive to their unique needs. Native students, for example, would experience much more success with special native language programs than they would with French language programs. Similarly, students from an area

with an industrial economic base required technical programs whereas those who came from families employed in education or government were more responsive to academic programs.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Chapter V outlines the characteristics of an effective board in a particular location at a particular time.

These characteristics have not been tested for other locations and times. An empirical study could now be undertaken to determine the extent to which selected groups agree or disagree that the characteristics are indicators of effectiveness. The groups who could be contacted include: trustees, superintendents, secretary-treasurers, other central office administrators and school principals. The list of groups is restricted to the foregoing because of their knowledge of the role of a board. The results of the questionnaires in this particular study indicated that neither teachers nor parents had particularly strong opinions about what the board was actually doing. Their scores tended to centre around the mid-point of the seven-point scale.

Another study which could be conducted could centre around parents' and teachers' "zone of indifference" as far as board operations are concerned. What is it that parents and teachers want to know about the board of trustees and to what extent do they want to be involved?

One additional phenomenon that was interesting was discovered from the questionnaire data. This can be explained as follows. The central office administrators expressed the least discrepancy between "what is" and "what ought to be" relative to board functions and areas of responsibility. The second lowest discrepancy was expressed by principals; the third lowest discrepancy was expressed by teachers; and the greatest discrepancy was expressed by parents.

This phenomenon could be interpreted, "those closest to the locus of decision-making have the most accurate picture of what is actually occurring." Diagrammatically this can be depicted as shown in Figure 7.

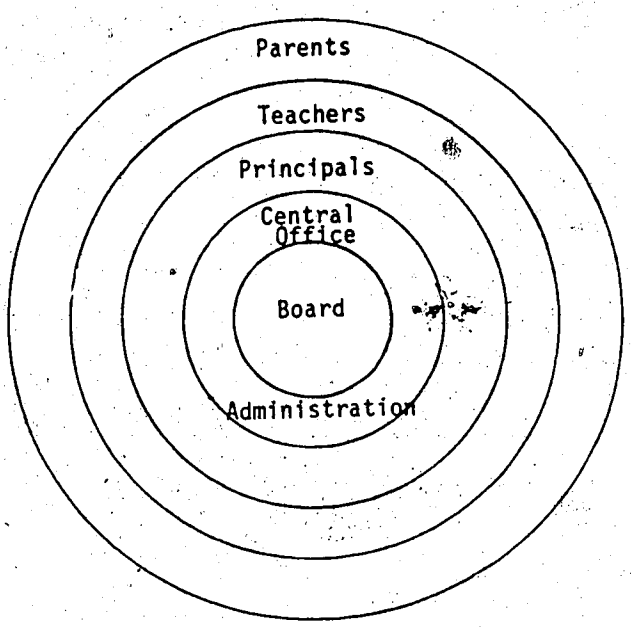

Figure 7. Discrepancy Phenomenon

The average scores resulting from questionnaires administered to the parents tend to lend some credence to this hypothesis. On a scale of 7, their average scores ranged from 3.1 to 5.0 or in the midpoint of the scale which could be interpreted as their not really knowing what is the actual priority being assigned.

In order to test these hypotheses, it would be necessary to administer the questionnaire to similar groups of respondents in several jurisdictions.

The major implications of this study are that: (1) the characteristics of effective governance need to be tested in other school jurisdictions; (2) the questionnaire should be administered in other jurisdictions; and (3) the framework developed is useful for further studies of school systems.

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APPENDIX A

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OUTLINED IN THE SCHOOL ACT AND PROGRAM POLICY MANUAL

Personnel

A board shall:

1. appoint a superintendent, a secretary-treasurer, and other employees as required (School Act, Section 72(1));

2. pay salaries of teachers (School Act, Section 101);

3. designate one teacher to be the principal of each school (School Act, Section 93);

4. employ only teachers who hold a certificate under the Department of Education Act (School Act, Section 80);

5. evaluate individual teacher performance (Program Policy Manual, page 50);

6. permit students enrolled in the faculty of education or their instructors to attend any classroom for observation or student teaching (School Act, Section 79).

A board may:

1. require employees to undergo medical examination (School Act, Section 72(3));

2. transfer a teacher from one room or one school to another room or another school (School Act, Section 83);

3. employ a teacher part-time or for only one year (School Act, Sections 85 and 87);

4. terminate a teacher's contract or designation after giving the teacher 30 days' notice (School Act, Section 89);

5. suspend a teacher believed to be guilty of gross misconduct, neglect of duty, neglect to obey a lawful order of the board, or who has a mental infirmity (School Act, Section 90);

6. designate any teacher to an administrative, supervisory or consultative position (School Act, Section 93);

7. appeal to the Minister if a disagreement arises between the board and a teacher (School Act, Section 96);

8. apply for grants to offer teacher inservice providing they establish policies consistent with those of the province (Program Policy Manual, page 35);

9. participate in the Initiation to Teaching Project (Program Policy Manual, page 41).

Transportation

Boards are responsible for transporting resident students or for maintaining them away from home (School Act, Section 165(1)).

Boards will:

1. establish and implement transportation policies; and

2. maintain transportation records, maps and permits (Program Policy Manual, page 7).

Boards may:

1. provide transportation for non-resident students (Program Policy Manual, page 7);

2. contract with a parent to provide transportation (School Act, Section 166).

Board Operations

The board shall:

1. hold meetings (School Act, Section 72);

2. keep a record of all proceedings of the board, (School Act, Section 72);

3. hold open meetings (School Act, Section 48);

4. hold an annual meeting of the electors (School Act, Section 41);

5. call a public meeting when it receives a petition signed by 25% of the parents of the children in the school or the lesser of 2000 or 25% of the electors in the district (School Act, Section 4(1));

6. hold elections, by-elections, polls, plebiscites, votes on by-laws or money, by-laws or votes in accordance with the Local Authorities Election Act (School Act, Section 9);

7. hold three distinct separate readings of a by-law before it is passed (School Act, Section 47);

8. provide for the adjudication of disputes (School Act, Section 72);

9. ensure a board officer prepares an annual financial statement (School Act, Section 74);

10. submit an auditor's report to the Minister each year (School Act, Section 77);

All resolutions shall be submitted to a board by the chairman or a trustee and no seconder is required. The chairman and every trustee shall vote on a question unless excused by the School Act or a board resolution (School Act, Section 45).

The board may:

1. make rules governing procedures and meetings (School Act, Section [illegible]);

2. provide [illegible] to trustees and pay their expenses (School Act, Section 72);

3. pay grants to another board, association of trustees, or educational organization (School Act, Section 72);

4. enter into an agreement with a municipality for the promotion and development of community services (School Act, Section 72);

5. delegate power to the superintendent or a committee (School Act, Section 72);

6.delegates its powers to bargain (School Act, Section 72);

7. enter into an agreement with another board to establish a regional district (School Act, Section 22);

8. call a special meeting of the board (School Act, Section 42).

Property

A board shall:

1. keep in good order all its real and personal property (School Act, Section 72);

2. dispose of real or personal property by bid or tender and with the approval of the Minister (School Act, Section 104).

A board may:

1. purchase instructional supplies and materials (School Act, Section 72);

2. sell, rent and distribute supplies (School Act, Section 72);

3. acquire by gift, lease or purchase and hold any real or personal property or any interest in it (School Act, Section 102);

4. sell, lease, rent or otherwise dispose of its personal property, and, with the approval of the Minister in writing, dispose of any of its real property (School Act, Section 104).

Home Schooling

Boards may excuse resident pupils from attendance at school if they are under efficient instruction elsewhere, but not in private schools (Program Policy Manual, page 9).

School Operation

A board shall:

1. make rules for the administration, management and operation of schools (School Act, Section 72);

2. specify school opening date, length of school year, length of the school day, minutes of instruction, and recess and vacation periods (School Act, Section 148);

3. display the Canadian flag at each school (School Act, Section 162);

4. arrange for a remembrance ceremony or the observance of two minutes' silence on Remembrance Day or on the school day immediately preceding Remembrance Day (Remembrance Day Act);

5. keep in force an insurance policy for death or personal injury and buildings and equipment (School Act, Section 72).

The board may:

1. declare one day a month to be a school holiday (School Act, Section 148);

2. close schools if pupils' health or safety is endangered (School Act, Section 150);

3. close a school with the approval of the Minister (School Act, Section 149).

Basic Instruction

Grade 1-12 instructional program will be as outlined in the JuniorSenior High School Handbook, and the Elementary, Junior and Senior High School Programs of Studies (Program Policy Manual, page 1).

Boards may offer a locally developed course with the prior approval of the Minister (Program Policy Manual, page 1).

Special Programs

The school board will:

1. establish a Special Education Placement Appeal Committee (Program Policy Manual, page 15);

2. establish Educational Opportunities Fund policies (Program Policy Manual, pages 17 and 18);

3. make provision for French language instruction for students who meet the test of Charter Section 23 (Program Policy Manual, page 20);

4. institute instruction in the French language and/or religious instruction when a local advisory board passes a resolution requesting the board to do so (School Act, Section 27);

5. establish policies for the provision of programs for exceptional students and will spend two to five percent of the Special Education Grant on programs for the gifted (Program Policy Manual, page 29);

6. establish Academic-Occupational policies (Program Policy Manual, page 36);

7. establish Vocational Education policies (Program Policy Manual, page 38).

The school board may:

1. pass a resolution that a school is a Declared Community School (Program Policy Manual, page 13);

2. provide early childhood services programs (Program Policy Manual, page 15 and School Act, Section 72);

3. offer an instructional program in a language other than English or French (Program Policy Manual, page 22);

4. offer programs to disabled persons who are over age 18 years (Program Policy Manual, page 31);

5. offer off-campus vocational education programs at the high school level (Program Policy Manual, page 39);

6. offer after-hours courses (School Act, Section 164);

7. approve work experience (School Act, Section 170);

8. sponsor educational trips inside or outside the jurisdiction (School Act, Section 147);

9. offer English as a Second Language (Program Policy Manual, page 23);

10. offer adult extension programs (Program Policy Manual, pages 26 and 27);

11. prescribe or permit religious instruction (School Act, Section 160);

12. prescribe patriotic exercises or instruction (School Act, Section 161).

Pupils

A school board shall:

1. accept every pupil whose parents reside in its jurisdiction or direct the pupil to a school in another jurisdiction and pay all fees consequent to the education of that pupil (School Act, Section 145);

2. provide health services for pupils (School Act, Section 156).

The school board may:

1. video-tape classrooms (School Act, Section 72);

2. suspend or expel pupils (School Act, Section 155);

3. excuse from attendance any pupil whose special educational needs are of such a nature that regular attendance is not productive (School Act, Section 143);

4. lower the school entrance age (School Act, Section 147).

Finance

School boards wishing to access the School Foundation Program or Special Programs grants must indicate this annually on the appropriate forms submitted to Alberta Education and the Regional Office (Program Policy Manual, pages iv and 1).

Boards will submit to School Business Administration the Supplementary Requisition Form following board approval of the budget (Program Policy Manual, page 11).

A board shall advise the municipality of its estimates for the supplementary requisition (School Act, Section 128).

A board may:

1. raise revenue through local supplementary requisitions (Program Policy Manual, page 1);

2. make banking arrangements (School Act, Section 72);

3. invest (School Act, Section 72);

4. borrow to meet current expenditures, capital expenditures, or buy debentures (School Act, Section 110, 111);

5. exercise the powers of a municipality under the Municipal Government Act with respect to the collection of taxes if empowered by the Minister (School Act, Section 140);

6. charge tuition fees to non-resident pupils (School Act, Section 152);

7. enforce a judgment or order for the payment of money by means of a writ of execution (School Act, Section 178);

8. enter into an agreement with the Government of Alberta, Government of Canada, government of any province, a municipality, a board, or a corporation to provide educational services (School Act, Section 169).

School Construction/Modernization

A school board will:

1. submit to the School Buildings Branch by March 31 of each year three year capital plans with five-year enrolment projections (Program Policy Manual, page 3);

2. submit to Alberta Education:

a. modernization project plans and specifications;

b. tenders or schemes of construction for modernization projects exceeding $100,000 and for all new construction after securing local sources of funding;

c. construction contract;

d. a Statement of Final Costs upon project completion; and

e. confirmation of the Utilization Factor three years after the scheme approval date (Program Policy Manual, page 4);

3. submit annual project plans to Alberta Education for the Building Quality Restoration Program (Program Policy Manual, page 5);

4. give public notice of its intention to erect or purchase a school building, and shall submit the question to a vote of the electors if it receives a petition for a vote within 15 days of the public notice in a newspaper (School Act, Section 107);

5. receive aid for the construction or alteration of a school building only with the approval of the School Buildings Board (School Act, Section 105);

6. pass a by-law if it decides to borrow by debenture for a school building (School Act, Section 111).

The School Act places some specific restrictions on school boards but, generally, anything which is not outlined in the School Act is not permitted. Specifically, the School Act prohibits school boards from:

1. purchasing, constructing, altering, adding to, or renovating a school building without the approval of the School Buildings Board under the School Buildings Act (School Act, Section 108); and

2. charging tuition fees to a pupil whose parents are residents of the jurisdiction (School Act, Section 152).

APPENDIX "B"

HIGH PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION # 48

QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire is designed to obtain information for a study of the Governance and Administration of the High Prairie School Division. This study has been requested by the Board of Trustees of the School Division and is being conducted by staff members of the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. Information will be obtained from many different sources to try to determine how the staff and the public views the manner in which the School Division is governed and administered.

The confidentiality of all responses is assured and the researchers would like to thank you in advance for your invaluable assistance.

For each of the items on the following questionnaire would you please circle the number which most closely indicates your own views regarding the particular item. Please circle a response in both areas - the Actual Priority and the Preferred Priority.

1. The Actual Priority deals with the emphasis which you see each particular group or individual (i.e. Trustees, Superintendent, Principals, Central Office staff) placing on the item in the question.

2. The Preferred Priority deals with the emphasis which you believe or feel each particular group or individual (i.e. Trustees, Superintendent, Principals, Central Office staff) ought to place on that particular item.

