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A STUDY OF GRADING, PROMOTION AND RETENTION PRACTICES IN ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

by

John Henry Lohrfink

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Education)
in The University of Michigan
1976

Doctoral Committee:

Assistant Professor George E. Mills, Chairman
Professor Robert A. Bowman
Professor Allen Menlo
Professor Dennis Rigan

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Miriam, and my daughters, Karen and Heidi, who have given so much that this moment might become a reality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer would like to express his sincere gratitude and grateful appreciation to his advisor and doctoral committee chairman, Dr. George E. Mills, for his constant encouragement and timely advice.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

During the past decade and one-half, the American public has witnessed the rapid growth and development of the "Middle School" concept. This phenomenon, encouraged by educators and supported by tax dollars, has led to the restructuring of grade organization with the hope of modifying certain school practices designed to meet the unique needs of young adolescents. Evidence of this trend is found throughout the professional literature.

The re-awakening interest in the middle years resulted from the outgrowth of a basic dissatisfaction with the junior high school structure, an effort to improve educational practices and curriculum, a pressing need for modern facilities, and a genuine desire to provide broader enrichment programs for fifth and sixth graders.

Articles, reflecting these trends, began to appear in the educational literature during the early 1960's. In 1961, Mills published an article detailing innovative planning and construction of middle schools

in Saginaw Township.[1] Many additional authors followed this early lead. Alexander,[2] Atkins,[3] Curtis,[4] Eichhorn,[5] Pumarantz,[6] and Williams[7] all emphasized this growing movement.

Although a preponderance of professional publications have dealt with the growth in the construction of middle schools and grade level reorganization, there are also significant signs in the educational research that point to an inconsistency between the theoretical concept of the emergent middle school and actual practices within those schools. According to Alexander, "surveys indicate that the new middle school

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[1]George E. Mills, "The How and the Why of the Middle Schools," The Nations Schools, 68 (December 1961), 43-53.

[2]William M. Alexander, "What Educational Plan for the In-Between Ager?" Educational Digest, 31 (May 1966), 18-20.

[3]Neil P. Atkins, "Rethinking Education in the Middle," Theory Into Practice, 7 (June 1968), 118-119.

[4]Thomas E. Curtis, "The Middle School in Theory and Practice," NASSP Bulletin, 52 (May 1968), 136-140.

[5]Donald H. Eichhorn, "Middle School Organization: A New Dimension," Theory Into Practice, 52 (June 1968), 111-114.

[6]Philip Pumarantz, "State Recognition of the Middle School," NASSP Bulletin, 53 (March 1969), 14-19.

[7]Emmett L. Williams, "Middle School Movement," Today's Education, 57 (December 1968), 41-42.

organizations, in general, fail to provide a program and instructional organization differing very much from those in the predecessor schools, especially in the grade 7-9 junior high school."[1] Riegle also reached the same conclusions as the result of his investigation. He states, "the rapid increase in the number of schools labeled as middle schools has not been accompanied by a high degree of application of those principles considered by authorities in the field to be basic to middle school education."[2] Read's summary reinforces the conclusions reached above. She states, "the problem that exists both in theory and in practice,... is that many schools make grade-level organizational change but do not follow it with changes in educational philosophy, program, curriculum and instruction."[3]

Therefore, the nature of this investigation seeks to clarify whether or not changes in administrative practice have, in fact, accompanied the development of the new, emergent middle schools.

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[1]William M. Alexander, et al., The Emergent Middle School (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston Co., 1968), p. 164.

[2]Jack D. Riegle, "A Study of Middle School Programs To Determine the Current Level of Implications of Eighteen Basic Middle School Principles," (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971), p. 67.

[3]Betty Read, Grade Level Organization in a School System, a report prepared for the Albuquerque Public Schools, (Alburquerque, New Mexico: September 1969), p. 1.

Throughout the history of public education children have continued to face the frustration caused by reporting, promotion and retention practices which place undue emphasis on academic success or failure. In spite of substantial research discouraging the retention of students, a significant number of schools still follow the practice of grade-level retention and/or subject repetition.

Although recent trends in grade-level reorganization clearly identify the movement towards the creation of middle schools, empirical data relating to grading, promotion and retention practices in these schools are almost non-existent. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to shed light on middle school practices in these three areas and to determine whether or not they are significantly different from those practices in traditionally organized elementary and junior high schools.

This study is an attempt to assess current practices in traditional and middle school organizations to see if there was a significant difference in the ways in which they grade, promote and retain students. It focuses on whether middle schools have, indeed, implemented new practices based on a middle school philosophy, emanating from educational research relating to the physical and

psychological growth of children, or whether, in fact, we only have "old wine in new bottles."

Statement of the Problem

This study has been conducted to determine whether the recent growth and development of middle schools has been accompanied by a change in practices relating to student grading, promotion, and retention when they are compared to traditional elementary and junior high schools.

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations apply to this study:

1. This investigation was limited to a study of grading, promotion, and retention practices in grades six, seven, and eight in elementary, middle, junior and junior-senior high schools.
2. Schools in the sample were drawn from public, central, and union free school districts in suburban Westchester County, New York.
3. All city and institutional school districts were excluded.
4. The results of this study cannot be generalized to populations different from those utilized in this investigation.
5. No attempt was made to evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of school practices within the surveyed schools.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

I. There is a significant difference in grading practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

B. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

C. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

II. There is a significant difference in promotion practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

B. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

C. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

III. There is a significant difference in retention practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

B. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

C. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been defined:

Central School District: "A new school district formed by combining union free and common school districts to provide a larger unit of taxation and administration."[1]

Elementary School: A school with an organizational structure which facilitates a continuous curriculum for children beginning in kindergarten or first grade and continuing through grade six.

Grading Practices: A group of administrative procedures that periodically require teachers to make an evaluation of pupil progress by such means as a letter or numerical mark or by some type of anecdotal report.

Junior High School: A school with an organizational structure which provides a continuous curriculum beginning at grade seven but not continuing beyond grade nine.

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[1]William J. Hagney, School Law (Albany, New York: New York State School Boards Association, 1974), pp. 204-205.

Junior/Senior High School:	A school with an organizational structure which provides a continuous secondary curriculum and incorporates grades seven and/or eight through twelve.
Middle School:	A school with an organizational structure which facilitates a continuous curriculum of at least three years and incorporates grades six, seven and eight.
Promotion Practices:	A group of administrative procedures that permit a pupil to move from one grade level to the next upon the satisfactory completion of a grade.
Report Cards:	A formal, written notification to parents, pupils, and/or guardians reflecting achievement or progress of a student in various school programs; it may include such items as subject matter achievement, pupil attitude and behavior, effort and attendance.[1]
Reporting Practices:	A group of administrative procedures, which is part of the grading

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[1]Carter V. Good, ed., Dictionary of Education, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 463.

practice, that periodically requires teachers to report to parents and/or students their evaluation of pupil progress.

Retention Practices: A group of administrative procedures that require a student to repeat the work of a grade or subject.

School Practices: A group of administrative procedures reflecting the ways in which school personnel perform their duties.

Traditional School: An organizational pattern dividing segments of instruction into elementary and secondary blocks, usually K-6, 7-12 or K-6, 7-9, 10-12, or K-6, 7-8, 9-12.

Transescence: The period of human development which begins in late childhood, prior to the onset of puberty, and extends through the early stages of adolescence.[1]

Union Free School District: "A school district usually formed from one or more common school districts for the express purpose of

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[1]Donald H. Eichhorn, The Middle School, 2nd ed. (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1966), p. 107.

operating a junior high school or high school program, which common school districts cannot do."[1]

Statement of Procedure

The following statement of procedure describes the method of: selecting school districts; individual schools and respondents; source and methods of gathering data; the design of the survey instrument; the kinds of data solicited; the coding procedure; and the analysis of the data.

Methods of Selecting School Districts

All public, central, and union free school districts in Westchester County, New York, were contacted by telephone, to confirm their school district organizational patterns. Thirty-four districts were identified that fell into the criteria listed above (Appendix A). Two districts were later excluded because they were then undergoing school district reorganization or operating within the first year after reorganization. Thirty-two school districts participated in the study (Appendix B).

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[1]Hagney, School Law, p. 205.

Methods of Selecting Individual Schools and Respondents

In school districts where traditional patterns of organization existed, one elementary school was selected at random. Fifteen elementary schools were identified. Respondents in these schools provided the data relating to the sixth grade practices. The junior or junior-senior high school was identified as the school which received the students from the elementary school selected. Fifteen secondary schools were identified. Respondents in these schools provided the data relating to grades seven and eight.

In school districts that incorporated a middle school pattern of organization, one middle school was selected. In this group sixteen of the seventeen school districts had only one middle school. In the seventeenth district the middle school was selected at random. A total of seventeen middle schools were identified. Respondents in these schools provided the data relating to practices in grades six, seven and eight.

Interview respondents were administrators who were responsible for supervising the program of studies in the building selected. Forty-five building principals were interviewed during this investigation.

Source and Methods of Gathering Data

Data for this investigation were obtained from building principals of selected elementary, middle, junior, and junior-senior high schools in Westchester County, New York, between August 1, 1974 and January 31, 1975. Data were gathered by means of the personal interview and responses were recorded on the Interview Response Questionnaire (Appendix C).

Prior to the date of the interview, permission for the visit was obtained from the building principal by means of a personal telephone request. During this discussion the administrator was informed of the purpose of the visit and the nature of the study. A specific date, time, and location was scheduled for the interviews with the principal.

Two of the administrators included in the survey were unable to be interviewed in person. Both principals answered the Interview Response Questionnaire and returned the completed forms by mail. Two other administrators from the eligible school sample were unable to participate in the survey.

Design of the Survey Instrument

The design and statistical format of this investigation were developed by the investigator with the assistance of the staff of the Educational Computer Laboratory, The School of Education, The University of

Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Additional assistance was provided by the faculty of the Institute of Social Research at this University.

The Interview Response Questionnaire was field tested during the spring of 1974 and reviewed by a panel of practicing educators, including administrators, pupil personnel specialists, and university professors (Appendix D). The questionnaire consisted of sixty questions: twenty-three responses relating to demographic data and thirty-six responses pertaining to current school practices associated with grading, promotion, and retention.

Kinds of Data

The Interview Response Questionnaire was developed to solicit and record information from building principals relating to: themselves; the individual school demography; district-wide organizational patterns; the community; and current administrative practices dealing with grading, promotion, and retention.

The Coding Procedure

Responses from administrators were recorded on the Interview Response Questionnaire during the interview process by the investigator. Subsequent to the conference each response was transferred from the

Interview Response Questionnaire, coded in numerical form and recorded on coding sheets. Information, in numerical response form, was keypunched, verified and added to a master file.

Survey information and command instructions were then programmed into the Michigan Interactive Data Analysis System (MIDAS) to obtain computer print-outs. Upon completion of the input process, the data were analyzed and printed at The University of Michigan Computer Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Additional statistical computations were completed at the Pelham Memorial High School Computer Facility, Pelham, New York. Results of both processes were analyzed for purposes of this study.

Analysis of the Data

Each of three major hypotheses pertaining to grading, promotion, and retention were accepted or rejected through an analysis of three sub-hypotheses relating to each major hypothesis. The questions relegated to each sub-hypothesis were analyzed by using a Chi-square (X^2) test for significance. In those cases where the expected frequency of any cell in a 2 x 2 contingency table was less than 10, Chi-square was computed using Yates[1] correction for continuity (X^2_c). For

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[1]Quinn McNemar, Psychological Statistics (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1959), pp. 230-231.

the purpose of this investigation the .05 level of significance was employed.

In order to accept each major hypothesis, all three of its sub-hypotheses had to be accepted. Each sub-hypothesis was accepted or rejected by Chi-square tests of significance on sets of questions related to that sub-hypothesis. Questions 24-25, 28, 30, 32, 35-36, 38, 40, and 41 related to grading practices, questions 42-47 related to promotion practices, and questions 48-52, 54-55, 58, and 59 related to retention practices. Sub-hypotheses were accepted only if 80 percent of their component questions were significant.

Summary

The initial chapter of this study has provided the reader with background information for the current study. Both the problem and the need have been outlined. Important definitions have been defined for use throughout the study. Terms to be tested have been stated and the instrument and procedures for data collection and analysis have been described.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to review the literature relating to the developing middle school; and second, to explore the research as it pertains to student grading, promotion, and retention practices. Although the writer has referred, when necessary, to a broad historical perspective, the major chronological focus of the study parallels the era of the developing middle school, 1956-1976.

Need for the Middle School

The development of the middle school concept can best be characterized as the second major attempt in the twentieth century to reorganize the basic framework of elementary and secondary education. In retrospect, the origins of the middle school concept were deeply rooted in mounting criticism of the existing junior high schools and of their inability to implement their stated objectives effectively. According to Moss, the proposals for new middle schools were largely based on the contention that the existing junior high schools had not lived

up to their promise.[1] McGlasson reached the same conclusion when he stated, "it housed the wrong students; had lost sight of its traditional nature and purpose; and was too subject matter oriented."[2] According to Georgiady, Riegle and Romano:

> A review of the history of the junior high school discloses two major reasons for its failure to fulfill its early promise. First, it has failed to adequately recognize and provide for the early adolescent or transescent child as he is today. Secondly, it will be seen that the traditional junior high school program displays a serious lack of relevance to the true nature of the society in which these transescents must live."[3]

A second major impetus fostering the development of the middle school concept was the result of new empirical research relating to the physical, social, and emotional growth patterns of young adolescents. This apparent trend toward earlier maturation became well documented in the professional literature. In 1941 Meredith reported a significant trend in the growth

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[1]Theodore C. Moss, Middle School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 1.

[2]Maurice McGlasson, The Middle School: Whence? What? Whither? (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Foundation, 1973), p. 12.

[3]Louis G. Romano, Nicholas P. Georgiady and James E. Heald, eds., The Middle School (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Company, 1973), p. 73.

patterns of young preadolescent and adolescent males.[1] He indicated that both white and Negro boys, living in the United States, were 6 to 8 percent taller and 12 to 15 percent heavier than they were fifty years ago.[2]

Tanner, in a 1955 publication, reported a significant trend in the physical growth patterns of young adolescents. He stated that:

> During the last 100 years there has been a very striking tendency for the time of adolescence, as typified by menarche or the growth spurt, to become earlier. The data on heights and weights of children of school age and before show that the whole process of growth has been progressively speeded up and that all age children born in the 1930s or 1950s, for example were considerably larger than those born in the 1900s.[3]

Additional changes in physical development were noted by Bauer in her comparisons of today's adolescent with their counterparts of the 1920's and 1930's. She found them to be slightly taller, better fed, physically healthier, and perhaps more intelligent and sophisticated.[4]

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[1]Howard V. Meredith, "Stature and Weight of Children of the United States with Reference to the Influence of Racial, Regional, Socio-economic, and Secular Factors," American Journal of Diseases of Childhood, 47 (November 1941), 932.

[2]Ibid.

[3]James M. Tanner, Growth at Adolescence (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publishers, 1955), p. 88.

[4]Francis C. Bauer, "Causes of Conflict," NASSP Bulletin, 49 (April 1965), 15.

A comparative study completed by Espenschade and Meleney noted significant physical changes in girls.[1] When comparing youngsters in the same school over a period of 1934-1935 to 1958-1959, they "found that girls in the later sample were one inch taller and six pounds heavier."[3]

Earlier social maturation is also well documented in the literature. Coleman, writing in the National Association of Secondary Principals' Bulletin, indicated a greater sophistication among ninth graders.[2] He attributed this change to "partly urbanized and suburban living, partly television and other mass media, partly the money they now have to spend, partly their better educated parents, and partly the school, itself, have made adolescents more wise in the ways of the world."[3] Similar trends have also been documented by a variety of noted writers. Havinghurst also mentioned changes in both social situation and self concept.[4]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]James S. Coleman, "Social Change - Impact on the Adolescent," NASSP Bulletin, 49 (April 1965), 14.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Robert J. Havinghurst, "Lost Innocence," NASSP Bulletin, 49 (April 1965), 2.

Margaret Mead drew the following conclusion:

> One of the striking features of the last decade has been the steady spread downward in age level of dating; going steady; pairing-off (rather than one sex friendship); and in emphasis on vocational choice, criminal behavior, competitive athletics, religious affiliation, and permission to spend money on an increasingly lavish scale.[1]

A third factor influencing the development of the middle school was the public reaction to the launching of the Soviet Union's Sputnik satellite. Educators throughout the country were placed under immense pressure to justify existing programs and make recommendations for curriculum improvements. McGlasson stated,

> Following Sputnik, middle school proponents, in what seemed to be an inconsistent rationale in light of the junior high school limitation criticism, cited the need for a more rigorous academic program for ninth graders.[2]

This emphasis placed additional demands on educators to move the ninth graders into the high school and change the existing sixth grade programs into the emerging middle school.

A fourth reason for the growth of middle schools can be attributed to the increased pressure for racial integration at earlier grade levels. Numerous authors in the research have alluded to this trend. This view was represented by Moss when he said, "In large cities

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[1]Margaret Mead, "Early Adolescence in the United States," NASSP Bulletin, 49 (April 1965), 5.

[2]McGlasson, The Middle School: Whence? What? Whither?, p. 12.

the junior high unwittingly fostered racial imbalance."[1] The New York City Board of Education's Statement of Policy on "Excellence for the Schools of New York City" stated,

> the intermediate school will add an extra ingredient of excellence...the sharing of learning experiences and life values with other children of different races, nationalities and economic status.[2]

A fifth reason for the developing middle school emanated from a desire to utilize existing and new facilities better. Including grade six in the middle school complex provided educators with new opportunities to innovate change, improve curriculum, balance the ratios of male and female teachers, and provide more opportunities for exploratory courses. According to the National Schools Public Relations Association, the middle school "must establish an identity totally separate from the elementary and senior high school."[3]

A sixth reason centered on the need for more emphasis on the individual learner. Alexander best summarizes the principal justifications for the middle school as follows:

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[1]Moss, Middle School, p. 18.

[2]Primary School-Intermediate School Four-Year Comprehensive High School: Committee Recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools (New York City: Public Schools, December 20, 1964), p. 32. Cited in Alexander et al., The Emergent Middle School, p. 17.

[3]National School Public Relation Association, "Education U.S.A.," 18 (January 26, 1976), 125.