7 = A very high priority 1 = A very low priority

For Office Use Only 1

A. The priority which the *Trustees* of the High Prairie School Division place on each of the following:

	ACTUAL PRIORITY	PREFERRED PRIORITY	
2MMUNITY RELATIONS			
1. Developing policies dealing with Community Relations;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	3,4
2. Planning and developing particular Community Relations programs;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	5,6
3. Carrying out Community Relations activities;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7,8
4. Monitoring and assessing the Community Relations programs of the School Division;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	9,10

	ACTUAL PRIORITY	PREFERRED PRIORITY	For Office Use Only
STUDENT SERVICES			
5. Developing policies dealing with services to students;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	11,12
6. Planning and developing particular student services;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	13,14
7. Actually providing direct services to the students.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	15,16
8. Monitoring and assessing the services which the School Division provides to students;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	17,18
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS			
9. Developing policies dealing with the instructional program;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	19,20
10. Planning and developing instructional programs;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	21,22
11. Conducting the educational program;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	23,24
12. Monitoring and assessing the the educational program;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	25,26
PERSONNEL			
13. Developing policies regarding personnel;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	27,28
14. Developing programs dealing with personnel;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	29,30
15. Carrying out programs for or concerning personnel;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	31,32
16. Monitoring and assessing the performance of personnel and the operation of personnel programs;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	33,34
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT			
17. Developing policies for the financial management of the School Division;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	35,36
18. Planning and developing financial management programs and procedures;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	37,38
19. Managing the finances of the School Division;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	39,40

	ACTUAL PRIORITY	PREFERRED PRIORITY	For Office Use Only
20. Monitoring and assessing the manner in which the School Division is operated from a financial standpoint;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	41,42
FACILITIES			
21. Developing policies dealing with the School Division facilities;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	43,44
22. Planning facilities and/or the use of these facilities;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	45,46
23. Managing and operating the facilities of the School Division:	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	47,48
24. Monitoring and assessing the operation of the School Division from the standpoint of facilities;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	49,50
TRANSPORTATION			
25. Developing policies dealing with transportation;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	51,52
26. Planning the transportation arrangements and services for the Division;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	53,54
27. Implementing the transportation arrangements within the School Division;	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	55,56
28. Monitoring and assessing the transportation arrangements in the School Division.	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	7 6 5 4 3 2 1	57,58

APPENDIX "C"

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: TRUSTEES

I. Inputs into Governance and Administration

1. Name and Position

2. Experience:
   a) in present position
   b) in High Prairie S. D.

3. What types of policies, guidelines, terms of reference, etc. has the Board established to govern the way in which the Sup't and other central office staff carry out their functions?

4. What expectations do you have for the way in which
   (a) The Board carries out its functions
   (b) The C.O. staff members carry out their functions?

5. Do your expectations vary from your perception of the expectations held by other groups?

II. Context

6. What Community, School System and historical characteristics affect the way in which the Board and C. O. Administration carry out their responsibilities?

7. What professional and academic expectations affect, or should affect, the way in which C. O. administrators carry out their functions (e. g. codes of ethics, expectations of fellow members of the profession)?

---

* Similar questions were asked of each of the other sets of interviewees (central office staff, principals, teachers, and representatives of interest groups).

III. Transactions

8. In general terms could you describe the Governance and Policy-making structures and procedures used by the Board?

9. In respect to the operation of the Board:
   a) which people, or groups, have the most influence over Board decision making?
   b) whose interests do decisions serve?
   c) how are conflicting interests resolved?
   d) does the decision-making process allow for staff, students and others to to initiate agenda items?

10. Should a trustee do what the public wants even if he/she considers it to be the wrong action, or should the trustee use his/her judgment regardless of what others want?

11. Do members of the Board meet privately prior to a Board meeting to discuss items on the agenda?

12. Is there tension, or conflict, among people in the Division on questions having to do with educational policies?

13. Does the Board ever take a stand that the majority of the public seems to disagree with?

14. How often do delegations appear before the Board? How are their concerns dealt with?

15. In general terms could you describe:
   a) administrative structures and procedures at the Division level

b) administrative roles and responsibilities at the Division level

c) the roles and responsibilities of principals

d) how administrative decisions are made at the Division level

16. In general terms, compare and contrast the roles of Board and the Superintendent, and the way the roles are carried out.

17. How would you describe the philosophy and/or orientation of (a) the Board, (b) the Superintendent and (c) Central Office staff in respect to education and their roles in the System?

18. Do you ever feel any colflict between your responsibility to the public and to the school administration?

IV. Outputs

20. Do you believe the operational policies, structures, and guidelines established by the Division are adequate?

21. How responsive is/are

a) the Board to the wants and/or demands of interest groups?

b) C. O. administrators to the wants and/or demands of interest groups?

22. How responsive is/are:

a) the Board to changing needs and conditions?

b) C. O. administrators to changing needs and conditions?

23. How would you judge the commitment of (a) Board members and (b) C. O.administrators to education and to the policies of the Division?

24. Could you comment on your level of satisfactiion with the performance of the Board in respect to functions such as communication, policy-making, decision-making, monitoring, working with others, etc.

25. Could you comment on your level of satisfaction with the performance of C. O. administrators in respect to functions such as communication, planning, decision-making, program development, monitoring, working with others, etc.

26. How would you assess the overall "climate" of the System (morale, feeling of good will, enthusiasm)?

27. How would you assess the overall learning outputs of the System?

28. Please identify:

a) the three best features in respect to how the Division is governed and administered.

b) the three most important issues facing the division and how these should be dealt with.

c) the ways in which the roles of the Board, C. O. administrators and Principals should be expanded and/or reduced

29. Other comments?

APPENDIX "D"

CHECKLIST FOR BOARD MEETING OBSERVATION

Mechanics

1. Adherence to Times
   a. Opening Time
   b. Adjournment Time
2. Adherence to Procedures
   a. Parliamentary Procedure
   b. Agenda
3. Availability of Sources of Information
   a. Staff
   b. Policy Handbook
   c. School Act
   d. Program Policy Manual

Participation

1. Attendance
   a. Public
   b. Staff
   c. News Media
2. Provision for Input into Decision-Making
   a. Staff

b. Public

c. Superintendent

3. Climate

a. Open and free exchange of ideas

b. Conflict or unanimous

4. Discussion

a. Who initiates agenda items?

b. Who participates in the discussion?

c. Who makes proposals for action?

Preparation

1. Agenda

a. Is sufficient background information provided?

b. Is the agenda structured in a way that facilitates action?

2. Board Members

a. Do board members seem familiar with the agenda?

b. Do board members openly express opposition to some action or support for some action?

Substance of Discussion

1. Curriculum

2. Student Services

3. Personnel

4. Finance

E. Board Operations

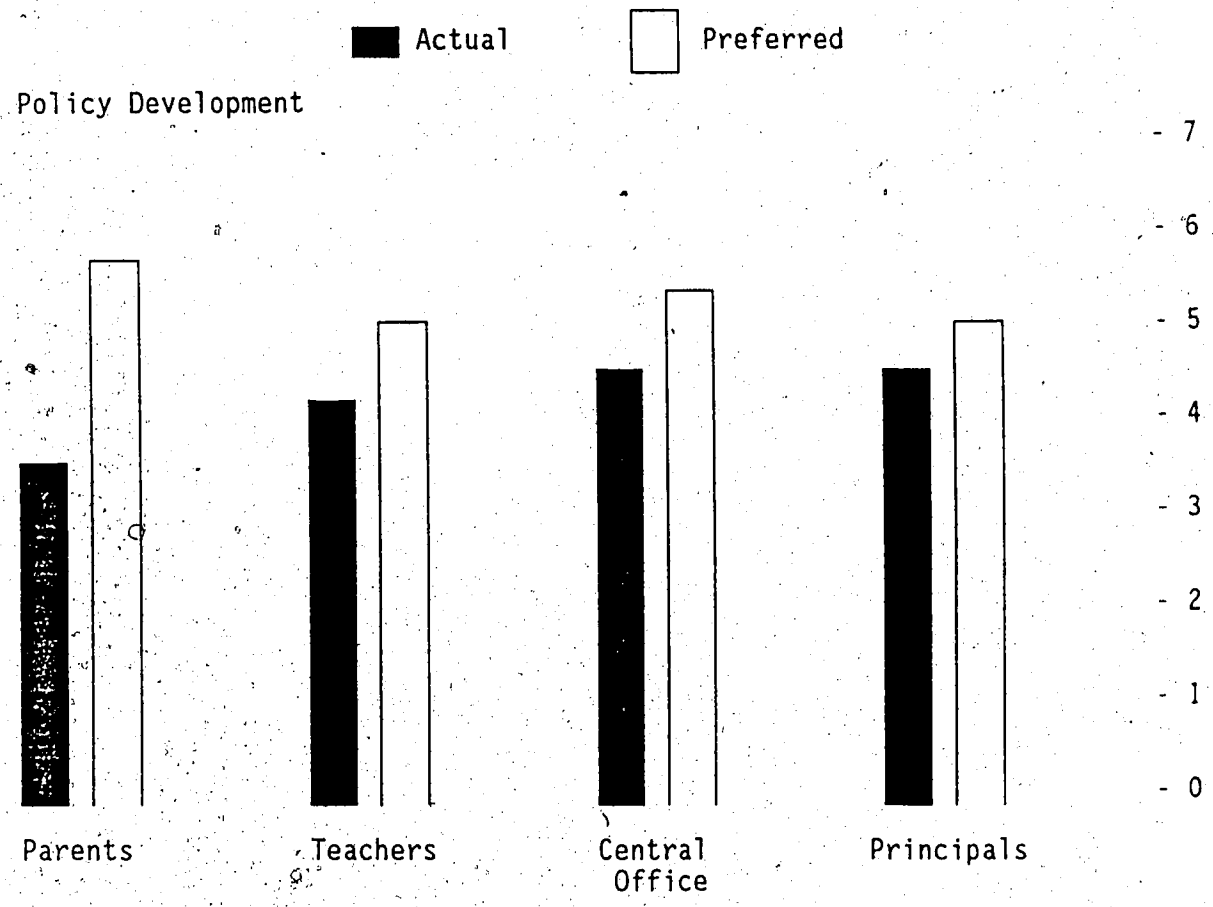
F. Transportation

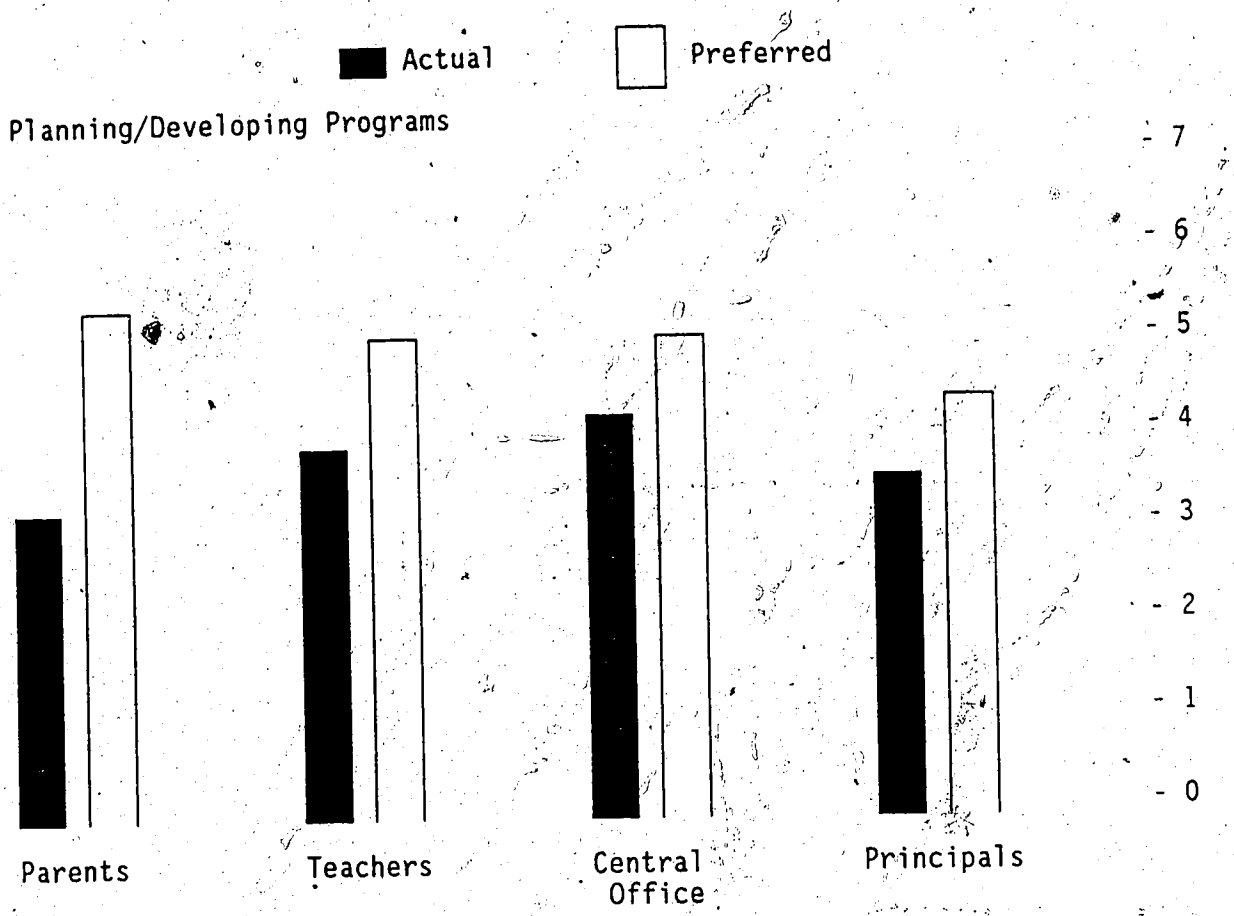
G. Community Relations

H. Facilities

APPENDIX "E"

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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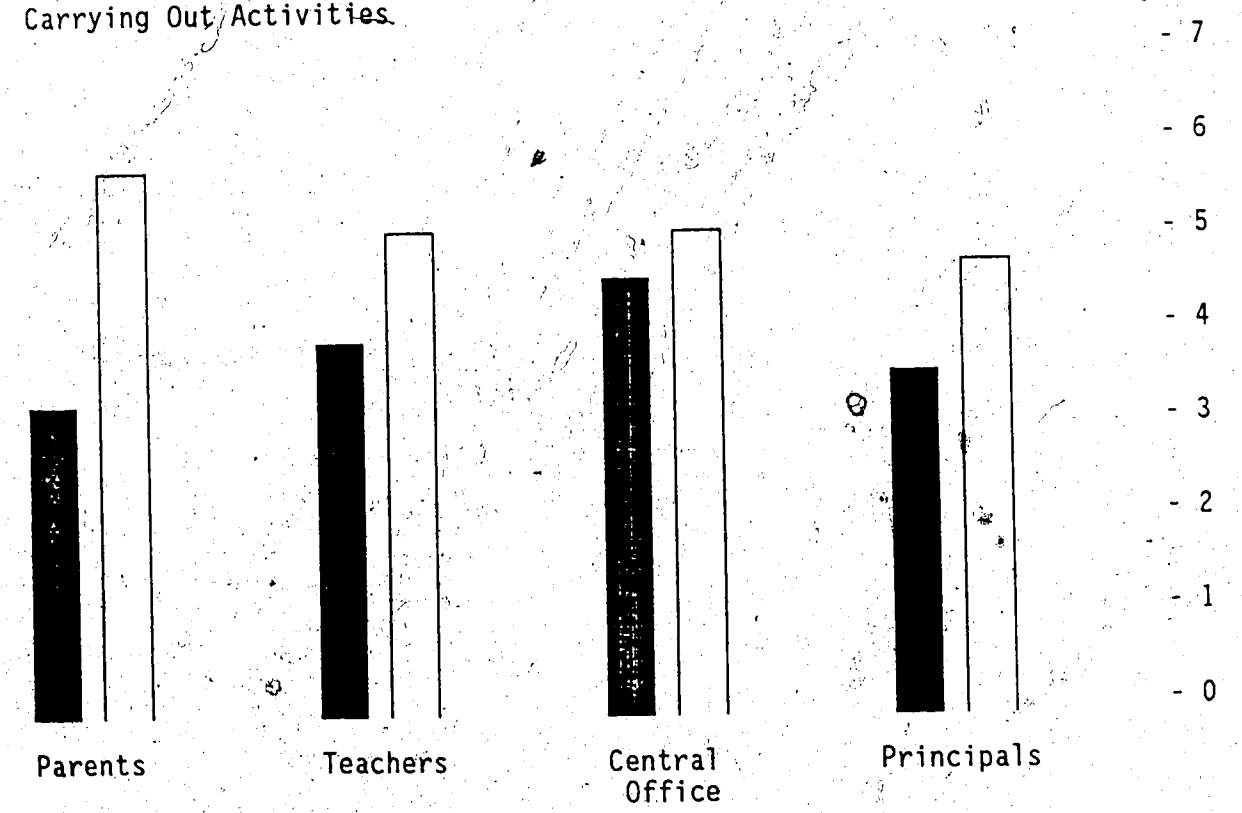
Carrying Out Activities
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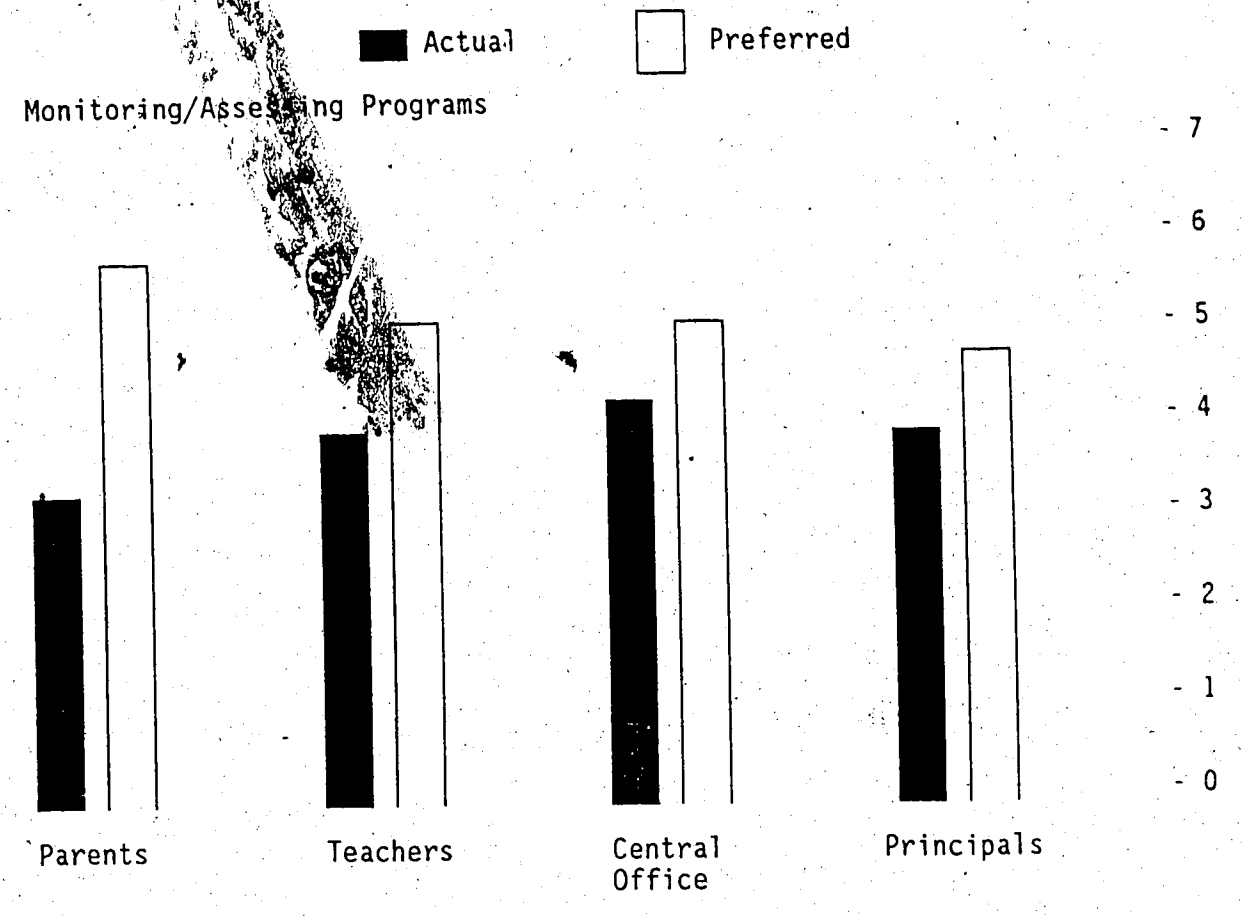

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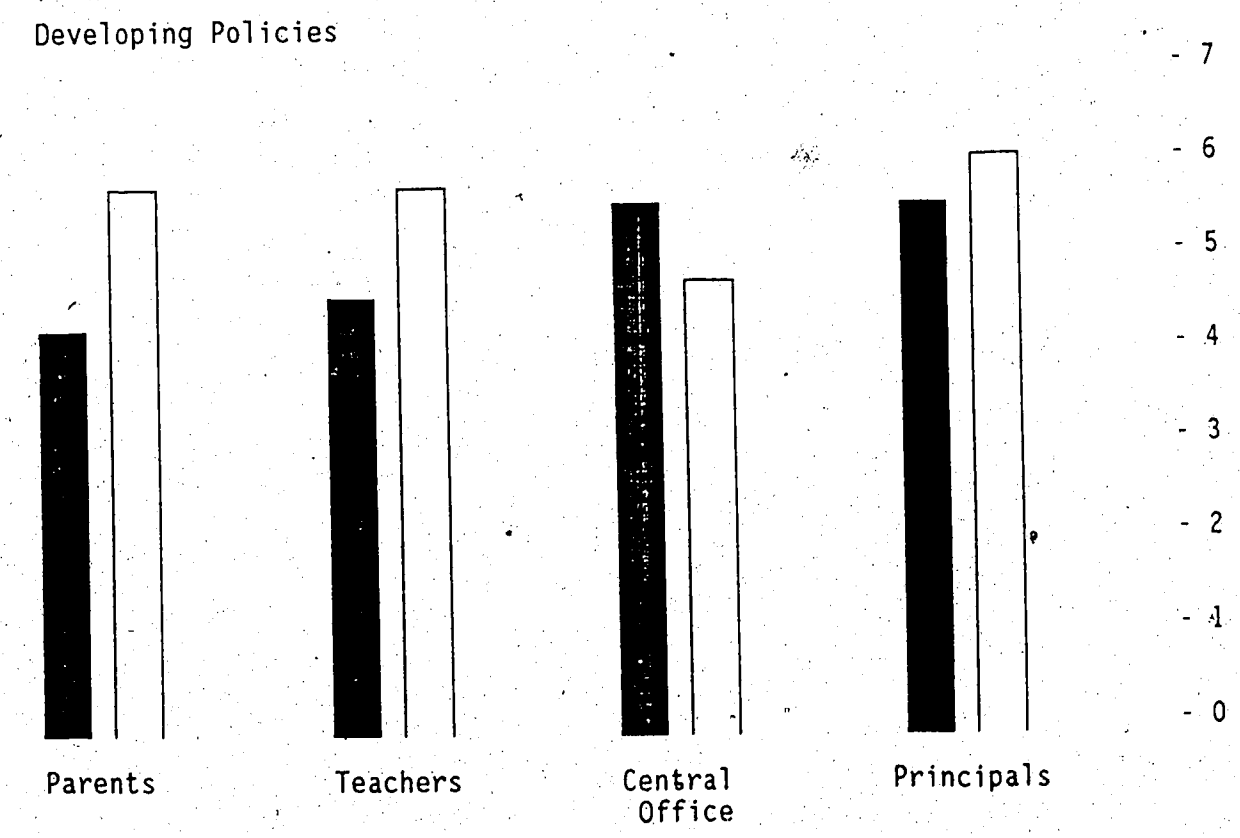

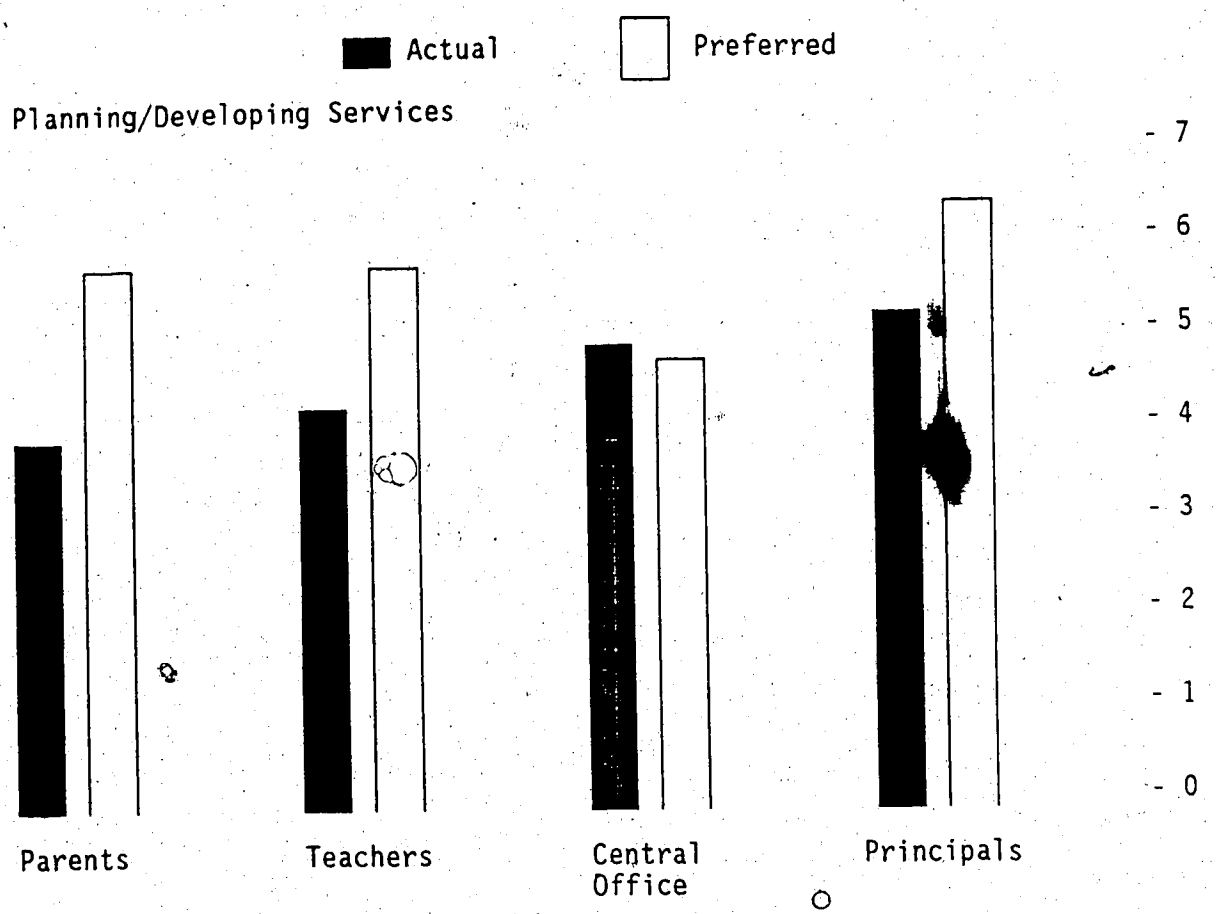
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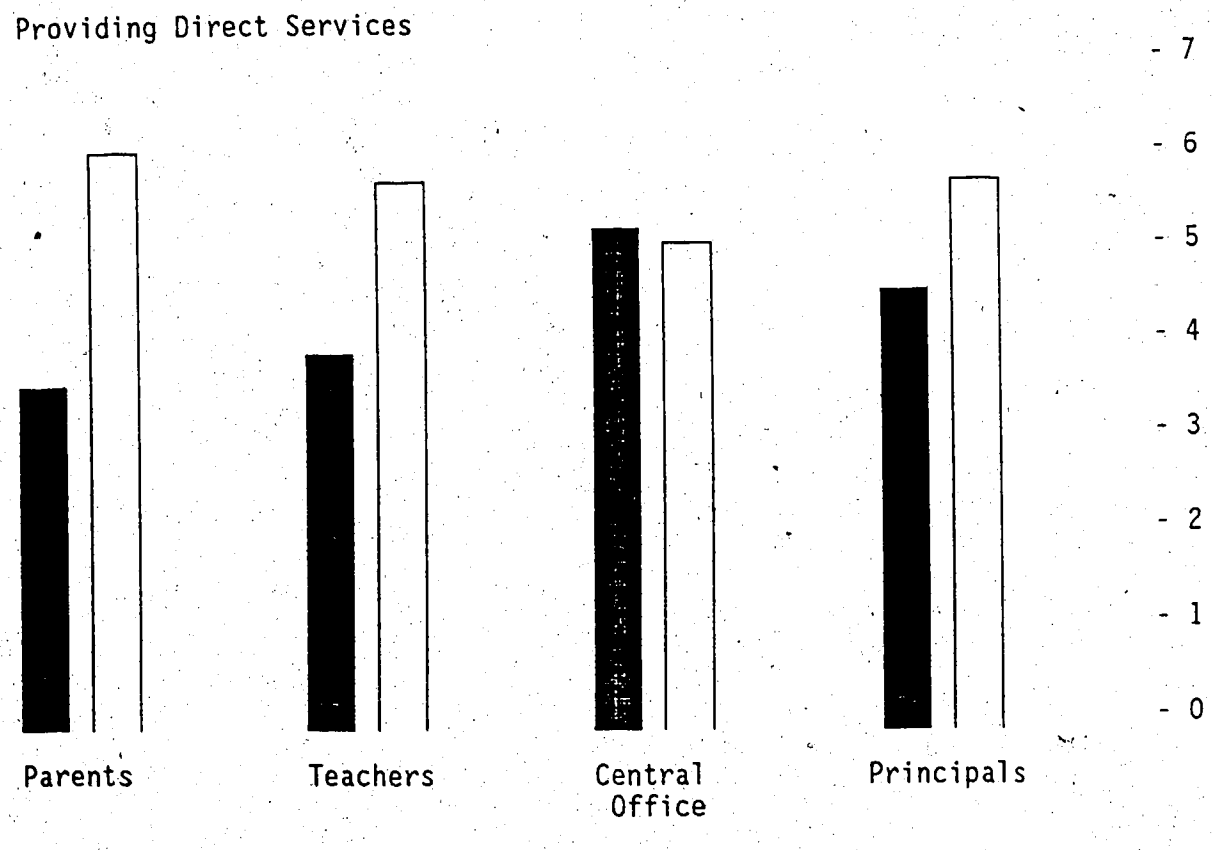
Providing Direct Services
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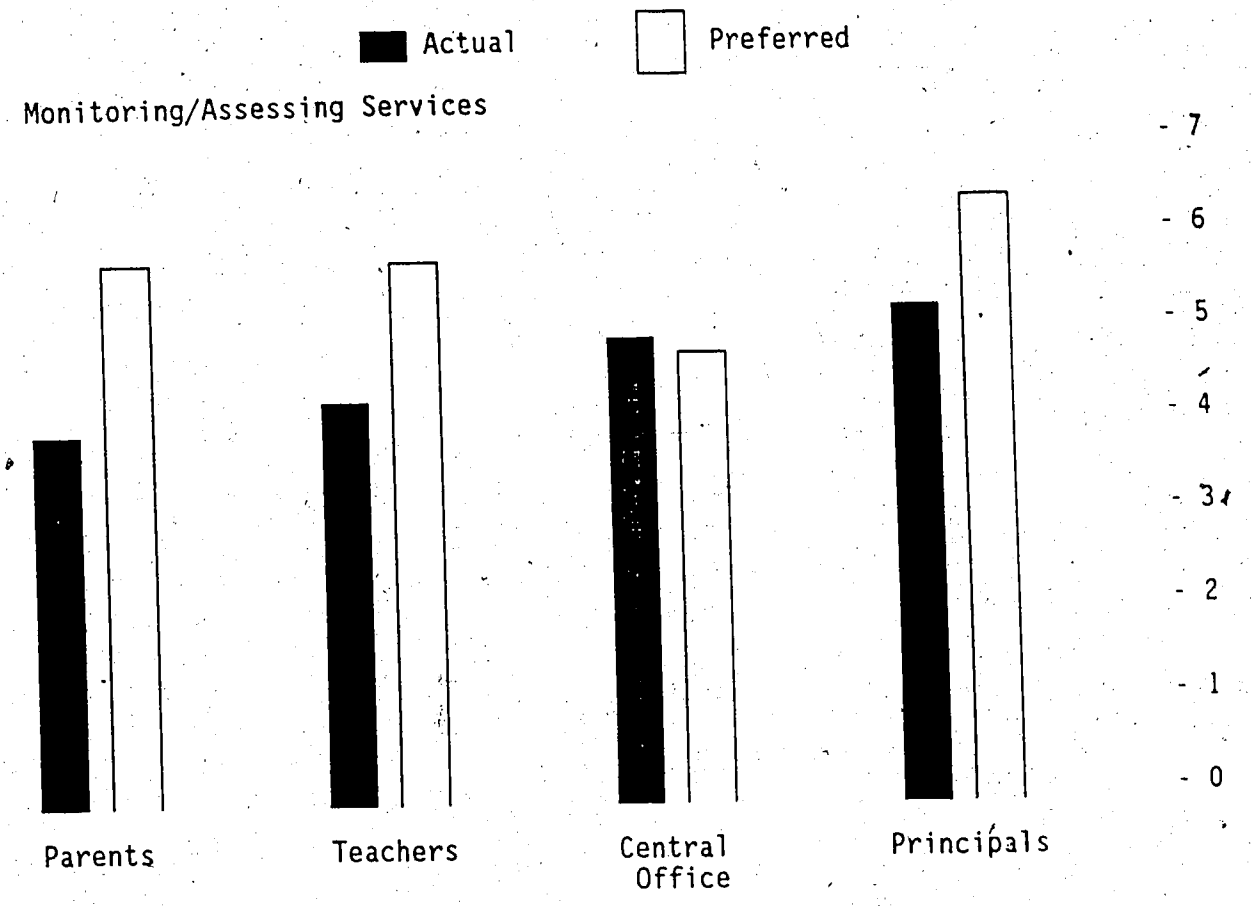