1. To provide a program especially adapted to the wide range of individual differences and special needs of the in-between ager.

2. To create a school ladder arrangement that promotes continuity of education from school entrance to exit.

3. To facilitate through a new organization, the introduction of needed innovations in curriculum and instruction.[1]

This position is supported by Stradley when he states

> the concern must be on the learning and functioning of the individual within the group rather than on the education of a group of students that, supposedly, possesses common skills, common abilities, common interests, and responds in a common, predictable manner.[2]

The preceding paragraphs have reflected six of the causative factors leading to the development of the middle school concept. They include: dissatisfaction with existing junior high schools; failure to adapt existing curricula to the pressing needs of young adolescents; failure to focus the learning experience on the individual student; a desire to implement new enrichment and exploratory courses at the fifth and sixth grade levels; and community pressure in larger city school districts to foster racial integration.

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[1]Alexander, The Emergent Middle School, p. 11.

[2]William E. Stradley, A Practical Guide to the Middle School (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1971), p. 23.

Growth of the Middle School Movement

The phenomenal growth of the middle school movement, as documented in the literature, will be presented briefly in the following paragraphs.

The middle school concept came into existence during the late 1950's. In an early survey of the U.S. Office of Education in 1959-1960, Wright and Greer found that 12 percent of the junior high schools and 15 percent of the junior-senior high schools were planning to change the grouping of grades 7, 8, and 9 to another organizational pattern.[1] This pattern was confirmed by Paul Zdanowicz in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, written in 1965.[2] In this survey he indicated that a number of junior high schools had changed their grade organization to include grade six or grades five and six.[3]

Additional surveys were conducted between 1965 and 1967 by other investigators. Pearl Brod completed

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[1]Grace S. Wright and Edith S. Greer, "The Junior High School: A Survey of Grades 7-8-9 in Junior-Senior High Schools, 1959-60," Bulletin No. 32 (Washington, D.C.: United States Office of Education, 1963), p. 4.

[2]Paul J. Zdanowicz, "A Study of the Changes that Have Taken Place in Junior High Schools of Northeastern United States During the Last Decade and the Reasons for Some of the Changes" (Ed.D. dissertation, Temple University, June 1965), p. 117.

[3]Ibid.

a study of fifty State Departments of Education and also contacted some five thousand school districts in an effort to determine the extent of the middle school movement.[1] The results of the survey indicated the existence of middle schools in forty-five of the fifty states with the majority of schools situated in eighteen states.[2] Cuff also conducted a similar survey of fifty State Departments of Education and identified over four hundred ninety middle schools throughout the United States.[3] At the annual conference of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Emmet Williams claimed that there were over one thousand middle schools in the United States.[4] Additional evidence was provided by Alexander in 1968 when he identified 1,101 middle schools.[5] In a more recent publication, Kindred cited the results of a doctoral study conducted by Raymer identifying 1906 middle schools in 1973-74.[6]

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[1]Pearl Brod, "The Middle School: Trends Towards Its Adoption," Clearing House, 40 (February 1966), 331-333.

[2]Ibid.

[3]William A. Cuff, "Middle Schools on the March," NASSP Bulletin, 51 (February 1967), 83.

[4]Williams, "Middle School Movement," pp. 41-42.

[5]Alexander, The Emergent Middle School, p. 164.

[6]Leslie W. Kindred et al., The Middle School Curriculum (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1976), p. 2.

The previously cited studies reflect a small portion of the related literature tracing the growth and development of the middle school movement. The results of these investigations have provided positive documentation of the movement away from the traditional six-three-three pattern of elementary and secondary education towards an alternative form of school organization.

Historical Overview

Grading and Reporting Practices

Throughout the history of public education, no other topic has been more controversial for such a long period of time as the issue of student grading and assessment. A review of the voluminous literature and research in this area indicates a continual effort on the part of educators to refine the tools of student assessment and improve the quality of communications between the school and the home. In retrospect, the imperfections in this procedure have served as the impetus for the changing trends in grading practices.

A review of the literature reflects the changing patterns of grading practices since the second half of the nineteenth century. Prior to the 1900's student progress was reported in face-to-face communications between teacher and child or by unstructured, written reports from the teacher to the parent. However, with the advent of additional secondary schools in the

early 1900's, these longhand evaluations were soon abandoned in place of percentage grades on a formal card.[1] At the elementary level teachers continued the use of written descriptions with some schools introducing satisfactory or unsatisfactory symbols. This procedure was the forerunner of grading practices as we know them today.

In 1912 Daniel Starch and Edward Elliott reported the results of a study which questioned the reliability of teachers' grades as a measure of pupil achievement.[2] Soon after the release of this information, educators began moving away from the 100-point scale to a three, four, or five-symbol system. These letter grade symbols soon replaced many of the existing percentage scales.

Following the conclusion of World War I supporters of the standardized testing movement began to challenge the reliability of grading systems.[3] Evidence was also mounting during the 1920's and 1930's that

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[1]Howard Kirschenbaum, Rodney Napier, and Sidney Simon, Wad-Ja-Get?: The Grading Game in American Education (New York City: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1971), p. 51.

[2]Ibid., p. 54.

[3]Ben Brodinsky, ed., Grading and Reporting: Current Trends in School Policies and Programs (Arlington, Virginia: National School Public Relations Association, 1972), p. 6.

"academic grades often reflected both arbitrary criteria and peculiar value systems of the individual teacher."[1] Armed with this evidence, proponents of the tests and measurement movement introduced the concept of marking a class according to the curve of normal distribution and taking into account the student's I.Q. score. In response to this thrust, the

> progressive education movement brought demands that grades provide information about the child's academic strengths and weaknesses, rather than just labeling him with a letter or number grade.[2]

They insisted on individualization of instruction and emphasis on the total person. The controversy between both factions continued throughout the 1930's.

During the early 1930's the child psychology movement expanded the concept of the "whole child." This philosophy rejected the implication of viewing the numerical or percentage grade in isolation from the child's total needs and potential. According to Kirschenbaum, the critics of grading were not advocating the elimination of evaluation, but rather aiming to change the present grading systems in order to enhance communication, evaluation and learning.[3]

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[1]Kirschenbaum, Napier and Simon, Wad-Ja-Get?: The Grading Game in American Education, p. 61.

[2]Brodinsky, Grading and Reporting: Current Trends in School Policies and Programs, p. 6.

[3]Kirschenbaum, Napier and Simon, Wad-Ja-Get?: The Grading Game in American Education, p. 63.

The 1940's witnessed the movement of the elementary schools to a two-letter system, satisfactory and unsatisfactory, which was then expanded to outstanding and improvement needed. Secondary schools, however, turned to a six-point system in which numerical ranges were converted to letter grades.

During the era of the 1950's both elementary and secondary schools returned to a five-point letter system with additional grades for behavior and work habits. This attempt to introduce new dimensions into the practice of student grading persisted until 1957 and the launch of the Soviet Sputnik. This suddenly perceived lack of technical superiority brought new demands for excellence in education and led to a retrenchment in rigid grading practices and greater emphasis on student productivity.

In an early 1960 publication Smith and Dobbin divided previous grading practices and research into two distinct periods:

> (a) the period extending roughly from 1910 to 1940 when research interest was focused mainly on the mechanical and semantic problems of marking; and (b) the period from 1940 to the present (1960) during which a greater interest has centered on improvement of marks in comprehensiveness and communication.[1]

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[1]A.Z. Smith and J.E. Dobbin, "Marks and Marking Systems," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 783-791.

For the most part the preceding paragraphs have briefly presented a condensed view of the changing trends in grading practices prior to the period of the emergent middle school. The following section will be devoted to current research published between 1955 and 1974.

Roelfs, in an article on trends in junior high school progress reporting, stated that evaluation procedures have been changed gradually and repeatedly in the public schools during the past few decades.[1] He suggests that the following trends appear to be evident in the methods of reporting to parents on pupil progress in junior high schools:

1. The trend is not toward using diagnostic letters or conferences as the only means of reporting to parents on the child's work in school.

2. There is a trend toward the use of supplementary reports between reporting dates.

3. There has been a return to the "ABCDF" marking and an abolition of the percentage system.

4. There is a strong interest in reporting progress in academic subjects by subdividing each subject into goals, skills or habits.

5. The quarterly reporting system is continuing to gain in popularity.[2]

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[1]R.M. Roelfs, "Trends in Junior High School Progress Reporting," Journal of Educational Research, 49 (December 1955), 247-248.

[2]Ibid.

A National Education Association article on reporting practices, published in 1963, found that the six most common reporting practices were: percentage grades; letter grades; pass/fail marks; letters to parents; conferences with parents; and check lists.[1] However, many schools were beginning to use a combination of several forms of reporting.[2] This study was enhanced by a later study in 1969 in which the Research Division of the NEA conducted a comprehensive investigation relating to current grading and reporting practices.[3] The results of this nation-wide survey of public school teachers reflected the following school practices:

Methods Used To Report Pupil Progress[4]

	Total	Elem.	Sec.
A report card with a classified scale of letters (e.g., A-F)	77.3%	71.6%	83.1%
A scheduled conference with parents	40.2	59.9	20.0
A written description of the pupil's performance	17.4	24.3	10.4
A report card with a classified scale of numbers (e.g., 1-5)	9.4	10.0	8.8
A report card showing percentage grades	6.2	2.4	10.0
A report with either pass or fail	5.4	8.2	2.6

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[1]"Report on Reports," NEA Journal, 52 (December 1963), 14-15.

[2]Ibid.

[3]NEA Research Division, "Marking and Reporting Pupil Progress," NEA Research Summary 1970-71 (Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1970), p. 31.

[4]Ibid.

The report further noted that:

> An analysis of responses revealed differences in the distribution for elementary and secondary school teachers. A higher percentage of elementary than secondary teachers use a report with either pass or fail, a written description of the pupil's performance and scheduled conferences with parents. The percentage using report cards with classified letter scales and report cards with percentage grades is higher among secondary than among elementary teachers.[1]

The study also found differences relating to school size and geographic location: Large school systems of 25,000 or more indicated a higher proportion of teachers using a classified scale of letters (80.2 percent) as compared to medium-sized schools of 3,000 to 24,999 (75.7 percent).[2] In terms of geographic areas teachers in the Southeast (26.7 percent) had the fewest scheduled conferences with parents and used the highest percentage (89.3 percent) of report cards with a classified scale of letters, while schools in the Northeast indicated a higher percentage of teachers using percentage grades (16.0 percent).[3] The report further suggested that most of the voluminous research devoted to report cards focused on a historical examination of reporting trends. These trends are listed below:

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid., pp. 45-46.

1. Report cards are developing certain common characteristics, the most important of which is the provision of space to record school grades and behavioral achievements, and space for the teacher and parents to comment.

2. The most common frequency of issuance is six times per year, but the frequency is diminishing, with some schools reducing the number to one or two a semester.

3. Increasingly, schools are discovering the need to augment formal procedures with other devices.... Parent-teacher conferences are increasingly used to supplement the report card.

4. Parents are sharing to a greater extent in report card revision.

5. Report cards are becoming increasingly uniform within a school system.[1]

The NEA Research Bulletin dated October 1970, reports that the most popular method still in use at that time was the letter-number system.[2] However, various plans for modifying or improving marking and reporting systems have been proposed as the result of objections to the traditional letter-number system. Among these is the dual marking system in which one mark represents the pupil's final achievement in relation to the teacher's standards, and a second mark represents the pupil's effort or his growth toward the educational objectives listed. Another alternative is the pass/fail

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[1]Ibid.

[2]"School Marks and Reporting to Parents," NEA Research Bulletin (October 1970), 76-77.

system which promotes exploration in courses which might otherwise be avoided.

The National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972, conducted by the Educational Testing Service, and sponsored by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, found a little more than a third of schools using letter grades committed to the A-B-C-D-F distribution.[1] Of the more than one thousand schools in the sample, 174 indicated they used percentage grades and one school in the sample used a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory system of grading.[2] The study further suggested that there was variation in letter-grade equivalents from school to school.[3] Of interest was the fact that the data from the sample found little recent experimentation with alternatives to traditional grading systems since 1960.[4]

In 1972 the National School Public Relations Association published a comprehensive report entitled "Grading and Reporting: Current Trends in School Policies and Programs."[5] In its report, the association

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[1]Barbara Pinchak and Hunter Breland, "Grading Practices in American High Schools," The Education Digest 39 (March 1974), 22.

[2]Ibid., 22-23. [3]Ibid., 23.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Brodinsky, Grading and Reporting: Current Trends in School Policies and Programs, p. 64.

drew the following general conclusions about the current status of report card practices:

1. Traditional report cards coexist with new and innovative reporting procedures--frequently in the same school system, in the same school.

2. Valiant efforts are being made to personalize and individualize grading and reporting at the elementary level.

3. Computerized cards are increasingly used in secondary schools, posing new barriers to reaching students and parents with individualized information.

4. The widespread search for improved methods of grading and reporting has brought about a rich variety of forms and formats, flexibility in frequency of reporting, and general agreement that grading and reporting should be used to promote growth rather than reward, punish or fix a student's rank in school or society.[1]

The report also emphasized the existing need for continued growth at the intermediate and secondary levels.[2] According to the author, the following comments are appropriate at the intermediate level:

1. Parent teacher conference is the goal as the major reporting procedure, but is more difficult to achieve.

2. Failing marks are regarded with disfavor: teachers are asked to emphasize accomplishments.

3. Efforts to individualize grading and reporting to help students improve in relation to his abilities are increasing; establishment of class rankings is declining.

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid.

4. The child as a scholar and the child as a citizen are treated with sharper distinction.

5. Checklists and rating scales are common forms of progress reports.

6. Experimental forms provide students and parents with detailed accounting of subject matter in which the student is involved and the degree of success in each.[1]

At the secondary level the following practices are firmly entrenched:

1. Parent-teacher conference recognized as goal but rarely used except in unusual or disciplinary cases.

2. A-B-C grading firmly entrenched, but efforts to modify or eliminate it are increasing. New approaches include Pass/Fail, Credit/ No Credit.

3. Many efforts to modify or change existing practices are hampered by college admissions procedures.[2]

In 1974 Pinchak and Breland, reporting on current grading practices in American high schools, found that of the 1,066 schools responding 68 percent used letter grades only, 16 percent used percentage grades only, 4 percent used some system other than letters or percentages, and 9 percent used some combination of systems.[3] They concluded that their data suggested growing movement in opposition to traditional grading.[4]

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid.

[3]Barbara Pinchak and Hunter Breland, "Grading Practices in American High Schools," 21-23.

[4]Ibid.

Promotion Practices

The historical perspective of promotion practices in American public education was deeply rooted in the assumption that children would complete one grade level of schooling in one year of attendance at school. Exceptions to this expectation have, in some cases, resulted in grade level acceleration or retention. Although deviations in both directions presently exist, the current trend is clearly in the direction of fewer cases of student acceleration or retention.

In a 1961 article relating to promotion policies, Dimond[1] identified the impact of changing elementary school practices on the secondary schools. He indicated that, over a thirty-year period, the median IQ of the high school graduating class had decreased from 129 to 117, while at the same time, the median IQ in the elementary schools had increased from 94 to 111.[2] A major part of these shifts was a change in promotion policies in the school system.[3] During the period of 1944-1954 other studies have identified changing trends in promotional practices. The U.S. Office of Education reported that the percentage of students retained in the first grade decreased from 21 percent to 12 percent.[4] At the same

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[1]Stanley E. Dimond, "What Kind of Policy for the Promotion and Non-Promotion of Students?" NASSP Bulletin, 45 (April 1961), 158-159.

[2]Ibid, p. 158. [3]Ibid. [4]Ibid.

time the loss at the tenth grade level was reduced from 19 percent to 11 percent. Although this reduction was significant, many students still failed to be promoted.

Zahn reported that promotional practices were quite similar regardless of geographic area.[1] He indicated that promotional practices were no longer viewed strictly in terms of academic achievement, but now included the increased emphasis on the needs of the total child and his chance for equal educational opportunity.[2] He identified the best promotion practice as belonging to the category of guidance promotion which considered the question whether retention or promotion would favor the child's total growth and development.[3]

According to Rivlin an increase in the number of children being promoted and a decrease in the retention rate has not been the result of better teaching but due to a change in the standards for promotion.[4]

> The policy of conditional promotion has been used widely as a substitute for nonpromotion, both in the elementary school and in the high school. Conditional promotion is meant to indicate to the pupil that he has not mastered

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[1]Walter G. Zahn, Presentation at the Forty-Fifth Annual Convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals reported in NASSP Bulletin, 45 (April 1961), 160.

[2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

[4]Harry N. Rivlin, "Promotion," Encyclopedia of Modern Education (New York: Philosophical Library, 1943), p. 617.

> adequately the work of the grade but, all things considered, he can get along in the next grade provided he puts forth sufficient effort. It is therefore meant to serve as additional motivation since the threat is held over the child that if he does not do well at the beginning of the succeeding grade he will be demoted.[1]

Many other types of innovative plans have been introduced to enhance pupil success and reduce the incidence of nonpromotion. Among them have been unit, quarter and semester promotion plans. Most noticeable have been the St. Louis Plan, the Cambridge Plan, the Portland Plan, and the Batavia Plan.

The St. Louis Plan originated almost one hundred years ago. The plan emphasized the concept of promoting students each quarter or every ten weeks. This program found limited acceptance and is not presently used by middle school educators.

Semiannual or semester promotions found greater initial acceptance, but their use has diminished during the past decade.

The Cambridge Plan and the Portland Plan were implemented as tracking systems to provide for the varying abilities among students. The first plan had a double track in grade four through nine. At the time of its implementation, grade nine was in the elementary school.[2] The majority of pupils completed the track within six years, while brighter students could complete

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid., p. 618.

it in four years.[1] The Portland Plan divided the curriculum into six units per grade. Brighter students were permitted to complete eight courses of study rather than accelerating to the next grade level.[2]

Under the Batavia Plan large classes were assigned two teachers who were able to subdivide the students into smaller subgroups and provide more appropriate remedial instruction.[3]

In addition to these practices, educators have also experimented with social or continuous promotion and guidance promotion policies. The concept of continuous promotion is based on the philosophy that retention of chronologically older children serves little educational value. In fact, research has shown that few educational objectives are achieved when older children are rescheduled with younger classmates. In essence, these repeaters had the same teacher, the same curriculum, identical materials, and were evaluated by the same criteria as their peers.