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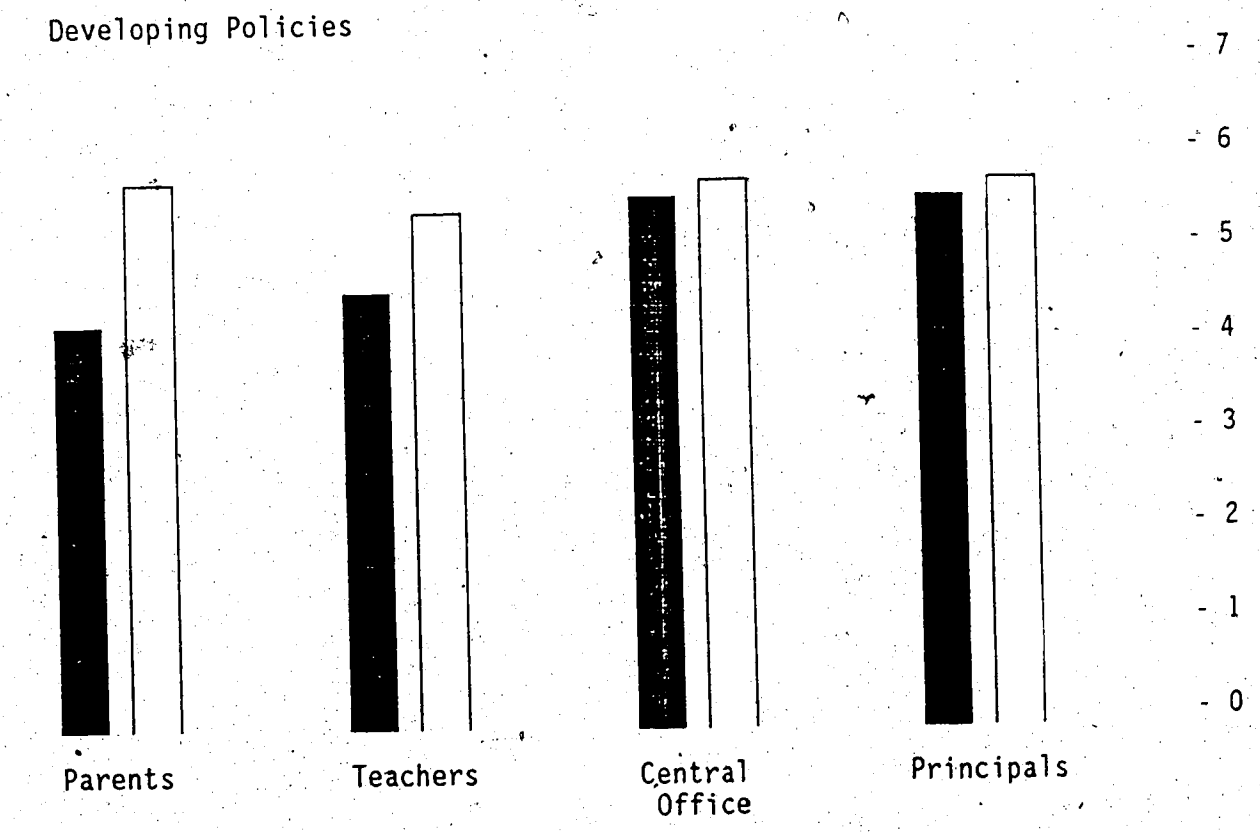

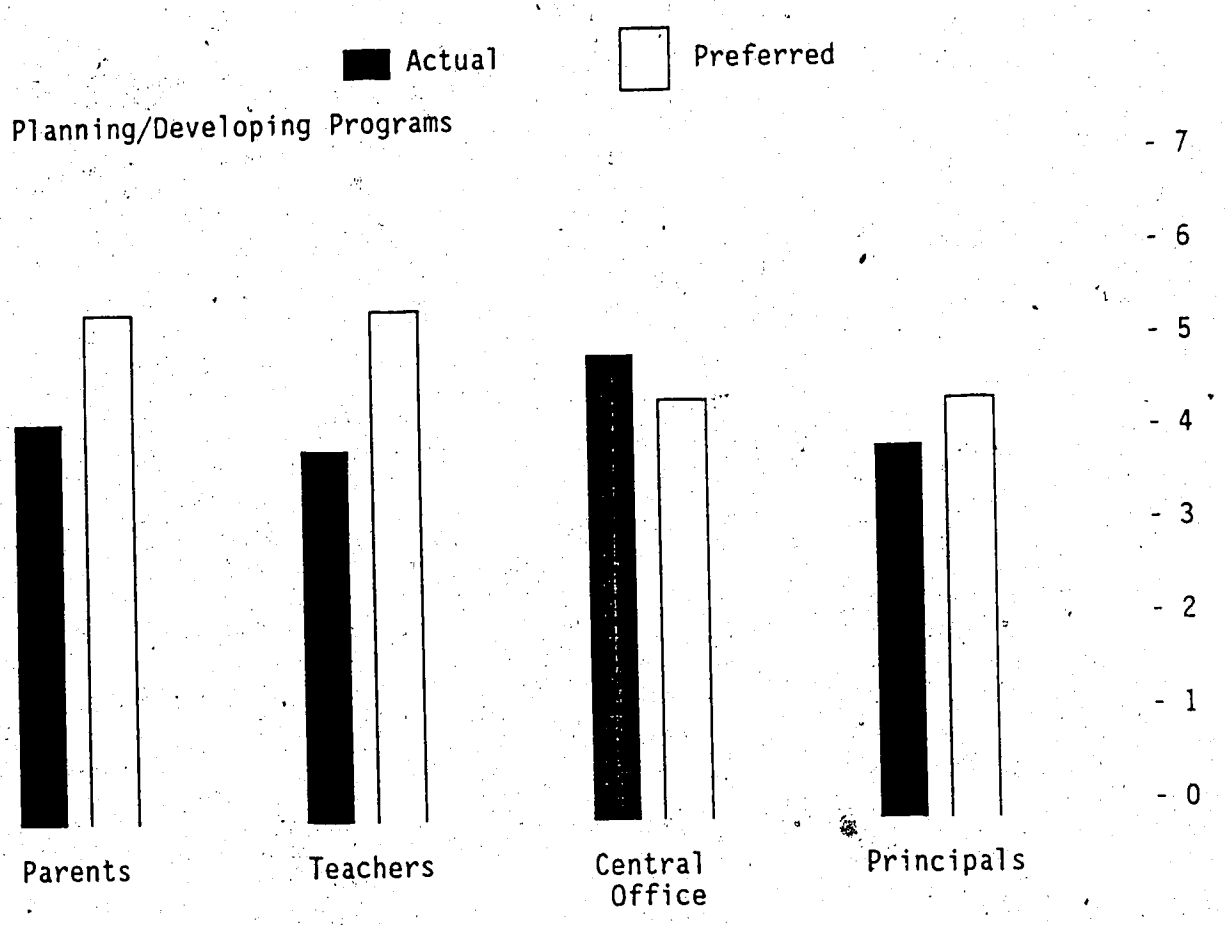
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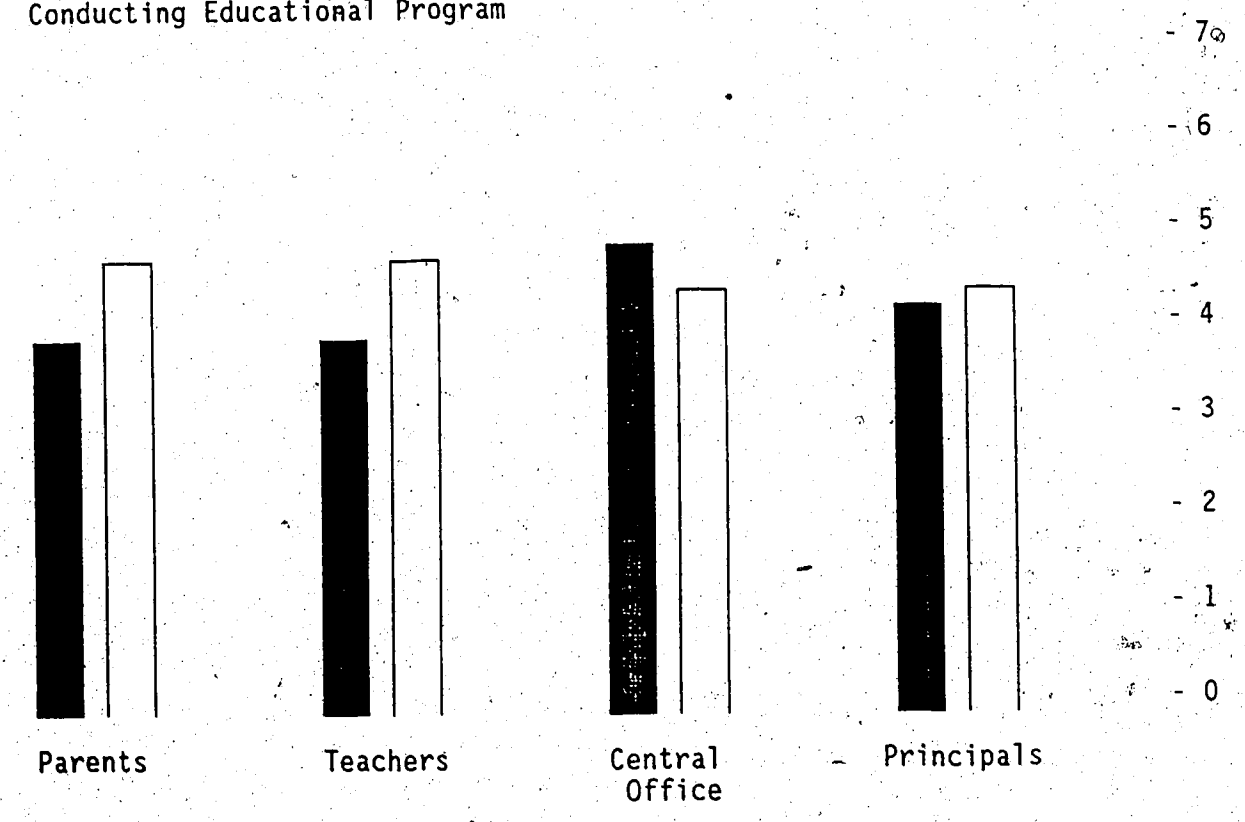
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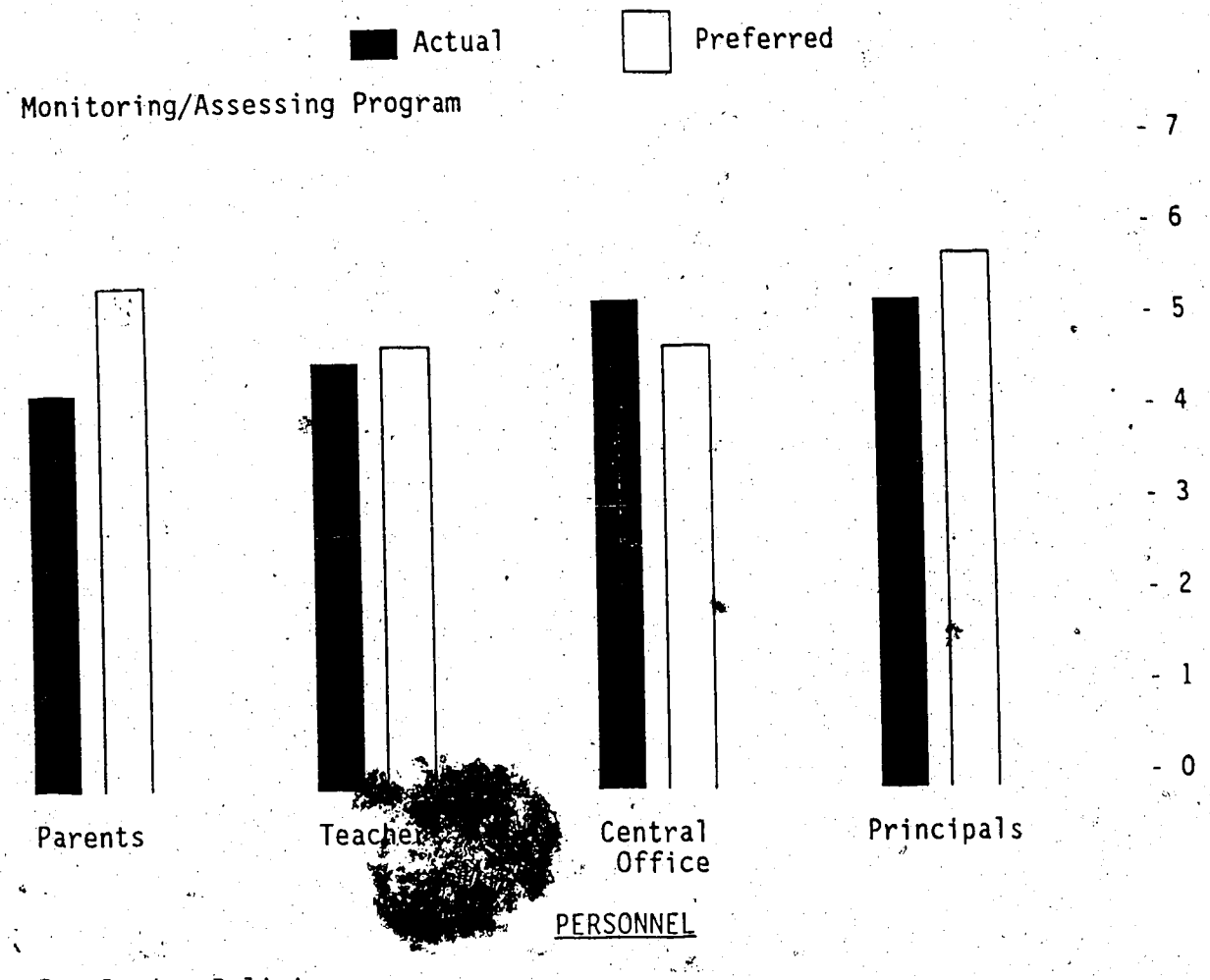
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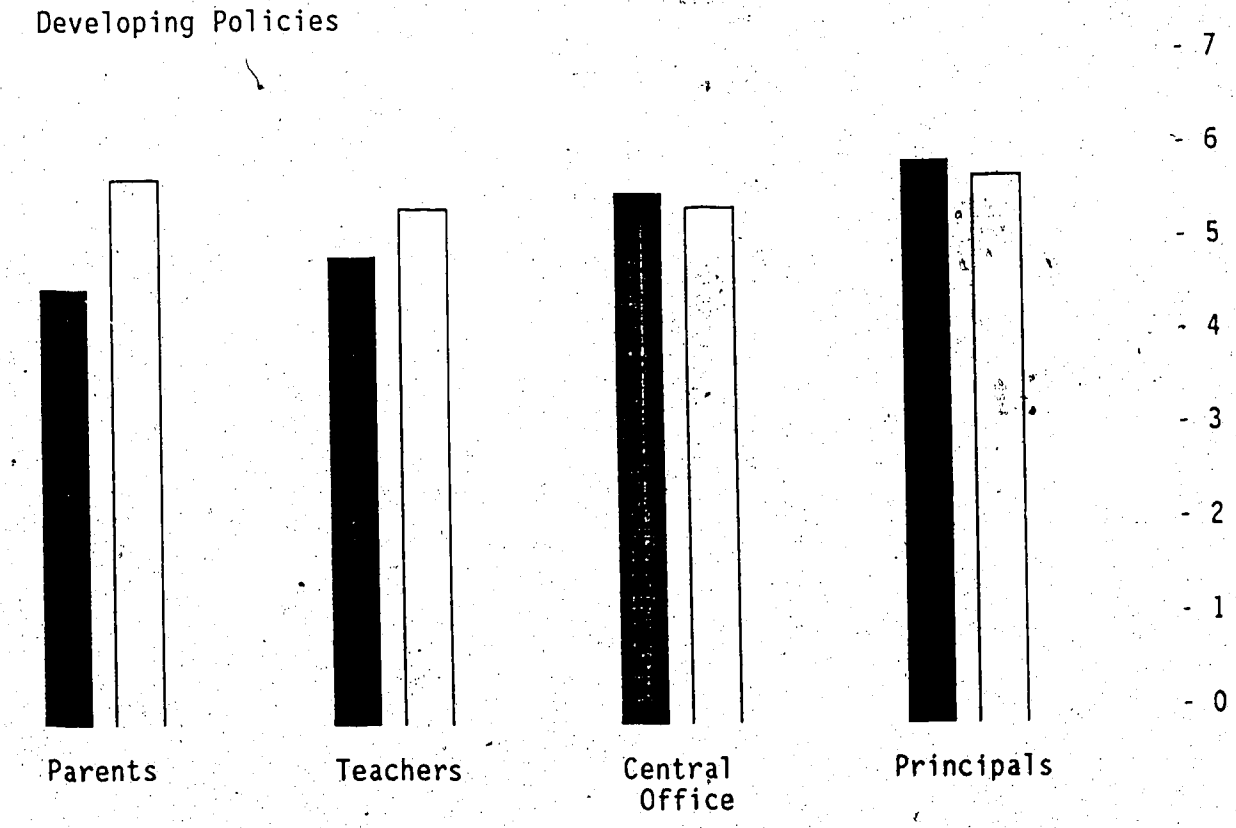