Dimond defines guidance promotion as a plan whereby students are promoted based on a careful study

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

and analysis of what seems best for each individual.[1] It is an outgrowth of the continuous progress plan and tends to place emphasis on the needs of the individual learner.

Anderson and Ritsher, writing in the 1969 edition of the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, indicated that a vast revolution had taken place in American education during the decade of the 1960's.[2] Much of this change process had related to the way we dealt with the issues of pupil progress. Prior to this era much of the research focused on the administrative aspects of pupil progress. According to the authors:

> In general the studies reviewed assumed well defined age norms and academic standards for each grade. They tended to be quantitative in nature and they relied heavily on city and state surveys and on other comparative statistical data.[3]

Although considerable thought and effort had been devoted to meeting individual needs prior to 1950, it was only since that date, with modern advances in science and technology and with the incentive given in 1957 by Sputnik, that the actual meeting of these needs had become an attainable national goal.[4]

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[1]Dimond, NASSP Bulletin, p. 159.

[2]Robert H. Anderson and Cynthia Ritsher, "Pupil Progress," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 4th ed., R.L. Ebel, ed. (Toronto, Canada: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 1050-1060.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 1053.

Another significant influence on the course of education has been the Supreme Court decision of 1954 (Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas) condemning "separate but equal" education. Further, President Johnson's 1964 speech declaring war on poverty also emphasized the need to provide all citizens with the opportunity to advance their welfare to the limits of their capabilities. In addition the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided federal funds for parochial and public schools to use in strengthening elementary and secondary programs for educationally deprived children in low income areas.[1]

Large influxes of federal money in the late 1960's stimulated individualization of instruction and encouraged flexible organizational patterns to facilitate pupil progress.

The "nongraded" school of the 1950's soon became the reality of the 1960's. Although embraced more extensively by elementary schools, the concept began to spread to the secondary level. The term "nongraded" refers to:

> A pattern of vertical school organization which, in dramatic contrast to the rigid, lockstep pattern of graded schools, presumably permits the unhurried and uninterrupted progress of children through the school program each on a timetable uniquely suited to his own academic potential....[2]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid., p. 1054.

> Of special interest is an apparently strong trend to acknowledge the weaknesses of conventionally organized junior high schools and to adopt in its place the so-called middle school, which attempts to provide a more suitable and hygienic academic and social environment for the preadolescent and early adolescent child.
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> In summary, the innovations under way in the 1960's included not only pedagogical and curriculum reforms but also various efforts to create a more flexible, efficient, and comfortable environment within which children can learn.[1]

In 1955 Lennon and Mitchell reported that the promotion of elementary school pupils has undergone considerable modification in the past thirty years moving in the direction of social or chronological-age-based promotion and away from promotion based on attainment of any fixed level of achievement.[2]

> There has been a steady decline in the average age of children grade by grade, since 1918.... Average age by grade reflects changes both in admission and in promotional policy. Since average age of admission has probably increased somewhat in the period covered, the observed decline in average age by grade is to be attributed to changes in promotion policy.[3]

In addition there was a pronounced decrease in the spread of ages within each grade as the variability of ages within each grade was reduced between 1918 and 1952 by approximately 40 percent.[4] This change represented clear

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[1]Ibid., p. 1056.

[2]Roger T. Lennon and Blythe C. Mitchell, "Trends in Age-Grade Relationship: A 35-Year Review," School and Society, 82 (October 1955), 123.

[3]Ibid., p. 124.

[4]Ibid., p. 125.

evidence of the effects of a chronological-age promotion policy.[1]

In 1959 Imhoff and Young reported the following trends in promotion practices:

1. Annual promotion has become the accepted policy throughout the nation.
2. Fewer than 4 percent of the school districts questioned promoted semiannually.
3. The trend in large city schools has been toward annual promotion.
4. Promotions from the ungraded primary levels to grade 4 were on the basis of academic achievement and social maturity.
5. Promotion rates showed no definite pattern although retention rates in grade 1 were higher than grades 2 and 3.
6. The number of schools holding to either 100 percent promotion or a rigid standard of promotion was small; a trend away from rigid academic promotion practices to a more flexible standard.[2]

A later study in 1965 by Margaret Boyd identified six promotion practices in use in the Steubenville, Ohio, public schools. They include:

1. The primary consideration should be the welfare of the pupil and the adjustment of the school to his needs and abilities.
2. Promotion should be determined on the basis of individual cases.

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Myrtle M. Imhoff and Wayne Young, "Promotion," Review of Educational Research, 29 (April 1959), 160.

3. Minimum achievement standards, although significant, should not be the sole determining factor in promotion. Rather, maximum standards of achievement should be insisted upon in terms of the pupil's ability to progress.

4. Placement should be where he will achieve the optimum adjustment.

5. While the promotion or failure of any pupil is the primary responsibility of the teacher, the teacher should obtain the approval of the principal or supervisor before retaining any pupil.

6. The teacher retaining a pupil should include a note in the permanent record explaining why this was done.[1]

In 1962 the Research Division of the National Education Association published a Research Memo (1962-16) entitled "Pupil Failure and Nonpromotion."[2] This memo presented the findings of two extensive surveys, one by the NEA and the second by the U.S. Office of Education. Both surveys reported on the most common elementary promotion practices in operation at the time. The NEA study indicated that 80 percent of the respondents reported that promotion was based on an individual study of pupils and consideration of all factors which operated in his best interests.[3] The U.S. Office of

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[1]Margaret Boyd, "School Standards in Promotion: Testing, Reporting and Grading," Theory Into Practice, 4 (June 1965), 95.

[2]NEA Research Division, "Pupil Failure and Nonpromotion" (Washington, D.C.: The Association, May 1962), pp. 1-11.

[3]Ibid., p. 1.

Education survey stated that academic achievement alone was reported as the basis by only 13 percent of the respondents while 58 percent used academic achievement with "group progress" a minor factor.[1] Group progress was defined as including many aspects of a child's performance, related to intellectual, personal, social, physical and emotional factors.[2] Both surveys agreed that in the majority of school districts academic achievement alone was not the only factor considered in elementary school promotion.[3] To enhance the rate of pupil promotion and reduce the incidence of student failure, the research memo supported the following recommendations:

1. Division of classes into small, flexible groups to enable the teacher to reassign a pupil whenever it seems in his interest to do so.

2. Elimination of grade lines at elementary and secondary levels.

3. The reduction of class size.

4. Establishment of adequate guidance facilities and personnel to enable classroom teachers to get help from specialists in working with pupils whose problems the teachers are unable to solve.

5. Provision of a curriculum varied enough to meet needs of pupils of all levels and types of abilities.

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

6. Provision for remedial work to enable students to overcome special difficulties...

7. Establishment of adequate inservice education to help teachers improve their teaching techniques.

8. Establishment of close relationships with parents....

9. Elimination of administrative practices that virtually require that some pupils be failed....[1]

Retention Practices

The topics of student retention and subject failure have long been debated by those associated with public education. Few school practices have generated more controversy or brought more trauma to young adolescents than those administrative procedures enacted to retain students on grade level or require them to repeat failed courses. According to Musgrave, the "practice of non-promotion of students in the public schools is a most perverse practice: primarily because it violates the integrity of the individual student living in a democracy and unfairly initiates a destroyed self concept."[2]

In spite of the voluminous literature refuting these practices, some school systems still continue to implement district policies requiring formal retention

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[1]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[2]G. Ray Musgrave, The Grading Game: A Public School Fiasco (New York: Vantage Press, 1970), p. 69.

of children who have not met prescribed standards. However, careful investigation of these minimum competency levels has led investigators to conclude that these standards are frequently inconsistent and habitually vary from district to district, school to school, teacher to teacher and student to student.[1]

The practice of promoting and retaining children began about 1860, when schools began to organize their students into grades with certain competencies and understandings specified for each grade level.[2] Prior to this time evaluation was made by the teacher on an individual basis. Students unable to meet the standards of the grade level were retained for an additional period of time to master the subject material or until they voluntarily withdrew from school. This procedure led to countless cases of non-promotion and early withdrawal from school.

According to Peyton, "three principal assumptions underlie the practice of non-promotion: that it facilitates achievement, that it reduces the range of abilities within the class, and that it produces motivation."[3] Subsequent research during the past six

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[1]Ibid., p. 70.

[2]Jim Peyton, "Non-Promotion," Education Digest, 34 (September 1968), 36.

[3]Ibid.

decades has seriously questioned all three assumptions.

A variety of researchers have concluded that retention does not improve student achievement. Arthur deduced that the average repeater learned no more in two years than did the average non-repeater of the same mental age in one year.[1] Sandin found that: (1) mastery of a subject was not assured by non-promotion; (2) slow learners were not helped; (3) non-promotion had poor effects on discipline; and (4) if promoted, the average student could make up the necessary work.[2] Similar findings were noted in an additional study by Coffield and Bloomers.[3] In this study, using matched pairs of seventh graders, they concluded that non-promotion, as a device to ensure greater mastery of elementary school subject matter, was not effective.[4] They found that failed students during the two years following retention did not progress significantly better than

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[1]Grace Arthur, "Study of the Achievement of Sixty Grade I Repeaters as Compared with that of Non-Repeaters of the Same Mental Age," Journal of Experimental Education, 5 (December 1936), 203-205.

[2]Adolph A. Sandin, Social and Emotional Adjustment of Regularly Promoted and Non-Promoted Pupils (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College of Columbia University, 1944), p. 142.

[3]William H. Coffield and Paul Bloomers, "Effects of Non-Promotion on Educational Achievement in Elementary School," Journal of Educational Psychology, 47 (April 1956), 249.

[4]Ibid., pp. 248-249.

matched pairs of promoted students during a single year in the next higher grade.[1] Kamii and Weikart in 1963 found that when non-promotion was used as general practice little improvement in achievement is shown.[2] Phila Humphrey also noted that non-promotion by grade level or subject area continued to be a common practice in spite of previous research.[3] Other studies by Anderson and Ritscher,[4] Elenger,[5] and Worth[6] have all reached similar conclusions.

Gaite, in a study of 642 students in grades 8-11, concluded "that repeating a whole grade is particularly

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Constance K. Kamii and David P. Weikert, "Marks, Achievement, and Intelligence of Seventh Grade Students Who Were Retarded (Non-Promoted) Once in Elementary School," Journal of Educational Research 56 (May 1963), 452-459.

[3]Phila Humphrey, "The Schools' Concern in Non-Promotion," Theory Into Practice, 5 (June 1965), 88-89.

[4]Anderson and Ritscher, "Pupil Progress."

[5]Bernice D. Ellinger, "Non-Promotion: A Review Essay," Theory Into Practice, 4 (June 1965), 122-128.

[6]W. H. Worth, "What Research Says about Promotions," Canadian Education, 15 (1960), 61-70.

wasteful when it means that a student has to repeat work he previously completed satisfactorily."[1]

The assumption that non-promotion reduces the range of abilities within grade levels has also been refuted by Cook.[2] He found that ranges in schools with high ratios of overagedness did not differ significantly from those with low ratios.[3]

Recommendations for Improvement Suggested by Middle School Proponents

An extensive review of the literature relating to student grading in the middle school has indicated that no previous comparative studies have been conducted that compare grading practices in traditional elementary and junior high schools to similar grades in the middle school. Although comparative research is missing, there does exist a growing body of professional opinion that attempts to describe what grading practices should be like in the emergent middle school.

In 1966 The National Association of Secondary School Principals Committee on Junior High School Education suggested that the progress of each pupil be

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[1]A. J. H. Gaite, "On the Validity of Non-Promotion as an Educational Procedure," ERIC Document 0046-043 (1969), p. 6.

[2]Walter Cook, cited by Jim Peyton, "Non-Promotion," Education Digest, 34 (September 1968), 37.

[3]Ibid.

measured in relation to his or her own potential.[1] They further endorsed the concept of the single-letter, multi-purpose mark being supplemented or replaced by parent conferences and a variety of written reports.[2]

In an attempt to improve reporting practices in the middle school, Vars suggested the following: evaluation should be continuous; both academic and personal-social development should be evaluated and reported; and that a student's progress be evaluated in comparison with his own ability, in comparison to classmates, and in comparison with state and/or national norms.[3]

Wiles noted great variety of grading practices within the existing middle schools. He stated:

> Because middle schools perceive themselves as schools of purpose that serve the needs of the students attending, there is great variety among evaluation systems in these schools. Examples of such alternatives to the traditional A.B.C.D.F. grading or pass/fail, arrangements; S.N.U. plans;

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[1]Gordon F. Vars, ed., Guidelines for Junior High and Middle School Education (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1966), p. 15.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Gordon F. Vars, "Student Evaluation: A Design for the Middle School," Clearing House, 45 (September 1970), 18.

> behavioral objectives measures; written and oral teacher reports; and multiple-grading systems within the same school.[1]

He believed that the student evaluation program of all middle schools ought to be concerned chiefly with the achievement of the objectives and programs of that school.[2]

In a list of eighteen middle school principles, Riegle suggested that grading and evaluation should be viewed in the following light. He stated:

> The middle school program should provide an evaluation of a student's work that is personal, positive in nature, nonthreatening, and strictly individualized. Parent-teacher-student conferences on a scheduled and unscheduled basis should be the basic reporting method. Competitive letter grade evaluation forms should be replaced with open and honest pupil-teacher-parent communications.[3]

According to Riegle the student frequently needs more information than the traditional system can provide. He "needs a supportive atmosphere that helps to generate confidence and a willingness to explore new areas of learning."[4]

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[1]John Wiles, "The Middle School: Alternative within the System," The National Elementary Principal, 11 (November 1971), 49.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Riegle, "A Study of Middle School Programs To Determine the Current Level of Implementation of 18 Basic Middle School Principles," p. 45.

[4]Romano, Georgiady and Heald, The Middle School, pp. 82-83.

McGlasson draws similar conclusions about grading and evaluation in the middle school. He writes:

> Although most middle schools still hold to the traditional A, B, C, D, F system of marking, many have made an attempt to explain this system with additional information and with devices to disseminate the information. Additional types of information may include an effort scale or comparison with the student's own ability, a work habit and behavior scale, or a profile showing a student's performance in relation to specific criteria deemed important in each subject. The development of performance criteria by some teachers has also brought difference in marking patterns.[1]

Many authors have written on the shortcomings of our existing grading systems. Some have gone beyond and have suggested that letter and percentage systems are not only detrimental but also destructive to the self-concept. Melby's review, in the spring of 1966, categorized the present marking systems as irrelevant and mischievous.[2] In its place he suggested an evaluation system that provided for measurement of each pupil in terms of his own capacity and growth.[3]

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[1]McGlasson, The Middle School: Whence? What? Whither?, p. 37.

[2]Ernest O. Melby, "It's Time for Schools To Abolish the Marking System," Nation's Schools, 77 (May 1966), 104.

[3]Ibid.

The expansion and refinement of evaluative criteria for the young adolescent is a key ingredient for the successful middle school teacher. Chiara and Johnson emphasized the use of multiple learner evaluation techniques and flexible standards for judging children.[1] They further emphasized the need to compare the outcomes of instruction with stated objectives, increase the use of parent-teacher conferences and the need to develop additional informal methods of evaluation.

In a recent article relating to grading practices in the middle school, Garvelink suggested that the evaluation system and methods to report achievements to the parents reflect student involvement and student goal setting.[2]

In a position statement relating to middle schools, the American Federation of Teachers stated:

> Numerical grading is, in our opinion, often arbitrary; it emphasizes for poor students the failure syndrome and it encourages good students to look for the grade rather than to reach for relevant satisfaction.[3]

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[1]Clara Chiara and Elizabeth Johnson, "Is the Middle School Doomed for Failure," The Clearning House, 46 (January 1972), p. 291.

[2]Roger H. Garvelink, "Anatomy of a Good Middle School," Education Digest, 39 (February 1974), p. 16.

[3]"Tomorrow's Middle School," American Teacher (February 1974), p. 17.

They suggested that educators look for new and creative ways to evaluate students and communicate the true meaning of this evaluation to parents.[1] They urged that numerical grades be de-emphasized and that subject area reports which indicate rates of progress on an individual basis also be used.[2]

Kindred, in a recent publication entitled The Middle School Curriculum, identified the following fundamental criteria for selecting a form or method for reporting student progress in the middle school grades:

1. The evaluation should be in terms of behavioral objectives.
2. The evaluation should be in terms of student ability, not norms for the group.
3. The evaluation should be in terms of attitudes, personality characteristics, citizenship behaviors, and study habits.
4. The evaluations should be on separate report forms for different subjects.
5. The evaluations should be prepared less often but in more detail.
6. The evaluations should facilitate the educational development of the student as it relates to his ability.[3]

An analysis of the research relating to promotion practices in the middle school has identified a

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[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid.

[3]Kindred, The Middle School Curriculum, p. 212.

general void of controlled research in the area. Although some studies do exist at the elementary level, far fewer are available at the secondary level. Comparative studies of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade practices in traditional schools as compared to middle schools is non-existent. There is, however, a small body of expert opinion with suggestions relating to recommended practices for middle school implementation.

Stradley suggested that blanket policies were totally unsatisfactory when judging the adolescent child in the middle school.[1] The implication of this concept relates to the uniqueness of each child and his abilities to progress at varying rates. Riegle supported this position and espoused the non-graded organization that allows children to progress at their own individual rates regardless of their chronological age.[2] Kindred drew the identical conclusion and encouraged middle schools to provide opportunities for students to be able to progress on a continuous learning basis in terms of their own individual needs.[3]

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[1]Stradley, A Practical Guide to the Middle School, p. 54.

[2]Riegle, "A Study of Middle School Programs To Determine the Current Level of Implementation of 18 Basic Middle School Principles," p. 77.

[3]Kindred, The Middle School Curriculum, p. 83.

Implications from the research indicate that promotion practices should be flexible, geared to the individual needs of the student and designed to place the child in an environment where he will have the greatest opportunity for success.

The related literature was noticeably void of substantive research pertaining to retention practices in the middle school. As with promotion practices there is, however, a small body of opinion which opposes the establishment and implementation of rigid policies to retain children on grade level within the middle school. According to Riegle[1] and Stradley,[2] the practice of retention conflicts with the philosophy of continuous progress and individualization of instruction. The implication of middle school literature suggests that a well-planned, sequential learning experience, built upon the unique needs of the learner, should eliminate the need for retaining a child on grade level or forcing him to repeat an entire course of instruction.