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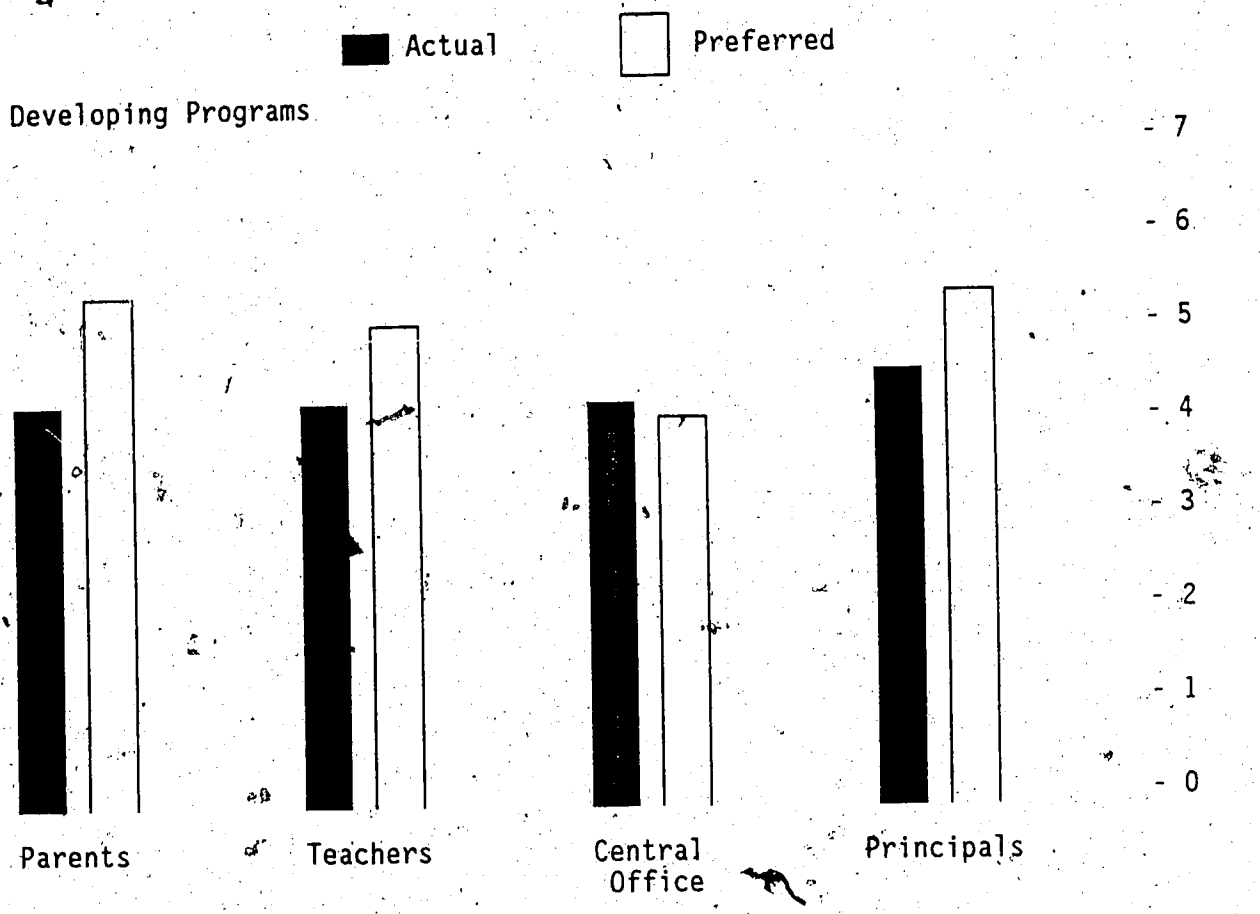
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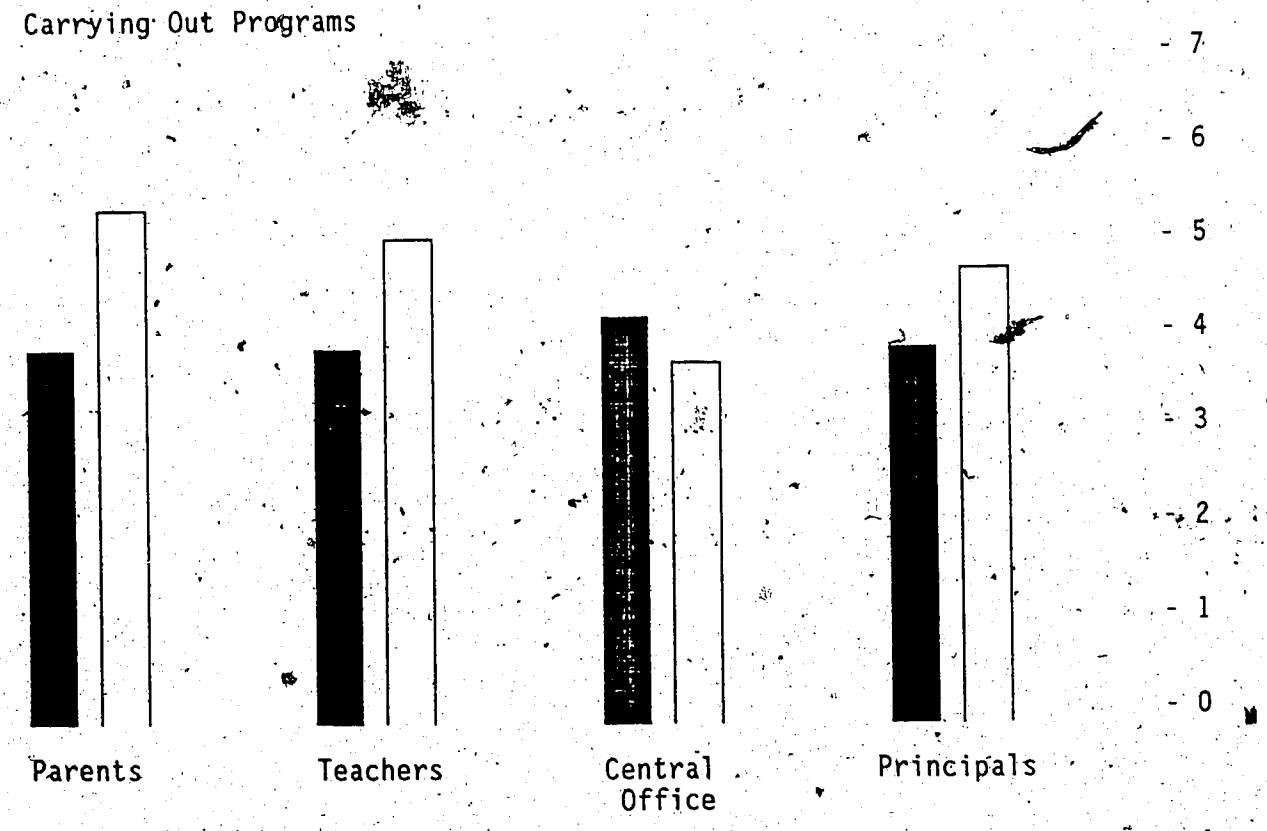
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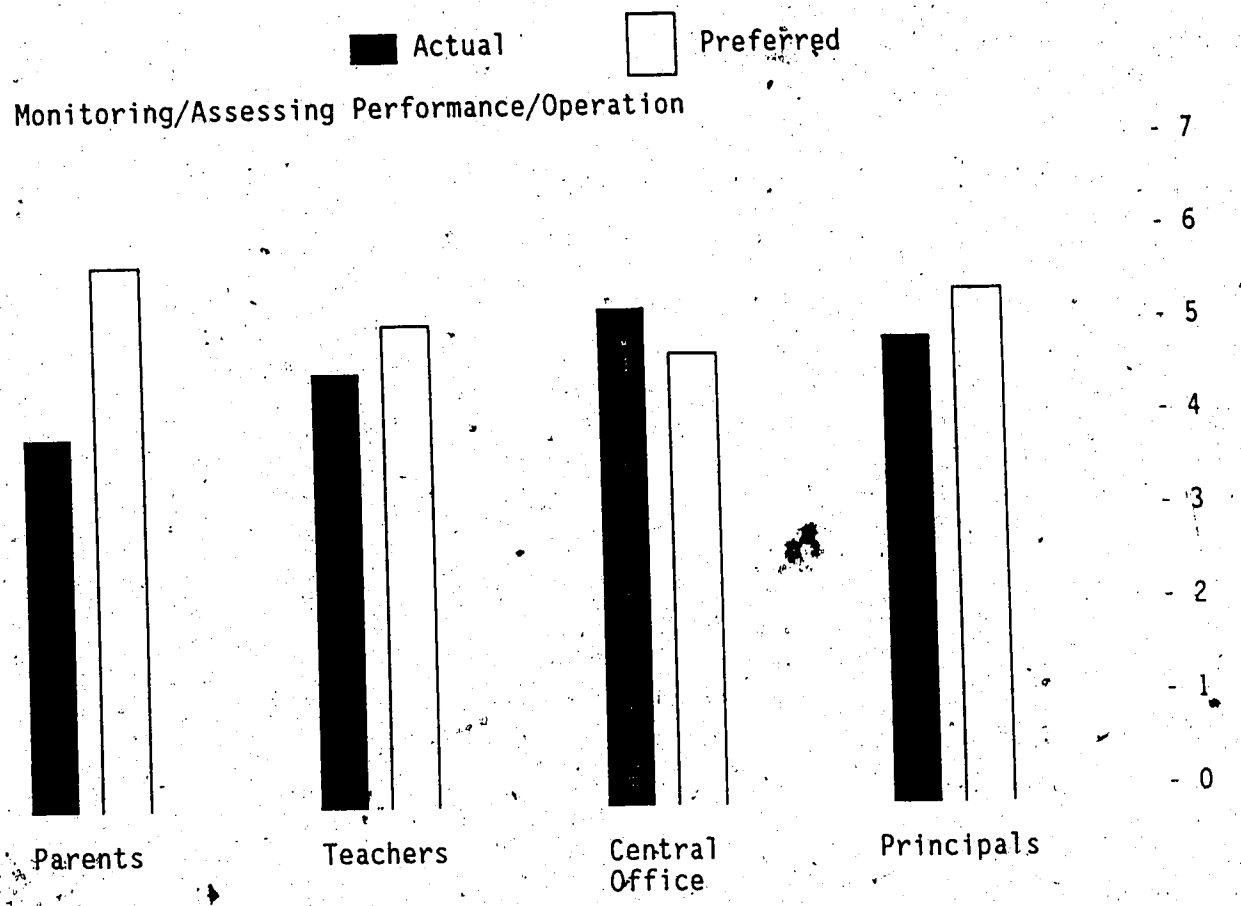
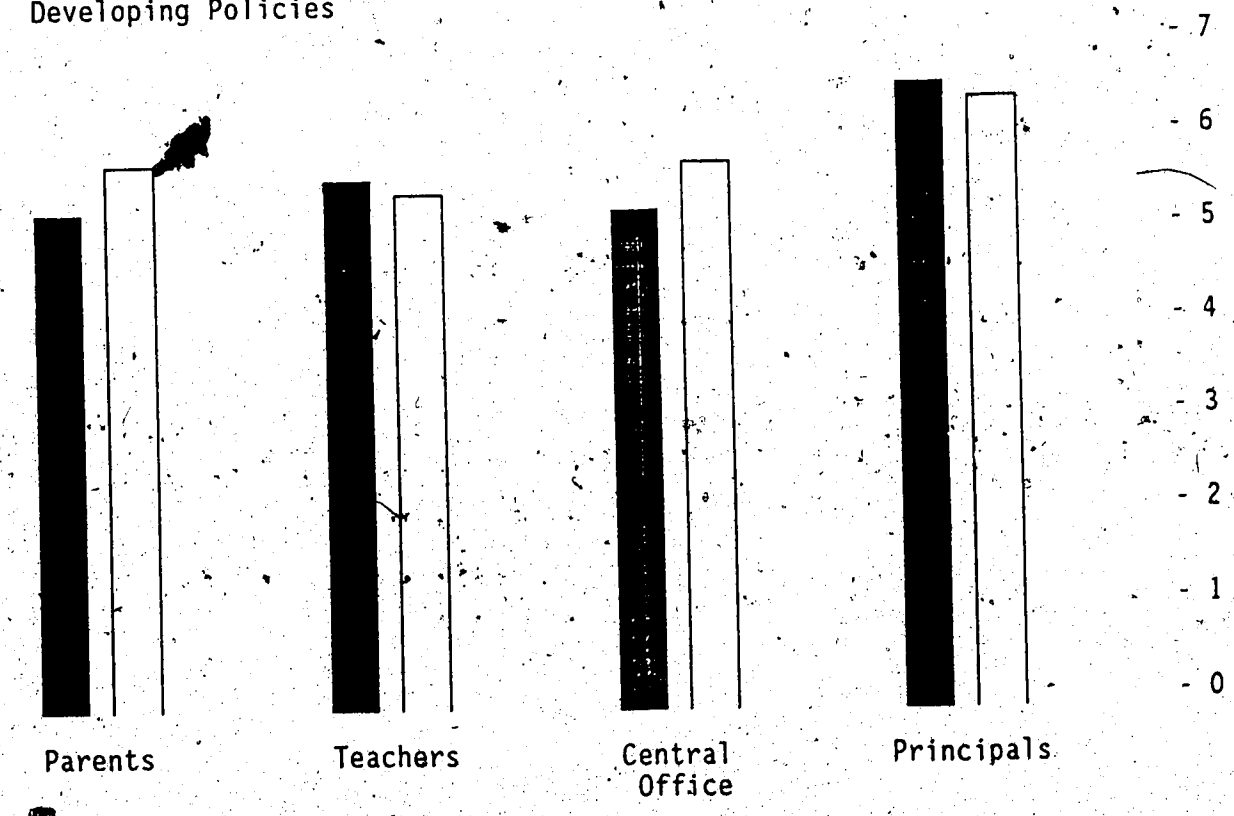
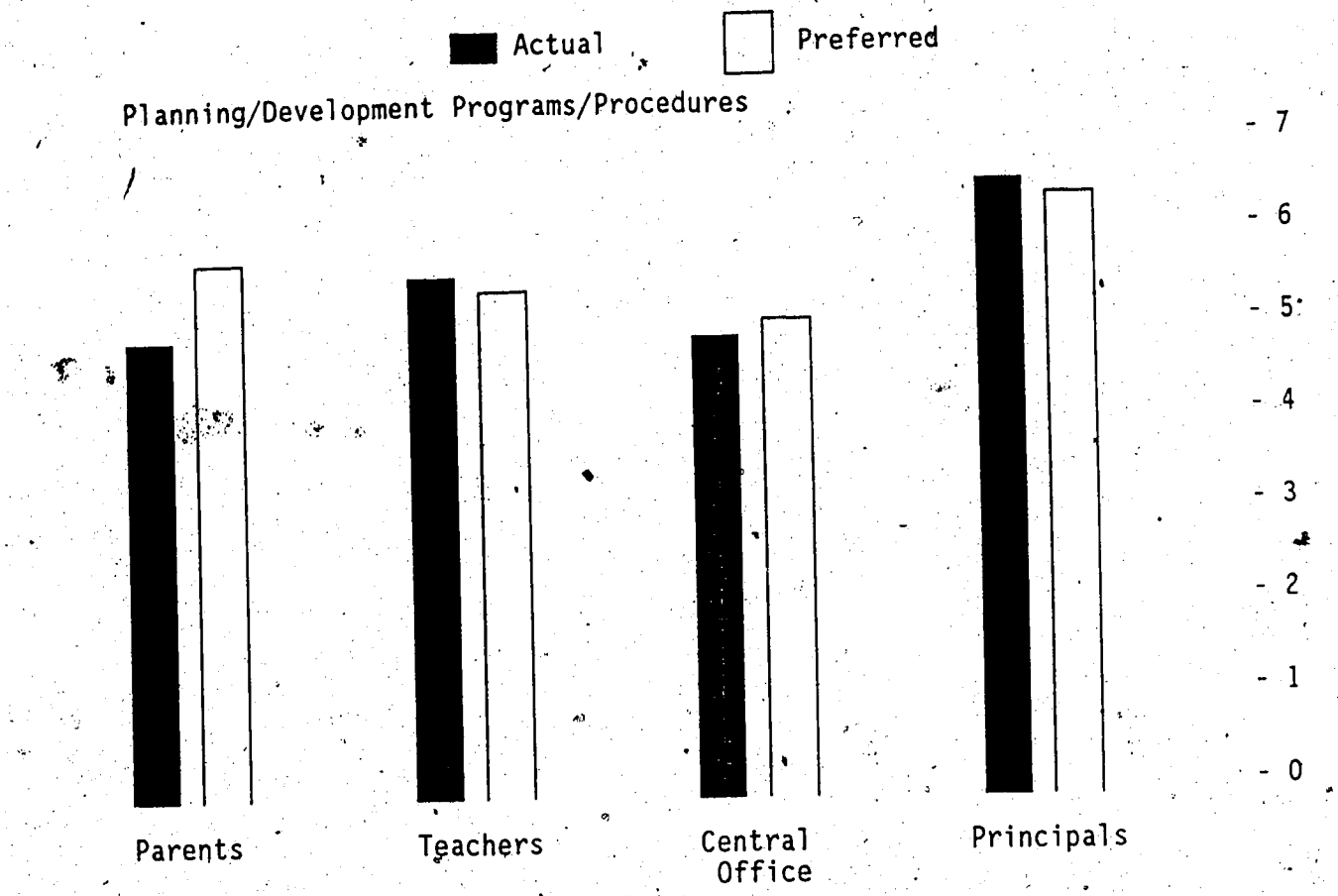


FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT




Actual
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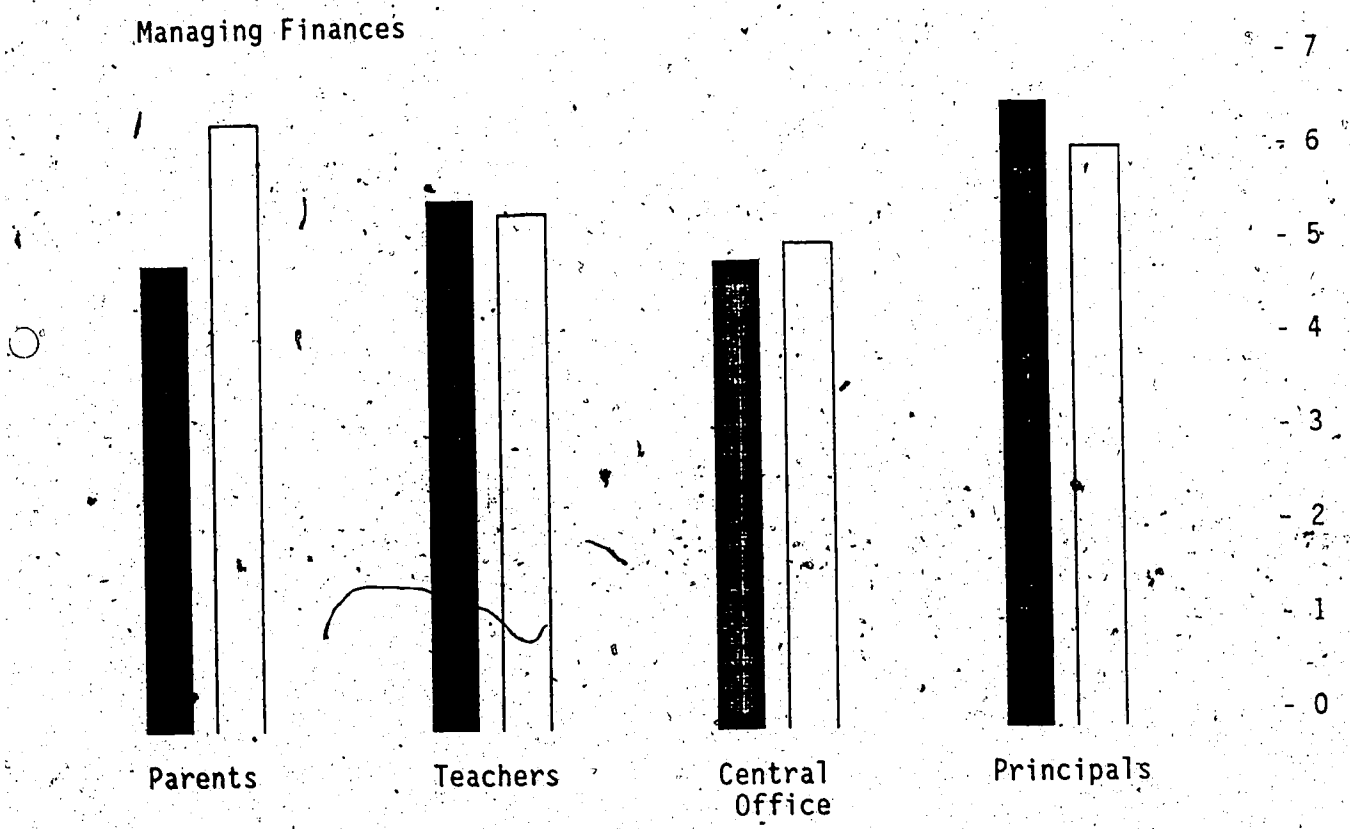
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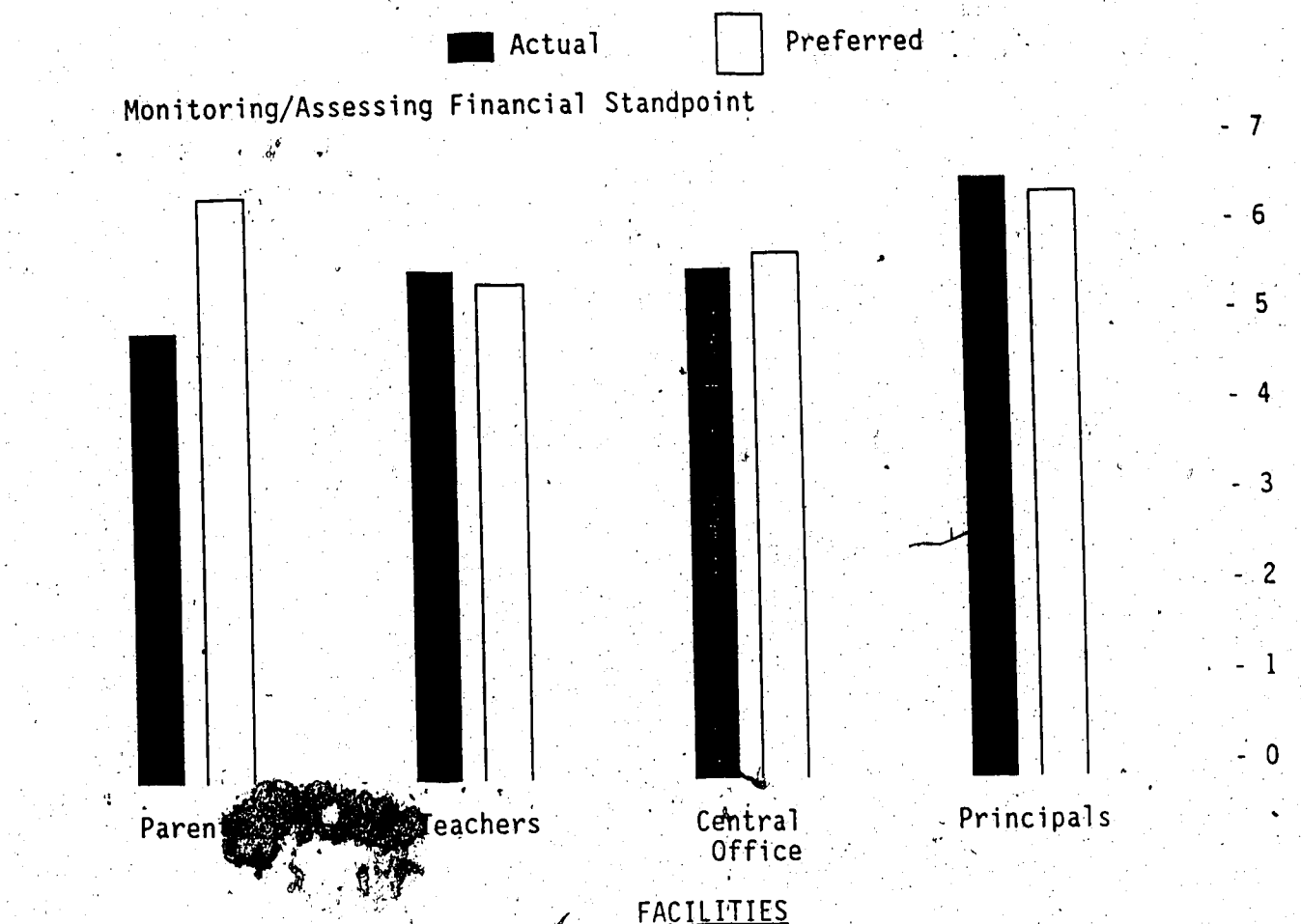
Actual
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Monitoring/Assessing Financial Standpoint
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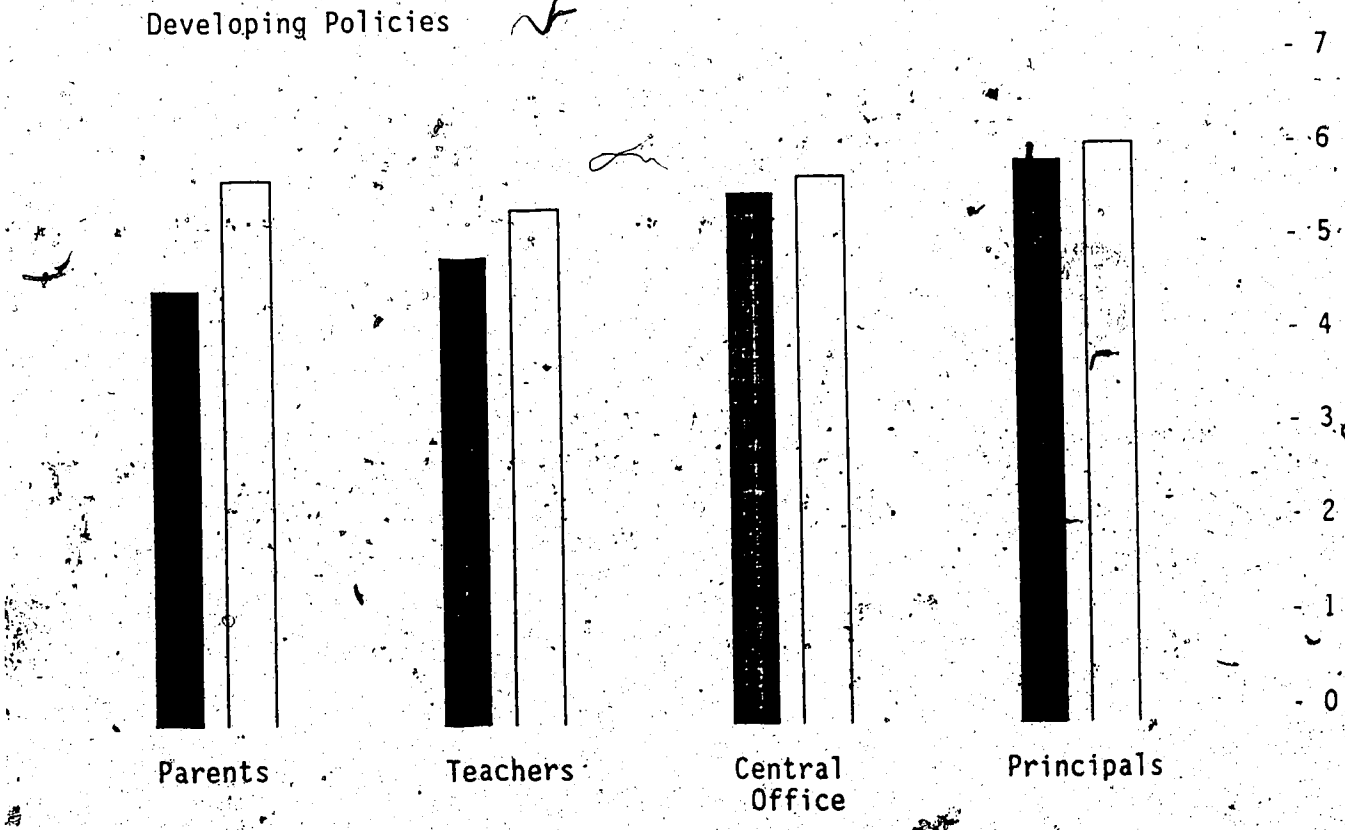
FACILITIES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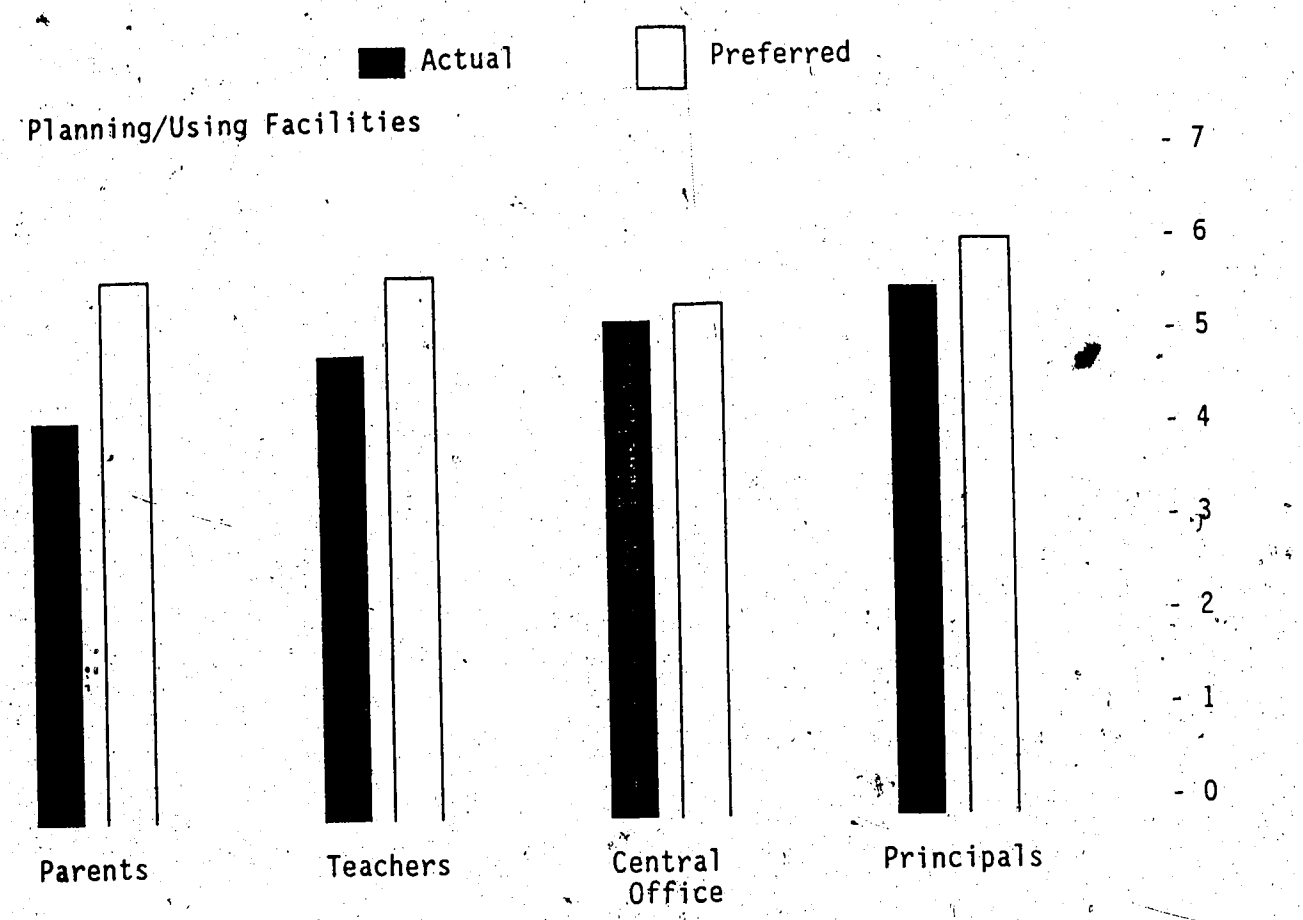
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Planning/Using Facilities
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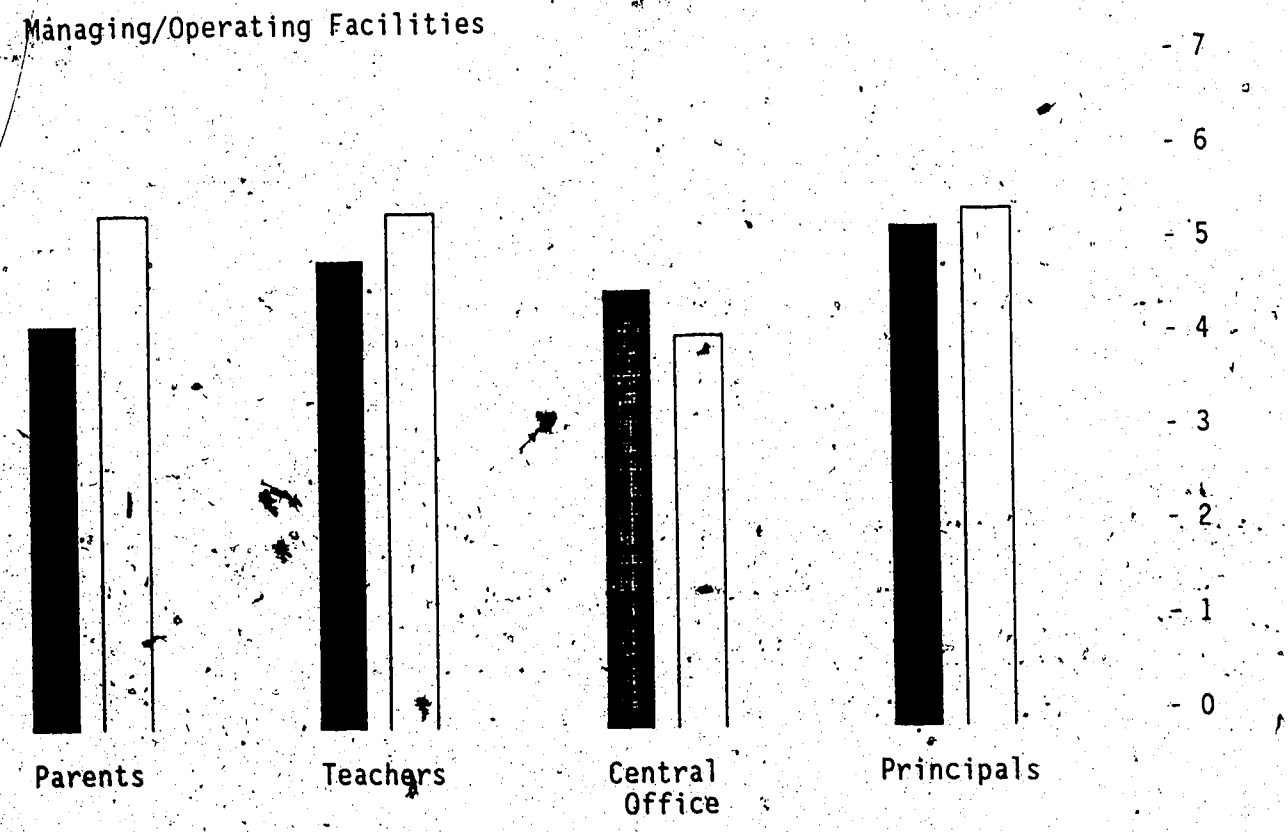
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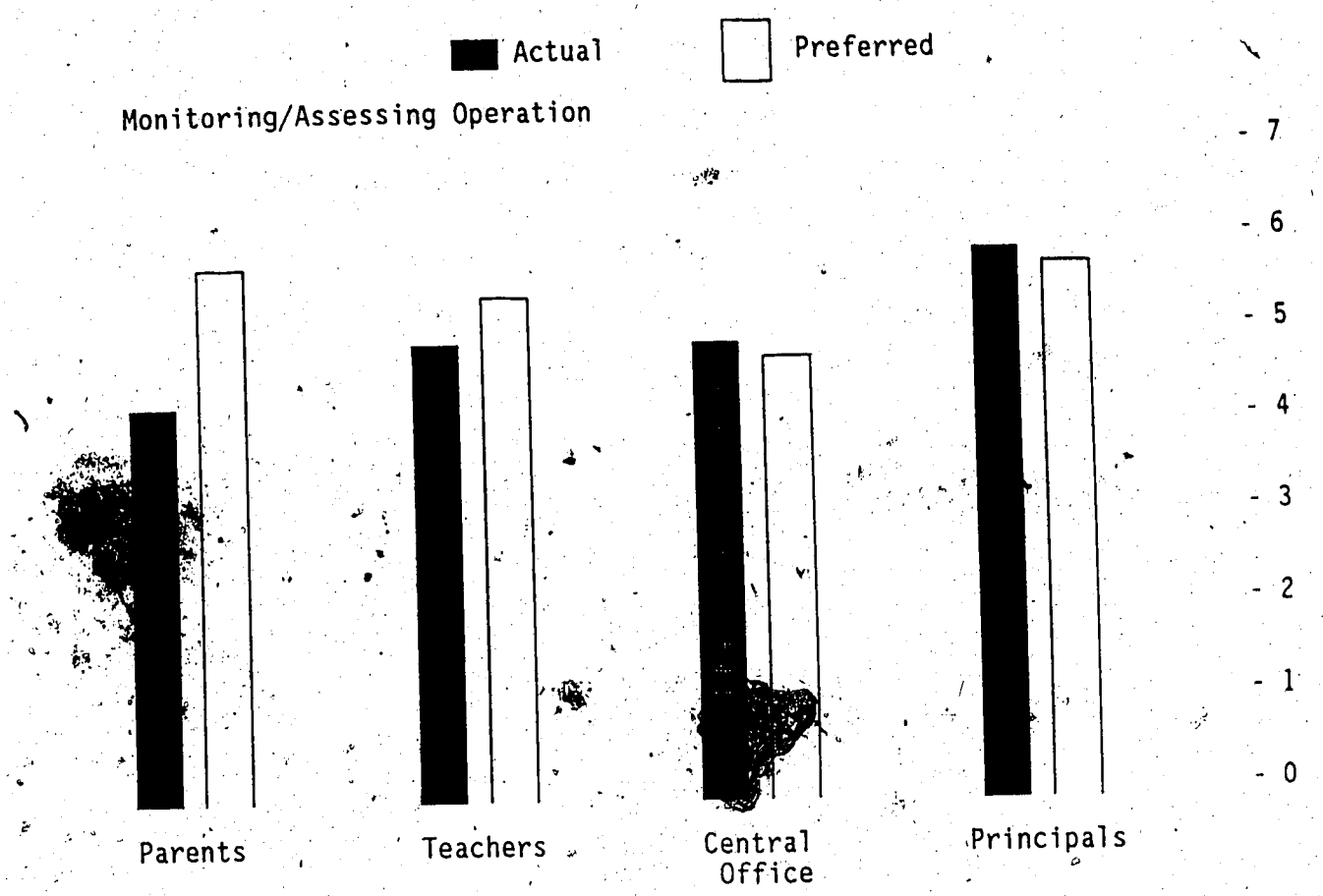
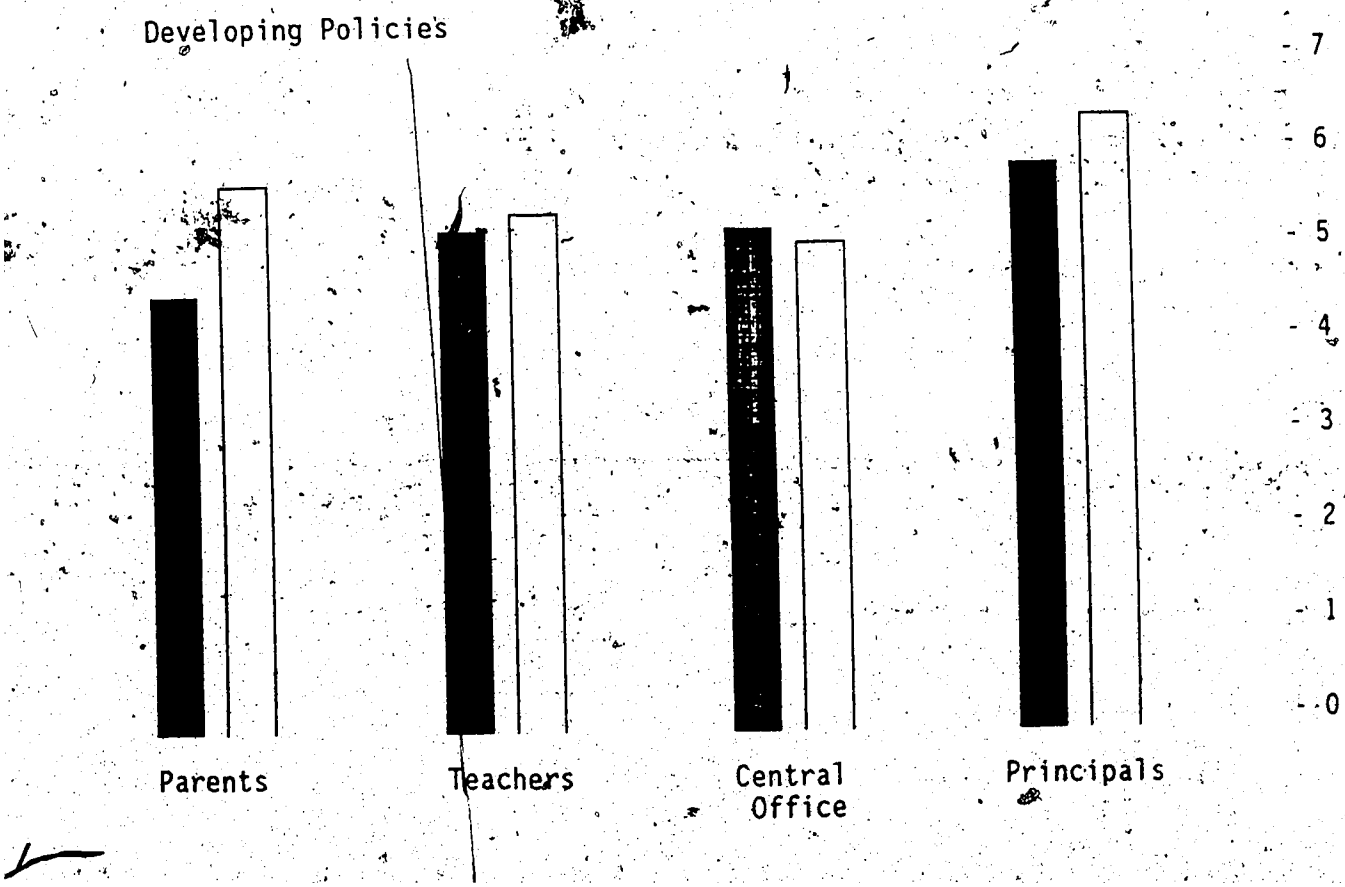
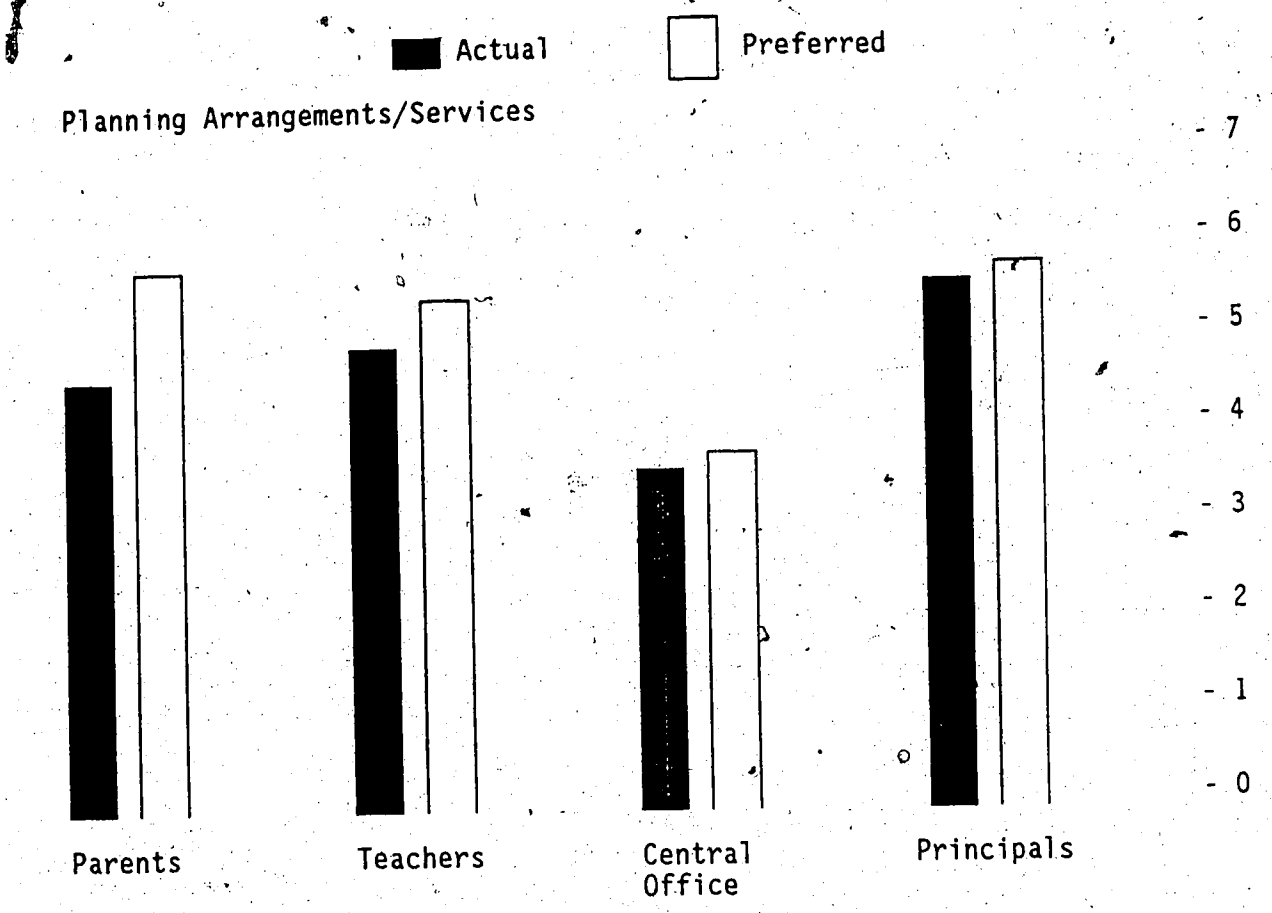