Further, the proponents of non-retention affirm that the middle school curriculum should foster a

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[1]Riegle, "A Study of Middle School Programs To Determine the Current Level of Implementation of 18 Basic Middle School Principles," p. 77.

[2]Stradley, A Practical Guide to the Middle School, p. 54.

success-oriented experience, which is incompatible with the punitive concept of retention. Special learning defects should be remediated within the confines of the regular instructional program or special educational alternatives within the school.

A summary of the research literature cited earlier in this chapter reflects a strong consensus of opinion that retention of students is not a fundamentally sound educational practice. The literature repeatedly expressed the view that retention has detrimental effects on motivation, learning and the psychological well-being of the child.

Summary

This chapter has summarized a number of basic factors fostering the growth of the middle school concept. Included among them are: the inability of the junior high schools to implement their stated philosophies; the failure of traditional schools to modify and/or reorganize existing curriculums; the inability of many elementary and junior high schools to focus the learning experience upon the individual child; the hesitation of school administrators to adapt programs to the earlier physical and social maturation of the child; a desire to expand elective and exploratory programs at the fifth and sixth grade level; and social pressure to expedite racial integration at an earlier

age. These glaring inadequacies of traditionally organized schools have accelerated the formation of the American middle school.

The chapter further documents the rapid growth and expansion of the middle school movement. Beginning in the late 1950's and continuing to the present, a number of existing traditional elementary and junior high schools have undergone reorganization and have assumed the name "middle school." In addition new school construction has swelled the number of middle schools currently in existence to over 1900.

Further, the author has provided an historical chronology and analysis of significant research relating to grading, promotion and retention practices in traditional elementary and secondary schools. In the area of student grading, the research has reflected significant changes in grading methods and reporting practices. At both the elementary and the secondary levels the letter grade system still prevails as the predominant method used to communicate pupil progress to the child and to the parent. Recent trends at the elementary level have also reflected increased emphasis on standardizing the reporting form within the district and supplementing the letter grade with some form of parent conference. The general trend in reporting practices has been to reduce the frequency of reporting periods from six to four or fewer times per year.

Changes in promotion practices have tended to lessen the number of students failing specific courses, or being retained on grade level and have significantly diminished the age level variance within a grade level. Additionally, the drop-out rate has been decreased as schools have endeavored to provide more remedial programs and additional guidance services.

Retention practices have been modified to eliminate arbitrary "minimum standards" in favor of considering the needs of the individual child. Further, a continuous attempt has been made by most schools to involve teachers, parents and administrators in the decision-making process, prior to retention.

The general review of the literature has been augmented in the final section of the chapter by suggestions and opinions from proponents of the new, emergent middle school. The implications of these authors reflect the need for further changes in grading, promotion, and retention practices.

In the area of grading practices the middle school proponents suggest: the need to establish evaluation systems that are personal and non-threatening; that evaluation be continuous; that evalution be in terms of behavioral objectives; that it be documented less often but in greater detail; that it communicate more effectively to parents; and that teachers implement flexible standards for judging children.

Middle school experts further suggest that promotion practices should not be based on blanket policies affecting all children and that the concept of the non-graded organization be expanded in order to provide all students with the opportunity to progress at their own rates regardless of chronological age.

Finally, the majority of middle school proponents have suggested that the concept of retention should be eliminated as a general middle school practice, since it is incompatible with the philosophy of continuous progress.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to present an analysis of data to establish the acceptance or rejection of the research hypotheses; and second, to review the demographic data relating to the respondents, their school districts and their schools. The following hypotheses were tested:

I. There is a significant difference in grading practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

   A. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

   B. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

   C. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

II. There is a significant difference in promotion practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

B. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high school.

C. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

III. There is a significant difference in retention practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in retention practices betweeen grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

B. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

C. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

Research Hypothesis I: Grading and Reporting Practices

An inspection of Table 1 indicates that elementary schools operated more frequently under district policies relating to report cards or evaluation conferences than either middle or junior/junior-senior high schools. A further comparison of sixth grades in the elementary to sixth grades in the middle school reflected a total of 60 percent of the elementary schools followed this practice while only 12.5 percent

TABLE 1

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF DISTRICT POLICIES IN RELATION TO REPORT CARDS OR EVALUATION CONFERENCES

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	9	2	2	4	2	4
	%	60.0	12.5	12.5	28.6	12.5	30.8
No	N	6	14	14	10	14	9
	%	40.0	87.5	87.5	71.4	87.5	69.2
		$X_c^2 = 5.70$		$X_c^2 = .41$		$X_c^2 = .56$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= .05		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

of the middle schools followed a different practice. A statistical comparison between sixth grades in elementary and middle schools reflected a significant difference at the .05 level.

When comparing seventh and eighth grade practices in the middle school to seventh and eighth grade practices in the junior/junior-senior high school, both reflected few instances of schools operating under district policies. Approximately 88 percent of the middle schools and 70 percent of the junior/junior-senior high schools were not bound by formal district guidelines. Statistical comparisons between seventh and eighth grades in the middle school and similar grades in the junior/junior-senior high school yielded no significant differences.

In Table 2, an inverse relationship was noted when examining those schools having a building practice or guideline in relation to report cards or evaluation conferences. Here, 81.3 percent of the middle school respondents indicated the existence of written guidelines while only 26.7 percent of the elementary schools had similar practices at the sixth grade level. A statistical analysis of the two types of schools yielded a significant difference at the .01 level.

At the seventh and eighth grade levels, the majority of both middle and junior/junior-senior high

TABLE 2

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF BUILDING PRACTICES OR WRITTEN GUIDELINES IN RELATION TO REPORT CARDS OR EVALUATION CONFERENCES

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	4	13	13	12	13	11
	%	26.7	81.3	81.3	85.7	81.3	84.6
No	N	11	3	3	2	3	2
	%	73.3	18.8	18.8	14.3	14.3	15.4
		$X_c^2 = 7.24$		$X_c^2 = .03$		$X_c^2 = .07$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= .01		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif. NS	

schools reported the existence of building practices or written guidelines in relation to report cards or evaluation conferences. A statistical analysis comparing seventh and eighth grade practices in the middle school to similar grades in the junior/junior-senior high school yielded no significant differences at either grade level.

The descriptive data found in Table 3 depicts the general practices used to report student progress to parents and students. Although a variety of alternatives were used, the majority of both elementary and middle schools used a combination of report cards and parent conferences. Eighty-seven percent of the elementary and 81 percent of the middle schools followed this practice.

In schools organized in a junior/junior-senior high school pattern, the most frequently employed reporting method was report cards only. Fifty-seven percent of the schools utilized this method.

An inspection of the overall sample of schools indicated that the most prevalent method of reporting was a combination of report cards and parent conferences.

Table 4 illustrates the participants involved in the development of policies or procedures relating to reporting practices. In general, administrators and teachers were the predominant participants in all three

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF GENERAL PRACTICES USED IN REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Methods of Reporting		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Report cards only	N	1	3	8	12
	%	6.7	18.8	57.1	26.7
Parent conference only	N	2	0	0	2
	%	13.3	0	0	4.4
Parent, student, teacher conference	N	2	7	3	12
	%	13.3	43.8	21.4	26.7
Written reports	N	2	7	5	14
	%	13.3	43.8	35.7	31.1
Combination of report cards and parent conferences	N	13	13	6	32
	%	86.7	81.3	42.9	71.1
Teacher, student conferences	N	1	6	2	9
	%	6.7	37.5	14.3	20.0

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and grade level

N = Elem. 15, M.S. 16, J/JSHS 14

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES OR PROCEDURES RELATING TO REPORTING PRACTICES

		School Type					
Participants		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
B.O.E. Members	N	2	2	2	1	2	1
	%	13.3	12.5	12.5	7.2	12.5	7.7
Adminis-trators	N	14	16	16	13	16	13
	%	93.3	100	100	81.3	100.0	100
Counselors	N	0	15	15	11	15	11
	%	0	93.8	93.8	78.6	93.8	84.6
Teachers	N	15	15	15	11	15	11
	%	100	93.8	93.8	78.6	93.8	84.6
Students	N	0	2	2	2	2	2
	%	0	12.5	12.5	14.3	12.5	15.4
Parents	N	5	6	6	4	6	4
	%	33.3	37.5	37.5	28.6	37.5	30.8

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and grade level

N = Elem. 15, MS 16, JHS 7th 14, JHS 8th 13

school types. This role was shared by guidance counselors in the middle and junior/junior-senior high schools. Few schools involved board members or students in the decision-making process.

Few differences were noted between the elementary and middle school, except in the area of counselor participation. Ninety-four percent of the middle schools actively involved guidance personnel. No guidance counselors were involved at the elementary level.

No apparent differences were noted between middle school participants and their counterparts in the junior/junior-senior high schools.

Table 5 illustrates the frequency distribution of the availability of written guidelines or policies for teacher use when completing student evaluation reports. In all school types the majority of teachers were provided with written guidelines. A statistical analysis comparing elementary and middle school practices found no significant difference between school types at the sixth grade level. A similar analysis, comparing seventh and eighth grade practices at the middle school to seventh and eighth grade practices at the junior/junior-senior high school found no significant differences.

Table 6 reflects the data pertaining to the frequency of required report card distribution and/or

TABLE 5

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF WRITTEN GUIDELINES OR POLICIES FOR TEACHER USE WHEN COMPLETING STUDENT EVALUATION REPORTS

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	9	13	13	14	13	13
	%	69.2	81.3	81.3	100	81.3	100
No	N	4	3	3	0	3	0
	%	30.8	18.7	18.7	0	18.7	0
		X_c^2 = .10		X_c^2 = 1.21		X_c^2 = 1.07	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 6

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF REQUIRED REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTIONS AND/OR PARENT CONFERENCES IN GRADE SIX

		School Type			
		Report Cards		Conferences	
Times Per Year		Elem. 6	M.S. 6	Elem 6	M.S. 6
One	N	0	0	4	3
	%	0	0	28.6	42.9
Two	N	3	0	10	3
	%	25.0	0	71.4	42.9
Three	N	4	3	0	0
	%	33.3	20.0	0	0
Four	N	4	12	0	1
	%	33.3	80.0	0	14.3
Five	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
Six	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
		$X^2 = 7.92$ df = 5 Level of Signif. = NS		$X^2 = 5.34$ df = 5 Level of Signif = NS	

parent conferences. Although no apparent pattern existed in the frequency of report card distribution at the sixth grade level in the elementary school, 80 percent of the sixth grades in the middle school issued report cards four times per year. However, a statistical analysis comparing sixth grade practices in elementary schools to sixth grade practices in the middle school found no significant difference between school types.

At the sixth grade level, 71.4 percent of the elementary schools followed the practice of semi-annual parent conferences while only 42.9 percent of the middle schools followed a similar practice. Once again, a statistical analysis comparing sixth grade practices in the elementary school to sixth grade practices in the middle school found no significant difference between school types.

Table 7 describes the frequency distribution of required report card distributions and/or parent conferences in grade seven. No apparent differences seem to exist between seventh grade reporting practices in the middle school and similar practices in the junior/junior-senior high school. In both school types, the most prevalent practice was the issuance of report cards four times per year. Eighty-eight percent of the middle schools and 86 percent of the junior/junior-senior high

TABLE 7

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF REQUIRED REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTIONS AND/OR PARENT CONFERENCES IN GRADE SEVEN

		School Type			
		Report Cards		Conferences	
Times Per Year		M.S. 7	JHS 7	M.S. 7	JHS 7
One	N	0	0	1	1
	%	0	0	20.0	50.0
Two	N	0	0	3	1
	%	0	0	60.0	50.0
Three	N	2	0	0	0
	%	12.5	0	0	0
Four	N	14	12	1	0
	%	87.5	85.7	20.0	0
Five	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
Six	N	0	2	0	0
	%	0	14.3	0	0
		$X^2 = 4.02$ df = 5 Level of Signif. = NS		$X^2 = .61$ df = 5 Level of Signif = NS	

schools followed this procedure. A statistical analysis between the two school types found no significant difference in school practice.

A review of the data relating to parent conference practices indicated that few middle or junior/junior-senior high schools required this practice at the seventh grade level. Only five middle schools and two junior/junior-senior high schools indicated a requirement in this area. No significant difference in school practice was found when comparing seventh grades in the middle school to seventh grades in the junior/junior-senior high school.

Table 8 illustrates the frequency distribution of required report distributions and/or parent conferences in grade eight. No apparent differences seemed to exist between eighth grade reporting practices in the middle school and similar practices in the junior/junior-senior high school. In both school types the most prevalent practice was the issuance of report cards four times per year. Eighty-eight percent of the middle schools and 92 percent of the junior/junior-senior high schools followed this procedure. A statistical analysis between the two school types found no significant difference in school practice.

A review of the data relating to parent conference practices indicated that few middle or junior/junior-senior high schools required this practice at

TABLE 8

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF REQUIRED REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTIONS AND/OR PARENT CONFERENCES IN GRADE EIGHT

		School Type			
		Report Cards		Conferences	
Times Per Year		M.S. 8	JHS 8	M.S. 8	JHS 8
One	N	0	0	1	1
	%	0	0	20.0	50.0
Two	N	0	0	3	1
	%	0	0	60.0	50.0
Three	N	2	0	0	0
	%	12.5	0	0	0
Four	N	14	12	1	0
	%	87.5	92.3	20.0	0
Five	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
Six	N	0	1	0	0
	%	0	7.7	0	0
		$X^2 = 2.88$		$X^2 = .89$	
		df = 5		df = 5	
		Level of Signif. = NS		Level of Signif = NS	

the eighth grade level. Only five middle schools and two junior/junior-senior high schools indicated a requirement in this area. No significant difference in school practice was found when comparing eighth grades in the middle school to eighth grades in the junior/ junior-senior high school.

Table 9 depicts the frequency distribution of schools requiring parent conferences as part of the student reporting procedure. A comparison of sixth grades in the elementary school to sixth grades in the middle school indicated a marked difference in school practice. All elementary schools surveyed required parent conferences as part of the reporting procedures. Only 25 percent of the middle schools followed a similar practice. A statistical analysis comparing school practices by school type reflected a significant difference at the .001 level.

Statistical comparisons at the seventh and eighth grade level found no significant difference in practice between school types. Seventy-five percent of the middle schools reported no requirement for parent conferences at both the seventh and eighth grade levels. In the junior high school, 92.9 percent of the seventh grades and 92.3 percent of the eighth grades did not require this type of conference procedure. A statistical comparison between seventh grades in the middle

TABLE 9

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A REQUIREMENT FOR PARENT CONFERENCES AS PART OF THE STUDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	15	4	4	1	4	1
	%	100	25.0	25.0	7.1	25.0	7.7
No	N	0	12	12	13	12	12
	%	0	75.0	75.0	92.9	75.0	92.3
		X_c^2 =15.33		X_c^2 = .670		X_c^2 = .54	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.=.001		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

school and seventh grades in the junior high school yielded no significant difference. Similar results were noted when comparing eighth grade practices in the middle school to eighth grade practices in the junior high school.

Descriptive information found in Table 10 indicates the type of procedures used to distribute student progress reports. At the sixth grade level the most prevalent practice used was the procedure of sending reports home with the students. At the sixth grade level, 53 percent of the elementary school and 75 percent of the middle schools followed this practice. Comparisons between the seventh grade in the middle school and the seventh grade in the junior high school reflected similar findings. The majority of respondents in both school types indicated that the predominant practice was to send the report home with students. This was also true at the eighth grade level.

Fifty percent of the seventh and eighth grades in the junior high school also indicated that at least one report card was mailed home to the parents. No junior high school delivered any written progress reports during a required parent conference.

Table 11 illustrates the frequency distribution of required use of interim progress reports. Fewer sixth grades in the elementary school (53.3 percent)

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE METHOD OF DISTRIBUTING STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Mailed home	N	1	5	5	7	5	7
	%	6.7	31.3	31.3	50.0	31.3	53.8
Sent home with student	N	8	12	12	8	12	8
	%	53.3	75.0	75.0	57.1	75.0	61.5
Sent home with student, signed by parent and returned	N	3	5	5	6	5	5
	%	20.0	31.3	31.3	42.9	31.3	38.5
Delivered during conference	N	3	2	2	0	2	0
	%	20.0	12.5	12.5	0	12.5	0

N = percent of total number of schools by type and level
% = Elem. 15, M.S. 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

TABLE 11

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF REQUIRED USE OF INTERIM PROGRESS REPORTS

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	8	16	16	14	16	13
	%	53.3	100	100	100	100	100
No	N	7	0	0	0	0	0
	%	46.7	0	0	0	0	0
		$X_c^2 = 7.16$		Cannot be computed		Cannot be computed	
		df = 1					
		Level of Signif.= .01					

than their counterparts in the middle school (100 percent) utilized this reporting practice. A statistical comparison between school types found a significant difference at the .01 level.

At both the seventh and eighth grade level in the middle and junior high school, all schools employed the use of interim reports. Since no variation existed in school practice, no statistical comparisons could be computed.

The frequency distribution found in Table 12 reveals the type of interim reports used by elementary, middle, and junior high schools. In schools that used interim reports, few differences were noted between school organizations and the type of interim reports used. The majority of the reports issued in all school types reflected both statements of commendation and deficiency. No school type utilized separate commendation reports.