TRANSPORTATION

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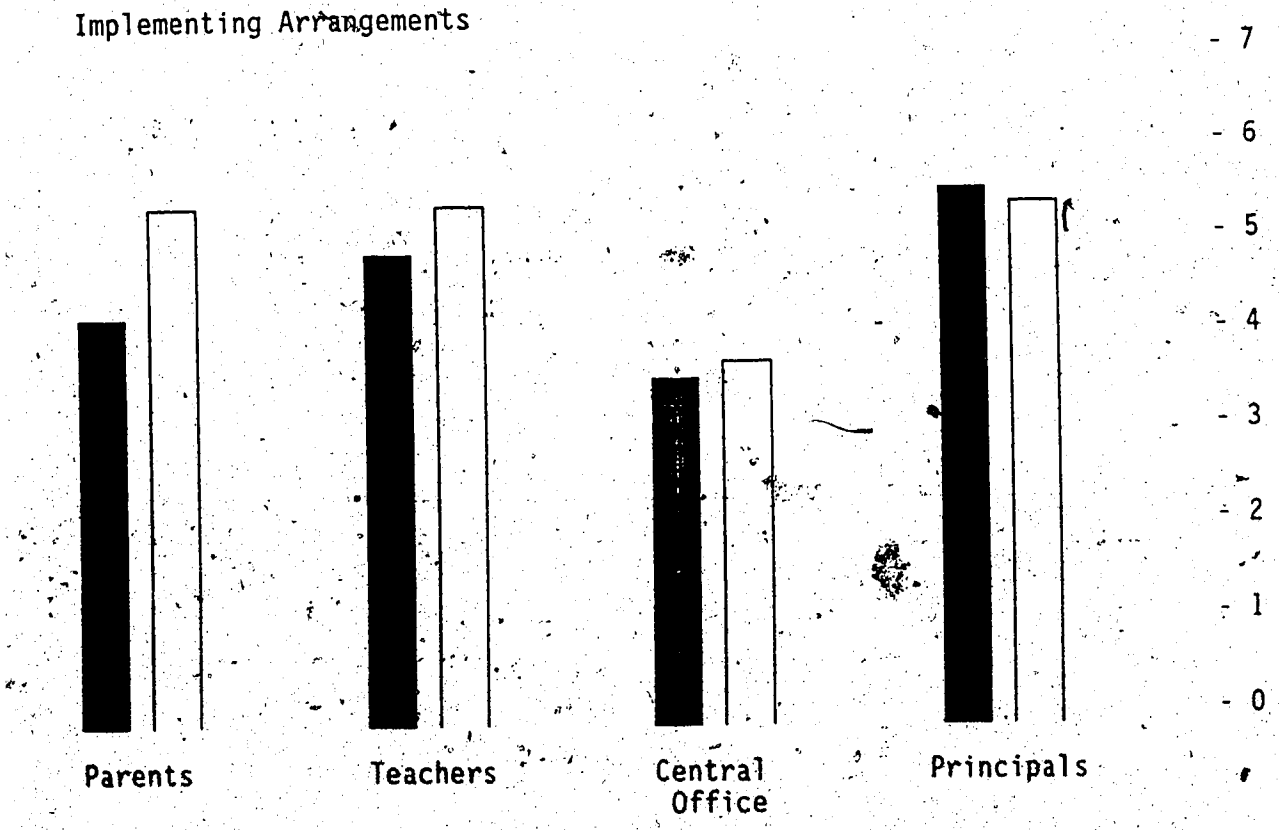
Principals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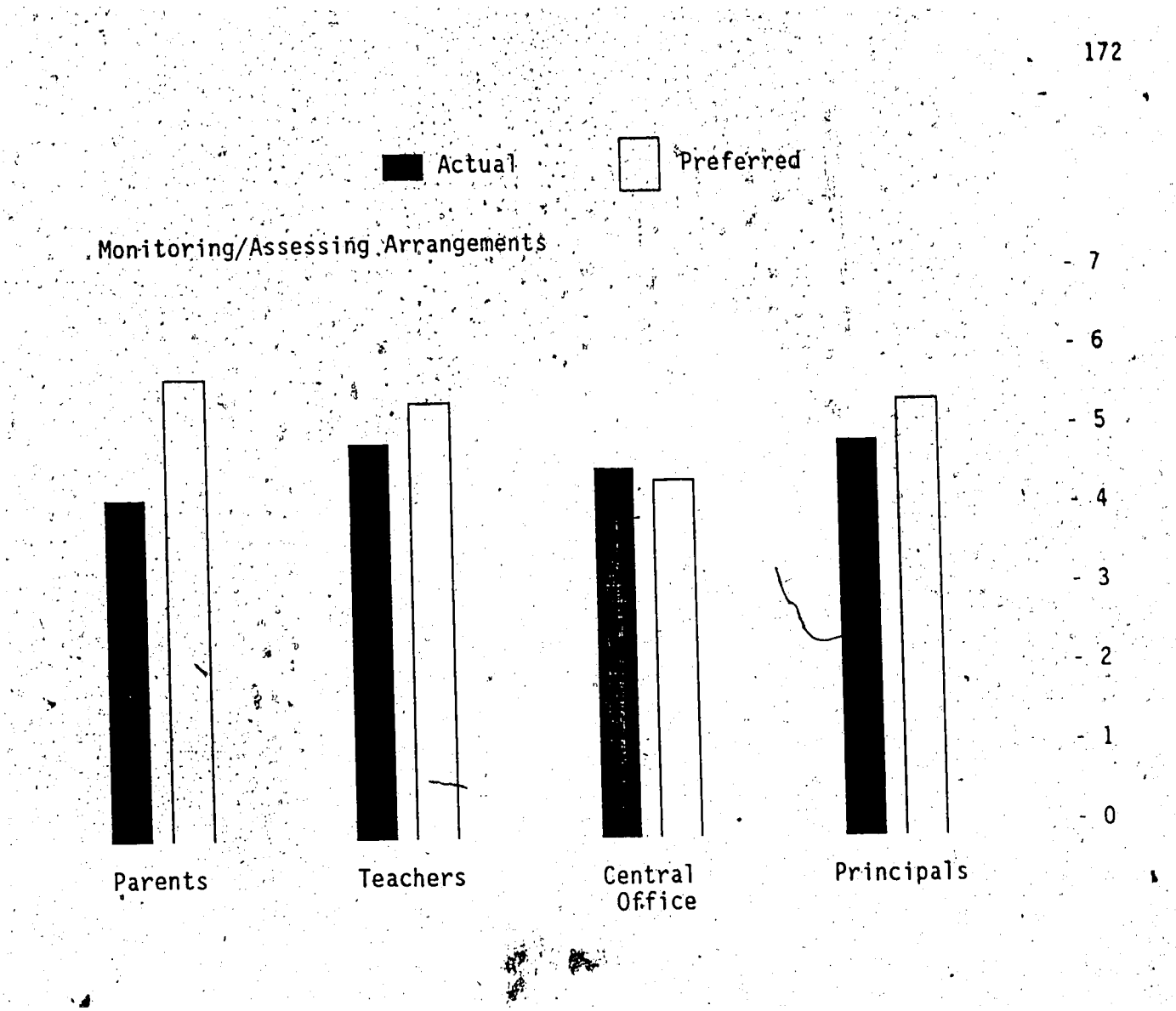
Principals


Actual
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Parents
Teachers
Central Office
Principals

APPENDIX "F"

DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF THE BOARD

LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS

Executive Council	formulation of goals
Principals	
Staff	ate goals and add others by consensus
Principals' Association	reactions
Executive Council	reactions
Board	priorit[illegible]for short-term, medium-t[illegible] long-term

****

PUPIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE PROCESS

Principal	recommends expulsion usually at junior high
Assistant Superintendent	contacts those affected for a hearing
Assistant Superintendent Parent Student Trustee Principal	gives the student the opportunity to respond; committee makes a decision
Board	acts upon recommendation
Board	full board acts as an appeal body

POLICY PROCESS

Initiated by Alberta Education Principals' Association Board Parents Teachers	
Trustee Assistant Superintendent Initiator	compile policy
Executive Council and A.S.T.A. Legal Services	determine need; rigorous review
Board	first reading and suggestions for policy directions
<u>Stakeholders Affected</u>	
Principals' Association Home and School R.C.M.P. Social Services Teachers Bus Drivers Support Staff	comments and reactions
Executive Council/Policy Committee	rework the policy
Board	second reading and comments
Board	third reading and adoption
M.L.A.'s Regional Office	information
Board	after one year for review
Board	every three years

BUDGET

Board	General Parameters: Programs and taxes
Superintendent	Leadership/Co-ordination
Secretary-Treasurer	Tours buildings to collect information
School Principals	Make Capital Requests
Executive Council	Each Assistant Superintendent develops a budget within designated areas of responsibility
Budget Committee	3 trustees, superintendent secretary-treasurer
Board	