A review of Table 13 reflects the types of reporting forms used by different school organizations. An inspection of the responses indicated wide variations between school types. At the sixth grade level, elementary schools were more prone to use "teacher write-in" forms (53.8 percent) while similar grades in the middle school tended to use "mark sense, data processed" materials (53.6 percent). A further inspection revealed

TABLE 12

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TYPES OF INTERIM PROGRESS REPORTS USED

Type of Interim Report Used		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Commendation	N	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deficiency	N	3	2	2	4	2	3
	%	37.5	12.5	12.5	28.6	12.5	23.1
Combination of both	N	5	14	14	10	14	10
	%	62.5	87.5	87.5	71.4	87.5	76.9

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and level

N = Elem. 8, M.S. 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

TABLE 13

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION INDICATING THE TYPE OF STUDENT REPORTING FORM USED

Type of Student Reporting Form Used		School Type					
		EL.6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Teacher Write-in	N	7	2	2	2	2	2
	%	53.8	12.5	12.5	14.3	12.5	15.3
Mark sense/ Data Processed	N	1	3	3	7	3	6
	%	7.7	18.8	18.8	50.0	18.8	46.2
Multiform Dito	N	3	9	9	5	9	5
	%	23.1	56.3	56.3	35.7	56.3	38.5
Other	N	2	2	2	0	2	0
	%	15.4	12.5	12.5	0	12.5	0
		$X^2 = 6.50$		$X^2 = 4.65$		$X^2 = 3.88$	
		df = 3		df = 3		df = 3	
		Signif. Level = NS		Signif. Level = NS		Signif. Level = NS	

that elementary schools usually employed teacher generated reports (53.8 percent) while middle schools generally utilized a standardized reporting instrument designed to reduce teacher writing time (85.7 percent).

At the seventh grade level middle schools (56.3 percent) followed the practice of using multi-form dittos while junior high schools employed "mark sense, data processed" forms (50.0 percent). Similar responses were noted at the eighth grade level where some slight variations existed. The majority of middle schools (56.3 percent) utilized the multi-form ditto while junior high schools proceeded with the "mark sense, data processed" materials.

A statistical analysis of the data comparing sixth grade practices in the elementary school to sixth grade practices in the middle school and seventh and eighth grade practices in the middle school to similar grades in the junior high school found no significant differences in any grade level comparisons.

Table 14 reflects few differences in methods used to process student report forms between elementary and middle schools. The most common practice used in both school types was that of using local personnel to process the forms. All of the elementary schools and

TABLE 14

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS USING LOCAL PERSONNEL TO PROCESS THE STUDENT REPORT FORMS

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	11	12	12	7	12	7
	%	100	75.0	75.0	50.0	75.0	54.0
No	N	9	4	4	7	4	6
	%	0	25.0	25.0	50.0	25.0	46.0
		X_c^2 = 1.55		X_c^2 = 1.08		X_c^2 = .64	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

75 percent of the middle schools employing reporting forms utilized their own employees to complete the task. Although middle and junior high schools tended to use local personnel, a higher percent of junior high schools employed other procedures to process their student report forms.

No statistical differences were noted in practices between school types when compared by grade level.

An analysis of the frequency distribution of schools using B.O.C.E.S. personnel to process student reporting forms found no significant differences when comparing school types by grade level (Table 15). The responses revealed that none of the elementary schools and few of the middle schools (25 percent) availed themselves of this service. Approximately half of the junior high schools at the seventh and eighth grade levels did employ the services of intermediate school district personnel to assist them in the reporting process.

Table 16 reveals the frequency distribution of the alternatives provided on the reporting form to reflect student progress. This descriptive table did not lend itself to statistical comparisons since the principals' responses did not reflect independent variables.

Achievement grades were the most prevalent method of reporting student progress. An inspection of all school types by grade level indicated that all middle

TABLE 15

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS USING BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PERSONNEL TO PROCESS THE STUDENT REPORT FORMS

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	0	4	4	7	4	6
	%	0	25.0	25.0	50.0	25.0	46.0
No	N	11	12	12	7	12	7
	%	100	75.0	75.0	50.0	75.0	54.0
		$X_c^2 = 1.55$		$X_c^2 = 1.08$		$X_c^2 = .64$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 16

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TYPES OF ALTERNATIVES THAT ARE PROVIDED ON THE STUDENT REPORT FORM

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Achievement Grades	N	10	16	16	14	16	13
	%	66.7	100	100	100	100	100
Behavior Comments	N	13	13	13	9	13	9
	%	86.7	81.3	81.3	64.3	81.3	69.2
Effort Marks	N	13	13	13	12	13	12
	%	86.7	81.3	81.3	85.7	81.3	92.3
Request for Parent Conferences	N	5	9	9	6	9	6
	%	33.3	56.3	56.3	42.9	56.3	46.2
Descriptive Comments	N	12	10	10	5	10	5
	%	80.0	62.5	62.5	35.7	62.5	38.5
Attendance Information	N	9	10	10	12	10	12
	%	60.0	62.5	62.5	85.7	62.5	92.3

% = percent of total number of schools by type and level

N = Elem. 15, M.S. 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

and junior high schools and two-thirds of the elementary schools followed this practice. In addition, the majority of schools in all categories also provided space on the reporting form for behavior comments, effort marks, and attendance information. Fifty-six percent of the middle schools also supplied space for "requests for parent conferences." Eighty percent of the elementary and 63 percent of the middle schools also provided an option for descriptive comments.

Table 17 indicates the results of a Chi-square analysis of the frequency distribution, by column total, of the reporting methods used by sixth grade teachers to evaluate student progress. Significant results were obtained at the .001 level when comparing elementary and middle schools in the areas of "letter grading" and "narrative comments."

In the area of "letter grading," significantly more middle schools employed letter grades as a practice than did elementary schools. Conversely, significantly more elementary schools utilized the practice of including "narrative comments" on the reporting form than did middle schools.

Further inspection of the data indicated that fewer than half of the elementary schools employ "letter grading" in any subject area. Conversely, all middle schools utilized this practice in English, social studies,

TABLE 17

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION, BY COLUMN TOTAL, OF THE REPORTING METHODS USED BY SIXTH GRADE TEACHERS TO EVALUATE STUDENT PROGRESS

		Methods of Reporting by Grade Level							
		Letter Grade		Numerical Grade		Pass/Fail		Narrative Comment	
Subject Area		EL.6	MS 6	EL.6	MS 6	EL.6	MS 6	EL.6	MS 6
English	N	7	15	2	1	0	0	6	0
	%	46.6	93.7	13.3	6.3	0	0	40.0	0
Soc. St.	N	7	15	2	1	0	0	6	0
	%	46.6	93.7	13.3	6.3	0	0	40.0	0
Math	N	7	15	2	1	0	0	6	0
	%	46.6	93.7	13.3	6.3	0	0	40.0	0
Science	N	6	15	0	1	0	0	6	0
	%	40.0	93.7	0	6.3	0	0	40.0	0
For. Lang.	N	0	8	0	1	0	1	1	0
	%	0	50.0	0	6.3	0	6.3	6.7	0
Type/Bus.	N	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	18.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
P.E.	N	7	14	1	0	1	2	4	0
	%	46.6	87.5	6.7	0	6.7	12.5	26.7	0
H.E.	N	4	8	0	0	0	3	2	0
	%	26.6	50.0	0	0	0	18.8	13.3	0
I.A./H.M.	N	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	0
	%	0	75.0	0	0	0	6.3	0	0
Music	N	0	14	1	1	1	1	5	0
	%	0	87.5	6.7	6.3	6.7	6.3	33.3	0
Art	N	7	14	1	1	1	1	5	0
	%	46.6	87.5	6.7	6.3	6.7	6.3	33.3	0
Other	N	2	0	0	1	0	1	3	0
	%	13.3	0	0	6.3	0	6.3		0
Total Yes		47	133	9	8	3	10	44	0
Total No		133	59	171	184	177	182	136	192
		X^2= 69.31 df = 11 Signif. Level=.001		X^2 = .14 df = 11 Signif. Level=NS		X^2 = 3.44 df = 11 Signif. Level=NS		X^2 = 53.23 df = 11 Signif Level=.001	

mathematics and science. The majority of middle schools also used "letter grading" in the areas of foreign language, phyical education, health education, industrial arts/homemaking, music and art. Only two elementary and one middle school reflected the use of numerical grading practices. No significant difference was found when statistically comparing school types.

The pass/fail method of evaluating student progress was only employed by one elementary school and sparsely used by the middle school. No significant difference was noted when statistically comparing school types.

Table 18 reveals the results of a Chi-square analysis of the frequency distribution, by column total, of the reporting methods used by seventh grade teachers to evaluate student progress. A significant difference was found at the .01 level when comparing middle and junior high schools in the area of "letter grading." An analysis of "numerical grading" revealed significance at the .001 level.

In the area of "letter grading," significantly more middle schools employed this practice than did junior high schools. Conversely, significantly more junior high schools utilized "numerical grading" practices than did middle schools.

A further inspection of the data revealed that all middle schools utilized letter grading in English

TABLE 18

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION, BY COLUMN TOTAL, OF THE REPORTING METHODS USED BY SEVENTH GRADE TEACHERS TO EVALUATE STUDENT PROGRESS

		Methods of Reporting by Grade Level							
		Letter Grade		Numerical Grade		Pass/Fail		Narrative Comment	
Subject Area		MS 7	JHS 7	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 7	JHS 7
English	N	15	9	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	64.3	6.3	35.7	0	0	0	0
Soc. St.	N	15	9	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	64.3	6.3	35.7	0	0	0	0
Math	N	15	9	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	64.3	6.3	35.7	0	0	0	0
Science	N	15	9	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	64.3	6.3	35.7	0	0	0	0
For. Lang.	N	15	6	0	4	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	42.9	0	28.6	0	0	0	0
Type/Bus.	N	7	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
	%	43.8	14.3	0	7.1	0	7.1	0	0
P.E.	N	14	7	0	4	2	3	0	0
	%	87.5	50.0	0	28.6	12.5	21.4	0	0
H.E.	N	11	7	0	1	2	2	0	0
	%	68.8	50.0	0	7.1	12.5	14.3	0	0
I.A/H.M.	N	14	8	0	3	2	2	0	0
	%	87.5	57.1	0	21.4	12.5	14.3	0	0
Music	N	14	9	1	4	1	1	0	0
	%	87.5	64.3	6.3	28.6	6.3	7.1	0	0
Art	N	14	8	1	4	1	2	0	0
	%	87.5	57.1	6.3	28.6	6.3	14.3	0	0
Other	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Yes		149	83	6	41	8	11	0	0
Total No		43	85	186	127	184	157	0	0
		x^2 = 31.10 df = 11 Signif. Level=.01		x^2 = 35.76 df = 11 Signif. Level=.001		x^2 = .96 df = 11 Signif. Level=NS		Cannot be computed	

social studies, mathematics, science and foreign language. The majority of middle schools also used this practice in physical education, health education, industrial arts/homemaking, music and art. Although the majority of junior high schools also employed letter grading practices, the percent of the total sample did not exceed 64.3 percent of the sample in any subject area.

In the numerical grading category only one (1) middle school and five (5) junior high schools employed any form of numerical grading. The predominance of this practice was found in the academic areas.

Few schools in either category incorporated the practice of reporting student progress by "pass/fail" indicators. Only two middle and three junior high schools indicated this procedure. In both school types, use was limited to the non-academic areas. No significant differences were found when statistically comparing school types.

No middle or junior high schools used the practice of reporting student progress by narrative comments at the seventh grade level. Since neither school utilized this procedure, no statistical analysis could be computed.

Table 19 reflects the results of a Chi-square analysis of the frequency distribution, by column total, of the reporting methods used by eighth grade teachers

TABLE 19

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION, BY COLUMN TOTAL, OF THE REPORTING METHODS USED BY EIGHTH GRADE TEACHERS TO EVALUATE STUDENT PROGRESS

		Methods of Reporting by Grade Level							
		Letter Grade		Numerical Grade		Pass/Fail		Narrative Comment	
Subject Area		MS 8	JHS 8	MS 8	JHS 8	MS 8	JHS 8	MS 8	JHS 8
English	N	15	8	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	61.5	6.3	38.5	0	0	0	0
Soc. St.	N	15	8	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	61.5	6.3	38.5	0	0	0	0
Math	N	15	8	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	61.5	6.3	38.5	0	0	0	0
Science	N	15	8	1	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	61.5	6.3	38.5	0	0	0	0
For. Lang.	N	15	7	2	5	0	0	0	0
	%	93.8	53.8	12.5	38.5	0	0	0	0
Type/Bus.	N	8	3	0	2	0	1	0	0
	%	50.0	23.1	0	15.3	0	7.7	0	0
P.E.	N	14	7	0	4	2	2	0	0
	%	87.5	53.8	0	30.8	12.5	15.4	0	0
H.E.	N	9	6	0	1	2	1	0	0
	%	56.3	46.2	0	7.7	12.5	7.7	0	0
I.A./H.M.	N	13	8	0	4	3	1	0	0
	%	81.3	61.5	0	30.8	18.6	7.7	0	0
Music	N	13	8	1	3	2	1	0	0
	%	81.3	61.5	6.3	23.1	12.5	7.7	0	0
Art	N	13	8	1	3	2	1	0	0
	%	81.3	61.5	6.3	23.1	12.5	7.7	0	0
Other	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Yes		145	79	8	42	11	7	0	0
Total No		47	77	184	114	181	149	0	0
		X^2 = 23.26 df = 11 Signif. Level=.05		X^2 = 36.22 df = 11 Signif. Level=.001		X^2 = .27 df = 11 Signif. Level=NS		Cannot be computed	

to evaluate student progress. A significant difference was found at the .05 level when comparing middle and junior high schools in the area of "letter grading." An analysis of "numerical grading" revealed significance at the .001 level.

In the area of "letter grading" significantly more middle schools employed this practice than did junior high schools. Conversely, significantly more junior high schools utilized "numerical grading" practices than did middle schools.

A further inspection of the data revealed that all middle schools utilized "letter grading" in English, social studies, mathematics, science and foreign language. The majority of middle schools also used this practice in physical education, health education, industrial arts/homemaking, music and art. Although the majority of junior high schools also employed letter grading practices, the percent of the total sample did not exceed 61.5 percent of the sample in any subject area.

In the category of "numerical grading," only one middle school and five junior high schools employed any form of numerical grading. The predominance of this practice was found in the academic areas.

Few schools in either category have incorporated the practice of reporting student progress by "pass/fail" indicators. Only three middle schools and two junior high schools indicated this procedure. In both

school types, its use was limited to the non-academic areas. No significant difference was found when statistically comparing school types.

No middle or junior high school used the practice of reporting student progress by narrative comments at the eighth grade level. Since neither school utilized this procedure, no statistical analysis could be completed.

The descriptive information found in Table 20 indicated the length of time covered by the reporting period by school type and grade level. Little difference was noted when examining reporting practices by school type. A clear majority of elementary, middle and junior high schools divided reporting periods into specific periods of time.

Table 21 reflects the frequency distribution of the existence of published dates for student reporting periods. At the sixth grade level all middle schools and 73.3 percent of the elementary schools published the dates of reporting periods. A statistical comparison between elementary and middle school responses was non-significant.

Since all middle and junior high schools followed this practice, no statistical comparison could be completed.

TABLE 20

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS INDICATING THE LENGTH OF TIME COVERED BY THE REPORTING PERIOD

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Specific period of time	N	11	15	15	12	15	11
	%	73.3	93.8	93.8	85.7	93.8	84.6
Cumulative evaluation to date	N	4	1	1	2	1	2
	%	26.7	6.3	6.3	14.3	6.3	15.4
Total N		15	16	16	14	16	13

TABLE 21

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF PUBLISHED DATES FOR STUDENT REPORTING PERIODS

		School Type					
Response		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	11	16	16	14	16	13
	%	73.3	100	100	100	100	100
No	N	4	0	0	0	0	0
	%	26.7	0	0	0	0	0
		$X_c^2 = 2.81$		Cannot be computed		Cannot be computed	
		df = 1					
		Level of Signif.= NS					

The descriptive information found in Table 22 reflects the location of published reporting period dates by school type and grade level. In general, middle schools more frequently listed these dates in student and faculty handbooks than did their counterparts in the elementary school. Approximately half of the elementary and middle schools also listed reporting dates in a P.T.A. newsletter.

At the seventh and eighth grade level few differences could be noted between school types. The majority of middle schools listed reporting dates in the faculty handbook and P.T.A. newsletter, while the majority of junior high schools listed these dates in the student and faculty handbooks and the P.T.A. newsletter.

Table 23 indicates the frequency distribution of the existence of uniformity of reporting practices on all grade levels. Statistical comparisons of school types by grade level yielded no significant differences. Although the variation was greater in the elementary school, all school types tended to use the same reporting practices on all grade levels.

TABLE 22

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE LOCATION OF PUBLISHED REPORTING PERIOD DATES

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Student Handbook	N	0	5	5	7	5	7
	%	0	31.3	31.3	50.0	31.3	53.8
Faculty Handbook	N	6	12	12	10	12	9
	%	40.0	75.0	75.0	71.4	75.0	69.2
Parent Handbook	N	5	4	4	6	4	6
	%	33.3	25.0	25.0	42.9	25.0	46.2
P.T.A. Newsletter	N	7	8	8	7	8	7
	%	46.7	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	53.8
Local Newspaper	N	1	1	1	4	1	4
	%	6.7	6.3	6.3	28.6	6.3	30.8
School Bulletin Board	N	0	4	4	4	4	4
	%	0	25.0	25.0	28.6	25.0	30.8

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and level

N = Elem. 15, M.S. 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

TABLE 23

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF UNIFORMITY OF REPORTING PRACTICES ON ALL GRADE LEVELS

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	10	14	14	13	14	12
	%	66.7	87.5	87.5	92.9	87.5	92.3
No	N	5	2	2	1	2	1
	%	33.3	12.5	12.5	7.1	12.5	7.7
		X_c^2 = .92		X_c^2 = .01		X_c^2 = .04	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

Research Hypothesis II: Promotion Practices

Table 24 reflects the frequency of schools functioning under board of education policies relating to student promotion. The majority of participating schools in all three categories did not operate under the structure of policy guidelines established by the board of education. A statistical analysis of school types by grade level revealed no significant difference in school practice when comparing sixth grades in elementary schools to sixth grades in the middle school. Identical findings were noticed when comparing seventh and eighth grade practices in the middle school to similar grades in the junior high school.

Table 25 examines the frequency distribution of those schools operating under written administrative guidelines relating to student promotion. Statistical comparisons comparing school types by grade level revealed no significant difference in school practice at any grade level.

Table 26 illustrates the frequency distribution of those schools that employed the practice of automatic promotion of students to the next higher level at the conclusion of the school year. Statistical comparisons of school types by grade level revealed no significant difference between school types.

TABLE 24

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY RELATING TO STUDENT PROMOTION

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	3	3	3	5	3	5
	%	20.0	18.8	18.8	35.7	18.8	38.5
No	N	12	13	13	9	13	8
	%	80.0	81.3	81.3	69.2	81.3	61.5
		$X_c^2 = .13$		$X_c^2 = .40$		$X_c^2 = .58$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 25

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF WRITTEN ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	5	7	7	9	7	8
	%	33.3	43.8	43.8	64.3	43.8	61.5
No	N	10	9	9	5	9	5
	%	66.7	56.2	56.2	35.7	56.2	38.5
		$X_c^2 = .05$		$X_c^2 = .57$		$X_c^2 = .34$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 26

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A SCHOOL PRACTICE THAT AUTOMATICALLY PROMOTES STUDENTS TO THE NEXT HIGHER GRADE LEVEL AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

		School Type					
Response		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	5	6	6	2	6	2
	%	35.7	37.5	37.5	14.3	37.5	15.4
No	N	9	10	10	12	10	11
	%	64.3	62.5	62.5	85.7	62.5	84.6
		X_c^2 = .08		X_c^2 = 1.04		X_c^2 = .82	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

In all three school types, less than 38 percent of the schools employed this practice. The practice appeared less frequently at the junior high school level.

The frequency distribution found in Table 27 reflects the number and percent of schools employing a formal promotion exercise or program at the conclusion of the school year. A statistical comparison of school types by grade level found a significant difference at the .05 level, at both the sixth and eighth grade levels. No significant difference was found at the seventh grade level.

The majority of schools in each school type and at each grade level indicated that formal promotion exercises were not utilized. The largest number of schools employing this practice were middle schools at the eighth grade level.

Table 28 reflects the number and percent of schools basing promotion to the next higher grade on student achievement of minimum standards established by the teacher. Statistical comparisons of school types by grade level found a significant difference at the .05 level when comparing seventh grades in the middle school to seventh grades in the junior high school and eighth grades in the middle school to eighth grades in the junior high school. No significant difference was noted when comparing sixth grades in the elementary

TABLE 27

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A FORMAL PROMOTION EXERCISE OR PROGRAM AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

		School Type					
Response		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	5	0	0	1	7	0
	%	41.7	0	0	7.1	43.8	0
No	N	7	13	14	13	9	13
	%	58.3	100	100	92.9	56.2	100
		$X_c^2 = 4.42$		$X_c^2 = .00$		$X_c^2 = 5.30$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.=.05		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= .05	

TABLE 28

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF STUDENT PROMOTION PRACTICES BASED ON MINIMUM STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE TEACHER

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	9	6	6	12	6	12
	%	60.0	40.0	40.0	85.7	40.0	92.3
No	N	6	9	9	2	9	1
	%	40.0	60.0	60.0	14.3	60.0	7.7
		X_c^2 = .53		X_c^2 = 4.63		X_c^2 = 6.18	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= .05		Level of Signif.= .05	

school to sixth grades in the middle school.

The highest degree of teacher autonomy was noted in the seventh and eighth grades in the junior high school while the lowest appeared in the middle school.

Table 29 illustrates the number and percent of sampled schools that utilized student promotion practices based on minimum standards established by the school system. Statistical comparisons between school types by grade level found no significant differences at either the sixth, seventh or eighth grade levels. Few schools in any of the school types reported the existence of such a practice.

Research Hypothesis III: Retention Practices

Table 30 indicates the number and percent of sampled schools that operated under district policies regulating student retention on grade level. Statistical comparisons between school types by grade level found no significant differences at either the sixth, seventh or eighth grade levels. Few schools in any of the school types reported the existence of such a practice.

The analytical data found in Table 31 reflects the number and percent of sampled schools that indicated the existence of written administrative guidelines regulating student retention on grade level. Statistical

TABLE 29

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF STUDENT PROMOTION PRACTICES BASED ON MINIMUM STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	5	3	3	5	3	5
	%	33.3	18.8	18.8	35.7	18.8	38.5
No	N	10	13	13	9	13	8
	%	66.7	81.2	81.2	64.3	81.2	61.5
		X_c^2 = .27		X_c^2 = .40		X_c^2 = .58	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 30

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A DISTRICT POLICY IN RELATION TO STUDENT RETENTION PRACTICES

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	2	3	3	1	3	1
	%	13.3	18.7	18.8	7.1	18.8	7.7
No	N	13	13	13	13	13	12
	%	86.7	81.3	81.3	92.9	81.3	92.3
		X_c^2 = .01		X_c^2 = .16		X_c^2 = .10	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 31

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF WRITTEN ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT RETENTION

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	3	8	8	6	8	5
	%	20.0	50.0	20.0	42.9	20.0	38.5
No	N	12	8	8	8	8	8
	%	80.0	50.0	80.0	47.1	80.0	61.5
		$X_c^2 = 1.87$		$X_c^2 = .00$		$X_c^2 = .06$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

comparisons between school types by grade level found no significant differences at either the sixth, seventh or eighth grade levels. The majority of schools at the elementary and junior high school levels indicated the lack of any administrative guideline for student retention.

Table 32 reflects the number and percent of respondents indicating the existence of a summer school program within commuting distance for students who have failed one or more subjects. Statistical comparisons between school types by grade level found no significant differences at the sixth, seventh or eighth grade levels. Few summer schools were available to sixth graders enrolled in the traditional elementary school when compared to the number available to children enrolled in the middle school. At the seventh and eighth grade level, summer school programs were readily available to students in both the middle and junior high school.

The frequency distribution found in Table 33 indicates the number and percent of respondents who encourage students to "make-up" failed subjects in summer school. Statistical comparisons between school types by grade level found a significant difference at the .05 level when comparing sixth grades at the elementary school to a similar grade in the middle school. More than

TABLE 32

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF A SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM, WITHIN COMMUTING DISTANCE, FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE FAILED ONE OR MORE COURSES

		School Type					
Response		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	4	9	12	13	12	11
	%	33.3	69.2	85.7	92.6	85.7	84.6
No	N	8	4	2	1	2	2
	%	66.7	30.8	14.3	7.4	14.3	15.4
		X_c^2 = 1.94		X_c^2 = .00		X_c^2 = .21	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 33

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO "MAKE-UP" FAILED SUBJECTS IN SUMMER SCHOOL

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	3	11	11	11	11	10
	%	20.0	68.8	68.8	84.6	68.8	83.3
No	N	12	5	5	2	5	2
	%	80.0	31.2	31.3	15.4	31.3	16.7
		X_c^2 = 5.59		X_c^2 = .31		X_c^2 = .19	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.=.05		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

three times as many middle school principals favored summer school as their counterparts in the elementary school. At the seventh and eighth grade levels the majority of principals in both categories favored summer school programs for their students.

Table 34 illustrates the number and percent of sampled school districts sponsoring accredited summer school programs for sixth, seventh and eighth grades in 1974. Statistical comparisons between school types by grade level found no significant differences at the sixth, seventh or eighth grade level. In both elementary and middle school districts only 14.3 percent and 13.3 percent respectively offered summer schools for this grade level.

Comparisons between the availability of summer schools for seventh graders in the middle school and seventh graders in the junior high school revealed a few districts providing such programs. Only three middle schools and seven junior high schools offered this option.

At the eighth grade level, only three middle schools and six junior high schools provided this option. Although the percentage was small, the largest concentration of summer schools were found in districts operating junior high school programs.

The descriptive data in Table 35 reflect the number and percent of responses indicating the alternatives available to students in their school districts

TABLE 34

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE DISTRICT'S SPONSORSHIP OF AN ACCREDITED SUMMER SCHOOL IN 1974

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	2	2	3	7	3	6
	%	14.3	13.3	18.7	50.0	18.7	46.2
No	N	12	13	13	7	13	7
	%	85.7	86.7	81.3	50.0	81.3	53.8
		X_c^2 = .22		X_c^2 = 2.03		X_c^2 = 1.40	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 35

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES PROVIDED BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE FAILED ONE OR MORE SUBJECTS

		School Type					
Alternatives		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Summer School	N	1	3	5	12	5	11
	%	6.7	18.6	31.3	85.7	31.3	84.6
Special Project	N	0	2	3	6	3	6
	%	0	12.5	18.8	42.6	18.8	46.2
Special Exam at the end of the summer	N	0	1	1	5	1	5
	%	0	6.3	6.3	35.7	6.3	38.5
Student adv. to the next higher grade with remedial help	N	7	8	9	11	9	10
	%	46.7	50.0	56.3	78.6	56.3	76.9

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and grade level

N = Elem. 15, M.S. 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

who have failed one or more subjects. Comparisons between practices at the sixth grade level in the elementary school and the sixth grade level in the middle school revealed a wider variety of options available to sixth graders in the middle school. Fifty percent of the middle schools indicated the alternative was "advancing students to the next higher level with remedial help."

Comparisons between seventh grades at the middle school and seventh grades at the junior high school revealed a much higher availability of summer school programs in schools organized in the junior high school pattern. Comparisons between eighth grades at the middle school and eighth grades at the junior high school revealed similar results. There was a higher percentage of summer school programs in districts organized in the junior high school pattern.

Table 36 illustrates the frequency distribution of student retentions by school type and grade level in June 1974. A statistical comparison revealed a significant difference at the .001 level when comparing eighth grades at the middle school to eighth grades at the junior high school. In this comparison, significantly fewer children were retained in the middle school. Similar grade level comparisons between sixth graders in the elementary school to sixth graders in the middle school

TABLE 36

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT RETENTIONS IN JUNE 1974

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Advanced	N	1988	3579	3572	3545	3630	3249
	%	99.65	99.80	99.72	99.52	99.89	99.42
Retained	N	7	7	10	17	4	19
	%	.35	.20	.28	.48	.11	.58
		$X^2_c = .68$		$X^2 = 1.86$		$X^2 = 11.51$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif= .001	

and seventh graders in the middle school to their counterparts in the junior high school yielded no significant differences.

A comparison of all school types found the highest rates of retention (.58 percent) at the eighth grade level in the junior high school and the lowest (.11 percent) in the sixth grades of the middle school.

Table 37 reflects the frequency distribution of passing and failing English grades in June 1974. Statistical comparisons of school types by grade level revealed no significant differences at the sixth, seventh or eighth grade level. The highest rate of failure (3.90 percent) was found at the seventh grade level in the junior high school while the lowest rate (1.64 percent) was noted in the sixth grade in the elementary school.

Table 38 indicates the frequency distribution of passing and failing social studies grades in June 1974. A statistical comparison by school type and grade level revealed a significant difference at the .001 level when comparing elementary and middle schools at the sixth grade level. It was found that there were fewer elementary failures than middle school failures.

Seventh and eighth grade comparisons yielded no significant differences. An inspection of the results by school type and grade level indicate the highest rate of failure (3.59 percent) appeared in the seventh grade

TABLE 37

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH GRADES IN JUNE 1974

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Pass	N	1435	2184	2137	2909	2249	2644
	%	98.36	97.63	96.60	96.10	97.11	96.57
Fail	N	24	53	89	118	67	94
	%	1.64	2.37	3.40	3.90	2.89	3.43
		$X_c^2 = 2.27$		$X^2 = .03$		$X^2 = 1.19$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 38

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES GRADES IN JUNE 1974

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Pass	N	1453	2181	2146	2942	2252	2649
	%	99.59	97.50	96.41	97.19	97.24	96.75
Fail	N	6	56	80	85	64	89
	%	.41	2.50	3.59	2.81	2.76	3.25
		X^2_c =23.43		X^2 = 2.60		X^2 = 1.01	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.=.001		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif. =NS	

of the middle school and the lowest rate of failure (.41 percent) in the sixth grade of the elementary school.

Table 39 illustrates the frequency distribution of passing and failing mathematics grades in June 1974. Statistical comparisons by school type and grade level revealed two significant differences. The first was found at the sixth grade level. In this case, elementary schools showed a significantly lower rate of failure than did middle schools. This difference was significant at the .001 level. The second difference was noted at the seventh grade level. Here, middle schools displayed a significantly lower rate of failure than their counterparts in the junior high school. A comparison at the eighth grade level revealed no significant difference between the middle and junior high school.

An inspection of the results for all three grade levels indicated the highest rate of failure (7.09 percent) was found in the eighth grade of the junior high school and the lowest rate (.75 percent) in the sixth grade of the elementary school.

Table 40 presents the frequency distribution of passing and failing grades in science in June 1974. Statistical comparisons by school type and grade level revealed two significant differences. The first was noted at the sixth grade level. In this case elementary schools showed a significantly lower rate of failure than did the

TABLE 39

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF MATHEMATICS GRADES IN JUNE 1974

		School Type					
Response		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Pass	N	1448	2152	2152	2867	2183	2544
	%	99.25	96.20	96.68	94.71	94.26	92.91
Fail	N	11	85	74	160	133	194
	%	.75	3.80	3.32	5.29	5.74	7.09
		X^2_c =32.38		X^2 =11.59		X^2 = 3.74	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.=.001		Level of Signif.= .001		Level of Signif. = NS	

TABLE 40

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCIENCE GRADES IN JUNE 1974

		School Type					
Response		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Pass	N	1447	2186	2154	2931	2215	2657
	%	99.18	97.72	96.77	95.64	95.64	97.04
Fail	N	12	51	72	96	101	81
	%	.82	2.28	3.23	3.17	4.36	2.96
		$X_c^2 = 11.19$		$X^2 = .02$		$X^2 = 7.11$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= .001		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= .01	

middle school. This difference was significant at the .001 level.

The second difference was noted at the eighth grade level. Here, junior high schools displayed a significantly lower rate of failure than their counterparts in the middle school. This was significant at the .01 level. A comparison of passing and failing grades at the seventh grade level revealed no significant difference.

An inspection of the results for all three grade levels indicated the highest rate of failure (4.36 percent) was found at the eighth grade level in the middle school and the lowest rate (.82 percent) in the sixth grade of the elementary school.

The descriptive data found in Table 41 reflect the frequency distribution of responses indicating the number of academic subjects a student must fail to be considered for retention on grade level. Few elementary or middle schools, at the sixth grade level, indicated retention practices based on the number of academic subjects failed. Only one elementary and five middle schools responded.

At the seventh grade level, seven of the middle schools and nine of the junior high schools reflected this practice. At the eighth grade level, seven of the middle schools and six of the junior high schools reported similar

TABLE 41

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ACADEMIC SUBJECTS THAT MUST BE FAILED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR RETENTION ON GRADE LEVEL

Number		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
One	N	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Two	N	1	5	5	5	5	4
	%	6.7	31.3	31.3	35.7	31.3	30.8
Three	N	0	0	1	3	1	1
	%	0	0	6.3	21.4	6.3	7.7
Four	N	0	1	1	1	1	1
	%	0	6.3	6.3	7.1	6.3	7.7

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and grade level

N = Elem. 15, MS 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

practices. Of those schools employing this factor as a consideration for retention, two failing grades was the predominant trend.

The descriptive data in Table 42 reflect the number and percent of respondents indicating the conditions under which a student might be retained on grade level. Sixth grade principals in both the elementary and middle school indicated "immaturity" as the largest single factor for considering a child for retention. Comparisons in all other areas reflected no major difference in school practice at this level.

Comparisons between seventh and eighth grade practices in the middle school and similar grades in the junior high school indicated two differences in the percent of response. Middle school principals tended to consider immaturity more frequently than their counterparts in the junior high school. Conversely, junior high school administrators considered failure of one or more courses more frequently than principals in the middle school.

Descriptive data in Table 43 reflect the number and percent of respondents indicating the circumstances under which they would philosophically consider retaining a child on grade level. Sixth grade comparisons between elementary and middle school principals revealed a close similarity between the responses of all principals except in the area of academic failure. In this area, elementary principals gave this factor a higher priority than their

TABLE 42

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH A STUDENT MAY BE RETAINED ON GRADE LEVEL

Response		School Type					
		El.6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Failure of one or more courses	N	4	5	5	8	5	7
	%	26.7	31.3	31.3	57.1	31.3	53.8
Immaturity	N	12	9	9	5	9	5
	%	80.0	56.3	56.3	35.7	56.3	38.5
Frequent illegal absences	N	3	5	5	6	5	6
	%	20.0	31.3	31.3	42.6	31.3	46.2
Prolonged illness	N	3	6	6	4	6	4
	%	20.0	37.5	37.5	28.6	37.5	30.8
Psycho-logical problems	N	8	6	6	4	6	4
	%	53.3	37.5	37.5	28.6	37.5	30.8

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and level

N = Elem. 15, M.S. 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

TABLE 43

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH PRINCIPALS WOULD PHILOSOPHICALLY CONSIDER RETAINING A CHILD ON GRADE LEVEL

Circumstances		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Academic failure	N	9	6	6	10	6	9
	%	60.0	37.5	37.5	71.4	37.5	69.2
Maturity	N	12	11	11	6	11	10
	%	80.0	68.8	68.8	42.9	68.8	76.9
Age level	N	6	6	6	3	6	5
	%	40.0	37.5	37.5	21.4	37.5	38.5
Psycho-logical problems	N	8	6	6	4	6	5
	%	53.3	37.5	37.5	28.6	37.5	38.5
Physical problems	N	2	4	4	2	4	3
	%	13.3	25.0	25.0	14.3	25.0	23.1
Excessive absenteeism	N	4	9	9	6	9	8
	%	26.7	56.3	56.3	42.9	56.3	61.5
Parent request	N	9	8	8	8	8	7
	%	60.0	50.0	50.0	57.1	50.0	53.8
Student request	N	3	5	5	4	5	4
	%	20.0	31.3	31.3	28.6	31.3	30.8

% = Percent of total number of schools by type and level

N = Elem. 15, M.S. 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

counterparts in the middle school. In both types of school organizations "maturity" received the highest number of responses as a condition for considering retaining a child on grade level.

Seventh and eighth grade comparisons between middle and junior high schools revealed a much larger emphasis on academic failure in the junior high school organization as a consideration for grade repetition. Conversely, middle school principals indicated a larger concern for maturity than their counterparts in the junior high school. Responses in all other areas revealed close similarity.

The frequency distribution found in Table 44 reflects the number and percent of respondents permitting students to repeat courses by straddling or crossing grade lines. Statistical comparisons of school types by grade level revealed no significant differences at the sixth, seventh or eighth grade levels. The majority of principals in all three school types did not permit this practice.

The frequency distribution found in Table 45 reflects the number and percent of respondents permitting parents to reject retention on grade level. Statistical comparisons of school types by grade level revealed no significant differences at the sixth, seventh or eighth grade levels. Observation of the data revealed a higher

TABLE 44

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS PERMITTING STUDENTS TO REPEAT COURSES BY STRADDLING OR CROSSING GRADE LINES

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	4	2	3	6	3	6
	%	50.0	16.7	23.1	46.2	23.1	46.2
No	N	4	10	10	7	10	7
	%	50.0	83.3	76.9	53.8	76.9	53.8
		$X_c^2 = 1.20$		$X_c^2 = .68$		$X_c^2 = .68$	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

TABLE 45

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS PERMITTING PARENTS TO REJECT RETENTION ON GRADE LEVEL

Response		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	8	5	5	3	5	2
	%	66.7	71.4	71.4	25.0	71.4	18.2
No	N	4	7	7	9	7	9
	%	33.3	28.6	28.6	75.0	28.6	81.8
		X_c^2 = .67		X_c^2 = .19		X_c^2 = .59	
		df = 1		df = 1		df = 1	
		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS		Level of Signif.= NS	

number of elementary principals permitting parent rejection of retention as compared to their counterparts in the middle school. Comparisons between middle and junior high school practices at the seventh and eighth grade level revealed little difference in practice. At this level the majority of schools did not permit parents to reject retention.

The descriptive data found in Table 46 illustrate the frequency distribution of participants involved in decision-making regarding retention on grade level. Comparisons of school practice at the sixth grade level in the elementary and middle school revealed almost identical involvement in all areas except guidance. No guidance counselors were involved at the elementary level.

At the seventh and eighth grade level, in both middle school and junior high school, the distribution of responses revealed virtually no difference.

Two basic similarities were noted in all three school types: no students were involved in the decision-making process; and most decisions were made by the principal.

TABLE 46

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING REGARDING RETENTION ON GRADE LEVEL

Participants		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Student	N	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teacher	N	5	3	3	1	3	1
	%	33.3	18.8	18.8	7.1	18.8	7.7
Counselor	N	0	7	7	6	7	6
	%	0	43.8	43.8	42.9	43.8	46.2
Psychol-ogist	N	4	2	2	2	2	2
	%	26.7	12.5	12.5	14.2	12.5	15.4
Principal	N	12	12	12	11	12	11
	%	80.0	75.0	75.0	78.6	75.0	84.6
Superin-tendent	N	1	3	3	1	3	1
	%		18.8	18.8	7.1	18.8	7.7

% = percent of total number of schools by type and level

N = Elem. 15, MS 16, JHS 7th 14 and JHS 8th 13

Demographic Data

Table 47 presents the frequency distribution of responding principals by school type. A total of forty-five administrators participated in the study. Of this number, fifteen were elementary, sixteen were middle school and fourteen were junior/junior-senior high school administrators.

TABLE 47

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDING PRINCIPALS

Responding Principals	School Type			
	Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Number	15	16	14	45

Table 48 illustrates respondents' position by school type. Of the forty-five administrators surveyed, 93.3 percent were principals and 6.7 percent were assistant principals.

Table 49 reflects the distribution of respondents by sex. Forty-two of the administrators were male (93.3 percent) and three were female (6.7 percent). All female principals were employed at the elementary level.

TABLE 48

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS POSITION BY SCHOOL TYPE

Respondents		School Type Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Principals	N	15	14	13	42
	%	100	87.5	92.9	93.3
Assistant principals	N	0	2	1	3
	%	0	12.5	7.1	6.7
Total N		15	16	14	45

TABLE 49

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' SEX

Sex		School Type Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Male	N	12	16	14	42
	%	80	100	100	93.3
Female	N	3	0	0	3
	%	20	0	0	6.7
Total N		15	16	14	45

Table 50 indicates the tenure of responding principals by the total number of years in their present position. Of those surveyed, 51.1 percent had occupied their present position for less than six years. Only 22.1 percent of the administrators had remained in their positions for more than fifteen years. No apparent differences seemed to exist in the frequency distribution when comparing principals by their level of assignment.

Table 51 illustrates the frequency distribution of the respondent's total years in education. The spread of experience ranged between six and thirty-one years or more. No apparent differences were noted when comparing principals by school type.

Table 52 indicates the frequency distribution of respondents' education by degree status. All but four administrators (8.9 percent) had achieved an M.A. plus thirty hours. Over half of the principals (57.8 percent) had secured their M.A. plus 60 hours. When comparing principals by school type, 53.7 percent of the elementary principals and 42.9 percent of the junior/junior-senior high school principals had not reached the M.A. plus 60 hours level. Conversely, 68.9 percent of the middle school principals had achieved the M.A. plus 60 hours level or better with five administrators obtaining an earned doctorate.

TABLE 50

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF
RESPONDENTS' YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION

Years in Position		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
0-5	N	6	9	8	23
	%	40.0	56.3	57.1	51.1
6-10	N	4	5	3	12
	%	26.7	31.3	21.4	26.7
11-15	N	2	1	2	5
	%	13.3	6.3	14.3	11.1
16-20	N	3	0	1	4
	%	20.0	0	7.1	8.9
21 +	N	0	1	0	1
	%	0	6.3	0	2.2
Total	N	15	16	14	45

TABLE 51

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF
RESPONDENTS' TOTAL YEARS IN EDUCATION

Years in Education		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
0-5	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
6-10	N	1	1	2	4
	%	6.7	6.3	14.3	8.9
11-15	N	1	3	3	7
	%	6.7	18.8	21.4	15.6
16-20	N	3	5	3	11
	%	20.0	31.3	21.4	24.4
21-25	N	5	4	3	12
	%	33.3	25.0	21.4	26.7
26-30	N	3	2	2	7
	%	20.0	12.5	14.3	15.6
30+	N	2	1	1	4
	%	13.3	6.3	7.1	8.9
Total	N	15	16	14	45

TABLE 52

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF
RESPONDENTS' HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED

Degree Level		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
B.S.	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
B.S. + 30	N	1	0	0	1
	%	6.7	0	0	2.2
M.A.	N	0	1	2	3
	%	0	6.3	14.3	6.7
M.A. + 30	N	7	4	4	15
	%	46.7	25.0	28.6	33.3
M.A. + 60	N	3	3	3	9
	%	20.0	18.8	21.4	20.0
M.A. + 90	N	3	3	4	10
	%	20.0	18.8	28.6	22.2
Doctorate	N	1	5	1	7
	%	6.7	31.3	7.1	15.6
Total	N	15	16	14	45

A review of the administrative staff frequency distribution (Table 53) reflects a greater variation of administrative titles employed in the middle school. This would include the title of "house principal" which appeared to be unique to this school type. Assistant principals also appeared in greater frequency in both the middle school and junior/junior-senior hgih school categories. Of the eighty administrators employed in the sampled schools, only sixteen administrators had titles other than principal or assistant principal.

TABLE 53

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS IN RESPONDING SCHOOLS

	School Type			
Position Title	Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Principal	15	14	14	43
Assistant Principal	2	8	11	21
Adm. Assistant	3	6	0	9
Adm. Intern	1	0	1	2
Adm. Dean	0	2	0	2
House Principal	0	3	0	3
Total N	21	33	26	80

The frequency distribution of guidance counselors (Table 54) indicates a marked variation of employment patterns between the elementary and secondary schools. No elementary schools had full-time guidance counselors on their staff. Conversely, all middle and junior/ junior-senior high schools employed at least one full-time counselor on their staff.

TABLE 54

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Number of Counselors	School Type			
	Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
0	(15)	0	0	(15)
1		6	2	8
2		5	3	16
3		2	5	21
4		4	4	32
Total N	0	38	39	77

A review of the frequency distribution relating to grades supervised by responding principals (Table 55) indicates a wide variation of organizational structures within the three basic subtypes. At the elementary level five different patterns were reported: the most

TABLE 55

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES SUPERVISED BY RESPONDENT

Grades	School Type			
	Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
K-6	9	0	0	9
1-6	1	0	0	1
4-6	3	0	0	3
5-6	1	0	0	1
6	1	0	0	1
5-8	0	4	0	4
6-8	0	11	0	11
K-8	0	1	0	1
7	0	0	1	1
7-8	0	0	4	4
7-9	0	0	3	3
7-12	0	0	6	6
Total N	15	16	14	45

prevalent being the K-6 structure. At the middle school level, two basic patterns were noted: 5-8 and 6-8. The most frequent supervisory structure was the 6-8 pattern. At the junior/junior-senior high school level four different combinations of supervisory structures were reported. The most common was the 7-12 grade level combination. Although wide variation existed in all subtypes, the most prevalent supervisory pattern for young adolescents was the 6-8 middle school.

Comparisons of student enrollments by school type are found in Table 56. At the elementary level, school size ranged from 201 through 800, the most predominant range being 401-500. At the middle school level student enrollment varied greatly. School size ranged from under 200 to over 1200, the most predominant category being 601-800. Similar distributions were noted when reviewing the junior/junior-senior high school organizational pattern. School enrollments ranged in size from over 201 to under 1200, the most predominant range being between 801 and 1,000. In the entire sample, only six schools indicated enrollments of less than 401 students.

Table 57 displays the frequency distribution of student enrollments by school type and grade level. A comparison of sixth grades in the elementary school to sixth grades in the middle school reveals the majority of sixth grades in the elementary school do

TABLE 56

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT

	School Type			
Enrollment	Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
0-200	0	1	0	1
201-400	2	2	1	5
401-600	10	3	4	17
601-800	3	4	1	8
801-1000	0	1	6	7
1001-1200	0	4	2	6
1201-1400	0	1	0	1
Total N	15	16	14	45

TABLE 57

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL

	School Type					
Enrollment	El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
0-50	0	1	1	0	1	0
51-100	7	1	1	1	0	1
101-150	2	4	4	4	4	4
151-200	2	2	2	1	3	1
201-250	1	3	3	4	2	1
251-300	0	0	0	1	1	3
301-350	0	1	3	1	2	1
351-400	0	3	2	0	3	0
401-450	1	1	0	1	0	1
451-500	0	0	0	0	0	1
501-550	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total N	13	16	16	14	16	13

not exceed 150 students. The majority of middle school sixth grades, however, exceed 150 students. No noticeable differences in student enrollment per grade level seem to appear when comparing seventh and eighth grades in the middle school to their counterparts in the junior/junior-senior high school.

Table 58 reflects the distribution of pupil enrollment by school district. Few variations could be noted between the size and spread of school districts when comparing traditional districts and those employing the middle school concept. Although the majority of school districts encompassed student populations of less than 2,500, both types were balanced with large and small size districts.

School settings are described in Table 59. Ninety-eight percent of the principals characterized their school setting as suburban or suburban/rural. The predominant setting was suburban. No urban school districts were included in the study. Comparisons between school types indicated no difference between elementary, middle and junior/junior-senior high schools.

Socio-economic status of the enrollment (Table 60) was predominantly characterized by the principals as middle and upper class communities with low minority group representation. The higher concentrations of minority groups were found in school districts employing traditional elementary and junior/junior-senior high

TABLE 58

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF DISTRICT PUPIL ENROLLMENT

	School Type			
Pupil Enrollment	Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
0-1000	0	1	0	1
1001-1500	3	3	3	9
1501-2000	2	3	2	4
2001-2500	1	2	1	7
2501-3000	2	1	1	4
3001-3500	3	1	2	6
3501-4000	2	1	2	5
4001-4500	0	1	1	2
4501+	2	3	2	7
Total N	15	16	14	45

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF
SCHOOL SETTING

School Setting		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Urban	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
Suburban	N	12	15	11	38
	%	80.0	93.8	78.6	84.4
Suburban/ Rural	N	2	1	3	6
	%	13.3	6.3	21.4	13.3
Rural	N	1	0	0	1
	%	6.7	0	0	2.2
Total	N	15	16	14	45

TABLE 60

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE ENROLLMENT DISTRICT

Socio-Economic Status		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Low S.E.S., High minority group	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
Low S.E.S., Low minority group	N	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0
Middle S.E.S., High minority group	N	5	1	4	10
	%	33.3	6.3	28.6	22.2
Middle S.E.S., Low minority group	N	4	9	5	18
	%	26.7	56.3	35.7	40.0
High S.E.S., High minority group	N	0	1	0	1
	%	0	6.3	0	2.2
High S.E.S., Low minority group	N	6	5	5	16
	%	40.0	31.3	35.7	35.6
Total	N	15	16	14	45

school organizational patterns. No school was identified as being predominantly located in a low socio-economic area.

Descriptive data found in Table 61 illustrate the original construction dates of all three school types in the sample. Two-thirds of the elementary schools were constructed prior to 1950, while approximately two-thirds of the middle and junior/junior-senior high schools were constructed since 1950. Further inspection indicated that the majority of middle schools were constructed since 1960, with seven being built between 1960 and 1969.

Table 62 illustrates the frequency distribution of schools using ability grouping. More sixth grades in the middle school utilized this method of grouping than did similar grades in traditional elementary schools. The same results were noted when comparing seventh and eighth grades in the middle school to similar grades in the junior/junior-senior high school. In both cases ability grouping was more prevalent in the junior/junior-senior high school. It should also be noted that the incidence of ability grouping increased in both the middle school and junior/junior-senior high school as the grade level increased. Ninety-three percent of the junior/junior-senior high schools utilized ability grouping in the seventh grade and one hundred percent in the eighth.

TABLE 61

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF ORIGINAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION DATES

Original Construction Date	School Type			
	Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
1919 or before	4	3	1	8
1920-1929	3	0	1	4
1930-1939	2	2	3	7
1940-1949	1	0	0	1
1950-1959	2	2	4	8
1960-1969	2	7	5	14
1970-present	1	2	0	3
Total N	15	16	14	45

TABLE 62

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS USING ABILITY GROUPING

Ability Grouping		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Yes	N	4	7	8	13	11	13
	%	26.7	43.8	50.0	92.9	68.8	100.0
No	N	11	9	8	1	5	0
	%	73.3	56.2	50.0	7.1	31.2	0
Total	N	15	16	16	14	16	13

A frequency distribution of the criteria used as a basis for ability grouping is found in Table 63. The most prevalent criteria used at all grade levels was "grade level achievement" followed by "reading level." In addition, at least 50 percent of the junior/junior-senior high schools also utilized "I.Q." and "teacher recommendations" as part of their basis for ability grouping. The data also indicated that middle and junior/junior-senior high schools tended to utilize the same criteria for grouping at all grade levels within the school.

Table 64 reflects the frequency distribution of areas in which remedial instruction was provided during the school day. The most frequently offered remedial subjects in all three school types was reading followed by mathematics. Comparisons of practices at different grade levels indicated few variations between school types. A slightly higher incidence of remedial instruction was noted in the junior/junior-senior high school, in the areas of mathematics and study skills, when comparisons were made to similar grades in the middle school.

A study of the schools offering workshops or in-service training in the area of student evaluation and reporting is found in Table 65. The majority of schools (64.5 percent) made no attempt to hold in-service workshops or training sessions in this area. No meaningful

TABLE 63

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF CRITERIA USED AS A BASIS FOR ABILITY GROUPING

Criteria Used		School Type					
		El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
IQ	N	1	3	3	9	3	9
Reading level	N	2	6	6	11	6	11
Grade achievement level	N	4	9	9	11	9	10
Teacher recommendation	N	0	5	5	8	5	7
Standardized test scores	N	0	2	2	1	2	1

TABLE 64

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF AREAS IN WHICH REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION IS PROVIDED DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Areas of Remedial Instruction	School Type					
	El. 6	MS 6	MS 7	JHS 7	MS 8	JHS 8
Reading	11	16	13	12	13	11
Mathematics	4	4	4	9	4	8
Study skills	2	3	5	8	5	8
Foreign language	1	0	0	1	0	0

TABLE 65

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS OFFERING WORKSHOPS OR IN-SERVICE TRAINING, WITHIN THE LAST THREE YEARS, IN THE AREA OF STUDENT EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Workshop or In-Service Training		School Type			
		Elem	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Yes	N	5	8	3	16
	%	33.3	50.0	21.4	35.5
No	N	10	8	11	29
	%	66.7	50.0	78.6	64.5
Total	N	15	16	14	45

differences were noted among the three types of schools.

Similar results were reported when examining the frequency distribution of schools conducting formal follow-up studies on subject failure (Table 66). In the last three years 80 percent of the sampled schools made no attempt to study the issue. Comparisons between school types indicated no differences resulting from the organizational pattern of the school.

TABLE 66

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS CONDUCTING FORMAL FOLLOW-UP STUDIES ON SUBJECT FAILURE IN THE LAST LAST THREE YEARS

Follow-up Studies		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Yes	N	4	2	3	9
	%	26.7	12.5	21.4	20.0
No	N	11	14	11	36
	%	73.3	87.5	78.6	80.0
Total N		15	16	14	45

Table 67 reflects the frequency distribution of the number of schools conducting formal follow-up studies on student retention. No major attempt was

TABLE 67

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS CONDUCTING FORMAL FOLLOW-UP STUDIES ON STUDENT RETENTION IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

Follow-up Studies		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Yes	N	3	2	4	9
	%	20.0	12.5	28.5	20.0
No	N	12	14	10	36
	%	80.0	87.2	71.5	80.0
Total N		15	16	14	45

made by any school type to pursue this topic. Only 20 percent of the total sample indicated any attempt to follow-up student retentions. No difference was noted between school types.

Table 68 reveals the number of schools re-evaluating their grading system within the last three years. The results indicated that the majority of schools in all three school types had attempted to investigate this issue. Seventy-six percent (75.6 percent) of those schools responding indicated re-evaluations of existing school practices.

TABLE 68

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS RE-EVALUATING THEIR GRADING SYSTEM WITHIN THE LAST THREE YEARS

Re-evaluation of System		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Yes	N	9	15	10	34
	%	60.0	93.8	71.4	75.6
No	N	6	1	4	11
	%	40.0	6.2	28.6	24.4
Total	N	15	16	14	45

Table 69 indicates the number of schools re-evaluating their retention policy within the last three years. Slightly more than half (57.8 percent) of those schools surveyed had not re-evaluated their retention policy. The highest incidence in the study (50.0 percent) was found at the junior/junior-senior high school level with the lowest level (25.0 percent) found in the middle school. Although slight variations were noted, no major difference was apparent between school types.

TABLE 69

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS RE-EVALUATING THEIR RETENTION POLICY WITHIN THE LAST THREE YEARS

Re-evaluation of Retention		School Type			
		Elem.	M.S.	J/JSHS	Total
Yes	N	6	4	7	17
	%	40.0	25.0	50.0	37.8
No	N	9	10	7	26
	%	60.0	62.5	50.0	57.8
N.A.	N	0	2	0	2
	%	0	12.5	0	4.4
Total	N	15	16	14	45

A review of the demographic data presented in this chapter disclosed that relatively few noticeable differences exist between respondents employed in traditionally organized elementary and junior high schools, when compared to their colleagues employed in the middle school. Information relating to the respondents indicates that all but three of the forty-five administrators were male. The three female principals were all employed at the elementary level. Although their longevity in their present position varied, the majority of respondents in

all categories had not occupied their present position for more than five years. In addition, most of the building administrators had been employed in the educational field for sixteen to twenty-five years. Their attained degree status indicated that all but one administrator had achieved the Master's Degree level, with many having obtained the M.A. plus 60 hours level. The majority of elementary principals supervised grades K-6, while building principals at the junior high school level supervised grades 7-12. At the middle school level, most principals supervised grades 6-8.

Comparisons of school types by grade level also showed few noticeable differences. The majority of responding schools reported that their building enrollments were composed of predominantly middle class children with relatively few socio-economically deprived students. These schools were located in suburban communities within commuting distance of a larger, metropolitan area. Their enrollments ranged from approximately 200 to 1400 students with the average falling within the 401 to 800 range.

No apparent differences were noted between school types when considering construction dates, the implementation of ability grouping practices, the frequency of in-service training session, the number of follow-up studies on student failure or the number of schools

re-evaluating their grading systems within the last three years.

The most meaningful difference was noted in the types of schools employing full-time guidance counselors. It was found that none of the elementary schools surveyed employed a full-time counselor.

Summary

This chapter has presented an analysis of the data used to accept or reject the three major research hypotheses relating to grading, promotion and retention:

I. There is a significant difference in grading practices in middle schools compared to traditional schools.

II. There is a significant difference in promotion practices in middle schools compared to traditional schools.

III. There is a significant difference in retention practices in middle schools compared to traditional schools.

In addition the author has summarized and interpreted the demographic data relating to respondents, their schools and school districts.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Problem

A review of the literature indicates a variety of causative factors leading to a developing dissatisfaction with traditionally organized elementary and junior high schools. Among the most prevalent was the inability of the existing junior high schools to implement their stated objectives and divest themselves of high school domination. Second was their failure to recognize and adapt existing curriculum adequately to the changing needs of young adolescents in the complex society of the second half of the twentieth century. Third was the schools' hesitation to place the major focus of the learning experience on the individual learner.

At the elementary level, research has supported the earlier physical and social maturation of young adolescents. A desire to implement a broader elective and exploratory program at the fifth and sixth grade levels also existed. These factors, combined with the pressures of an expanding school age population, the need for new facilities, a desire for racial integration

and an abundance of public tax dollars has led to the restructuring of grade level organization and the creation of the middle school movement.

Although few comparative studies exist, there is a significant body of related literature and "expert opinion" that does suggest what practices should be instituted in this area to enhance the middle school program. In the area of grading, the research literature suggests that student evaluation should be: personal, positive in nature, nonthreatening and strictly individualized; that letter systems should be deemphasized or enhanced with additional reporting methods that communicate more information to the student and parent; and that a student's performance be judged more in terms of his success in achieving clearly defined criteria. It also encourages more student-teacher and teacher-parent conferences in combination with fewer formal, written reports. When written evaluations are completed, they should provide more in-depth reporting on the child's total growth to date.

In the area of promotion and retention, the literature encourages the expansion of the nongraded philosophy with each child progressing at his own rate regardless of his chronological age. It also encourages the elimination of subject failure and grade level retention by providing each child with a variety of learning experiences commensurate with his own ability and

potential. Finally, that decisions relating to promotion or nonpromotion should always be made in full consultation with teachers, administrators and parents, and that each case be determined on an individual basis. These practices would enhance the quality of education for young adolescents, improve communications between the home and the school, refine the objective measures of evaluation and tend to reduce the frequency of pupil failure and grade level retention.

This study was conducted to determine if the recent growth and development of the middle school movement has been accompanied by changes in administrative practice in the areas of student grading, promotion and retention when compared to traditionally organized elementary and junior high schools.

It had been hypothesized in this investigation that significant differences existed in grading, promotion and retention practices, between emergent middle schools and traditionally organized elementary and junior high schools. More specifically, it had been expected that these differences would be apparent between school types at the sixth, seventh and eighth grade levels. The present survey was an attempt to confirm or refute these assumptions.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

I. There is a significant difference in grading practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

B. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

C. Significant differences exist in grading practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

II. There is a significant difference in promotion practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school

B. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

C. Significant differences exist in promotion practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

III. There is a significant difference in retention practices in middle schools as compared to traditional schools.

A. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade six in the middle school and grade six in the elementary school.

B. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade seven in the middle school and grade seven in traditional junior high schools.

C. Significant differences exist in retention practices between grade eight in the middle school and grade eight in traditional junior high schools.

Summary of the Procedure

This investigation was conducted in suburban Westchester County, New York. It focused on forty-five public schools and their respective administrators. Included in the sample were fifteen elementary schools, sixteen middle schools and fourteen junior high schools.

In an effort to identify current administrative practices, information was solicited from building administrators using the personal interview technique. Interviews were conducted between August 1, 1974 and January 30, 1975.

Prior to the date of the interview, an Interview Response Questionnaire was developed to record the principals' responses to a set of predetermined questions. The information solicited pertained to demographic data, to the respondent and to student grading, promotion and retention practices. Only responses relating to school practices were analyzed by Chi-square tests of significance to accept or reject the research hypotheses. However,

all information obtained in the survey was displayed in tabular form by frequency and percent of response.

Summary of the Findings

Research Hypothesis One, relating to grading practices, was not supported since none of the sub-hypotheses yielded significant results (Table 70).

Sub-hypothesis A, relating to grading practices at the sixth grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis A was rejected, six of its component questions did yield significant differences. The following differences were noted:

1. Significantly more elementary than middle schools operated under district policies relating to report cards and evaluation conferences.
2. Significantly more middle than elementary schools operated under written administrative guidelines in relation to report cards and evaluation conferences.
3. Significantly more elementary than middle schools required formal parent conferences as part of the reporting procedure.
4. Significantly more middle than elementary schools used interim reports as part of the reporting procedure.
5. Significantly more middle than elementary schools used letter grades to report pupil progress to parents.

TABLE 70

SUMMARY TABLE OF THE CHI-SQUARE ANALYSES OF GRADING PRACTICES

Question Number	Table Number	Description of Question	Gr. Results 6th to 6th			Gr. Results 7th to 7th			Gr. Pesults 8th to 8th		
			X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig.
24	1	Existence of district policies for report cards	5.70	1	.05	.41	1	NS	.56	1	NS
25	2	Existence of written guidelines for report cards	7.24	1	.01	.03	1	NS	.07	1	NS
28	5	Written guidelines for teacher use in student evaluation	.10	1	NS	1.21	1	NS	1.07	1	NS
29a	6-8	Number of required reporting periods	7.92	5	NS	4.02	5	NS	2.88	5	NS
29b	6-8	Number of required conference periods	5.34	5	NS	.61	5	NS	.89	5	NS
30	9	Parent conferencing requirement	15.33	1	.001	.67	1	NS	.54	1	NS
32	11	Required use of interim reports	7.16	1	.01						
34	13	Type of student reporting form used	6.50	3	NS	4.65	3	NS	3.88	3	NS
35	14	Local processing of student reports	1.55	1	NS	1.08	1	NS	.64	1	NS
36	15	BOCES processing of student reports	1.55	1	NS	1.08	1	NS	.64	1	NS
38	17	Sixth grade reporting methods									
		LG	69.31	11	.001						
		NG	.14	11	NS						
		P/F	3.44	11	NS						
		NC	53.23	11	.001						

TABLE 70 continued

Question Number	Table Number	Description of Question	Gr. Results 6th to 6th			Gr. Results 7th to 7th			Gr. Results 8th to 8th		
			X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig
38	18	Seventh grade reporting methods									
		LG				31.10	11	.01			
		NG				35.76	11	.001			
		P/F				.96	11	NS			
		NC				------	--	----			
38	19	Eighth grade reporting methods									
		LG							23.26	11	.05
		NG							36.22	11	.001
		P/F							.27	11	NS
		NC							-----	--	---
40	21	Published dates for reporting periods	2.81	1	NS						
41	23	Uniformity of reporting on all grade levels	.92	1	NS	.01	1	NS	.04	1	NS

6. Significantly more elementary than middle schools used the narrative comments to report pupil progress to parents.

Sub-hypothesis B, relating to grading practices at the seventh grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis B was rejected, two of its component questions did yield significant differences. The following differences were noted:

1. Significantly more middle than junior high schools utilized letter grades to report pupil progress to parents.

2. Significantly more junior high schools than middle schools utilized numerical grades to report pupil progress to parents.

Sub-hypothesis C, relating to grading practices at the eighth grade level was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis C was rejected, two of its component questions did yield significant differences. The following differences were noted:

1. Significantly more middle than junior high schools utilized letter grades to report pupil progress to parents.

2. Significantly more junior high schools than middle schools utilized numerical grades to report pupil progress to parents.

Research Hypothesis Two, relating to promotion practices, was not supported since none of the sub-hypotheses yielded significant results (Table 71).

Sub-hypothesis A, relating to promotion practices at the sixth grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis A was rejected, one of its component questions did yield a significant difference. The following difference was noted:

1. Significantly more elementary than middle schools conducted formal graduation exercises at the conclusion of grade six.

Sub-hypothesis B, relating to promotion practices at the seventh grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis B was rejected, one of its component questions did yield a significant difference. The following difference was noted:

1. Significantly more junior high than middle school teachers had flexibility in establishing their own standards for student promotion.

Sub-hypothesis C, relating to promotion practices at the eighth grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

TABLE 71

SUMMARY TABLE OF THE CHI-SQUARE ANALYSES OF PROMOTION PRACTICES

Question Number	Table Number	Description of Question	Gr. Results 6th to 6th			Gr. Results 7th to 7th			Gr. Results 8th to 8th		
			X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig.
42	24	Existence of BOE policy on promotion	.13	1	NS	.40	1	NS	.58	1	NS
43	25	Existence of written administrative guidelines	.05	1	NS	.57	1	NS	.34	1	NS
44	26	Automatic promotion	.08	1	NS	1.04	1	NS	.82	1	NS
45	27	Graduation exercise	4.42	1	.05	.00	1	NS	5.30	1	.05
46	28	Teacher standards for promotion	.53	1	NS	4.63	1	.05	6.18	1	.05
47	29	School district standards for promotion	.27	1	NS	.40	1	NS	.58	1	NS

Although sub-hypothesis C was rejected, two of its component questions did yield significant differences. The following differences were noted:

1. Significantly more middle schools than junior high schools conducted formal graduation exercises at the conclusion of grade eight.

2. Significantly more junior high than middle school teachers had flexibility in establishing their own standards for student promotion.

Research Hypothesis Three, relating to retention practices, was not supported since none of the sub-hypotheses yielded significant results (Table 72).

Sub-hypothesis A, relating to retention practices at the sixth grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis A was rejected, four of its component questions did yield significant differences. The following differences were noted:

1. Significantly more middle than elementary school students were encouraged to attend and "make-up" failed courses in summer school.

2. Significantly more middle than elementary school students failed courses in social studies in grade six.

3. Significantly more middle than elementary school students failed courses in mathematics in grade six.

4. Significantly more middle than elementary school students failed courses in science in grade six.

TABLE 72

SUMMARY TABLE OF THE CHI-SQUARE ANALYSES OF PROMOTION PRACTICES

Question Number	Table Number	Description of Question	Gr. Results 6th to 6th			Gr. Results 7th to 7th			Gr. Results 8th to 8th		
			X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig.	X^2	df	Sig.
48	30	District policy on retention	.01	1	NS	.16	1	NS	.10	1	NS
49	31	Written administrative guidelines for retention	1.87	1	NS	.00	1	NS	.06	1	NS
50	32	Availability of a summer school	1.94	1	NS	.00	1	NS	.21	1	NS
51	33	Schools encouraging summer school	5.59	1	.05	.31	1	NS	.19	1	NS
52	34	District sponsored summer school	.22	1	NS	2.03	1	NS	1.40	1	NS
54	36	1974 student retentions	.68	1	NS	1.86	1	NS	11.51	1	.001
55	37	1974 English grades	2.27	1	NS	.03	1	NS	1.19	1	NS
55	38	1974 social studies grades	23.43	1	.001	2.60	1	NS	1.01	1	NS
55	39	1974 math grades	32.38	1	.001	11.59	1	.001	3.74	1	NS
55	40	1974 science grades	11.19	1	.001	.02	1	NS	7.11	1	.01
58	44	Repeat courses by straddling grade lines	1.20	1	NS	.68	1	NS	.68	1	NS
59	45	Parents permitted to reject retention	.67	1	NS	.19	1	NS	.59	1	NS

Sub-hypothesis B, relating to retention practices at the seventh grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis B was rejected, one of its component questions did yield a significant difference. The following difference was noted:

1. Significantly more junior high school than middle school students failed mathematics courses in grade seven.

Sub-hypothesis C, relating to retention practices at the eighth grade level, was rejected since 80 percent of its component questions did not yield significant results.

Although sub-hypothesis C was rejected, two of its component questions did yield significant differences. The following differences were noted:

1. Significantly more junior high school than middle school students were retained on grade level in June 1974.

2. Significantly more middle school than junior high school students failed courses in science in grade eight.

Conclusions and Discussion

The results of this study have led to the following conclusions relating to administrative practices in the areas of student grading, promotion and retention:

1. The weight of the analytical evidence indicates there are few significant differences in grading, promotion and

retention practices between traditional elementary and junior high schools as compared to middle schools.

2. Middle schools in Westchester County have not implemented new concepts in student grading, promotion and retention practices.

3. Middle schools have a significantly higher rate of failure in mathematics, science and social studies when compared to traditional elementary schools at the sixth grade level.

4. Middle schools have a significantly lower rate of student retention when compared to traditional junior high schools at the eighth grade level.

In summary, the data from this survey do not support the contention that the development of the middle school movement has been accompanied by statistically significant changes in grading, promotion and retention practices consistent with the special needs of the age group of children it serves. It should be noted that the data suggest that policy and practice related to grading, promotion and retention in the middle schools are determined by the faculty and administration of the schools. Yet, there is no statistically significant difference in practices from traditional junior high schools.

Further, one of the forces for the development of the middle school movement was an attempt to individualize instruction and decrease student failure. However, the results of this survey indicate that sixth grade students experience greater incidence of subject failure

in the middle school than in the elementary sixth grade.

These glaring discrepancies between middle school philosophy and reality need to be carefully examined. Perhaps one possibility is that teachers currently teaching in the middle school are primarily trained as high school teachers and have not effected the necessary change of attitudes implicit in middle school programs.

This and other possible explanations need to be explored in further research.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. It was confined to forty-five public schools: fifteen elementary; sixteen middle; and fourteen junior high schools.
2. It was confined to public schools in Westchester County, New York.
3. The Interview Response Questionnaire was completed during a single interview session.
4. The three grade levels included in the survey were component parts of numerous types of school organizations.
5. Only principals provided the major source of information for the study.

Recommendations

Three principal recommendations have emanated from this study. First, the need exists to determine why improvements in student grading, promotion and retention practices, suggested in the literature, have not been

implemented. Second, additional research with a more comprehensive geographical base and larger sample size is needed to verify the results of the survey. Third, a replication of this study at a future date would serve as a measure to determine whether the implementation of new student grading, promotion and retention practices suggested in the literature has taken place.

APPENDIX A

WESTCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

WESTCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

*Abbott House U.F.S.D.
Ardsley U.F.S.D.
Armonk-Byram Hills U.F.S.D.
Bedford Central School Dist.
Blind Brook-Rye U.F.S.D.
Briarcliff Manor U.F.S.D.
Bronxville U.F.S.D.
Chappaqua Central School
Croton-Harmon U.F.S.D.
Dobbs Ferry U.F.S.D.
Eastchester U.F.S.D.
Edgemont U.F.S.D.
Elmsford U.F.S.D.
Greenburgh Central School
*Greenburgh Eleven U.F.S.D.
*Greenburgh-Graham U.F.S.D.
Harrison Central School
Hastings-On-Hudson U.F.S.D.
*Hawthorne Knolls U.F.S.D.
Hendrick Hudson Central School
Irvington U.F.S.D.
Katonah Lewisboro U.F.S.D.
Lakeland Central School
Mamaroneck U.F.S.D.
*Mount Pleasant-Blythedale
*Mount Pleasant-Cottage
#Mount Vernon Public Schools
Mount Pleasant Central School
#New Rochelle Public Schools
North Salem Central School
Ossining Public U.F.S.D.
#Peekskill Public Schools
Pelham U.F.S.D.
Pleasantville U.F.S.D.
Pocantico Hills Central School
Port Chester-Rye U.F.S.D.
Public Schools-Tarrytowns U.F.S.D.
Rye Neck U.F.S.D.
#Rye Public Schools
Scarsdale U.F.S.D.

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*Institutional School District

#City School District

Somers Central School
*St. Christopher U.F.S.D.
*St. Peters U.F.S.D.
Tuckahoe U.F.S.D.
Valhalla U.F.S.D.
#White Plains Public Schools
#Yonkers Public Schools
Yorktown Central School
*Yorktown-Wiltwyck U.F.S.D.

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*Institutional School District

#City School District

Information Center on Education, Directory of New York State Public Schools and Administrators 1974-75 (Albany, New York: University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1974), pp. 114-118.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPATING WESTCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PARTICIPATING WESTCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Ardsley U.F.S.D.
Armonk-Byram Hills U.F.S.D.
Bedford Central School Dist.
Briarcliff Manor U.F.S.D.
Bronxville U.F.S.D.
Chappaqua Central School
Croton-Harmon U.F.S.D.
Dobbs Ferry U.F.S.D.
Eastchester U.F.S.D.
Edgemont U.F.S.D.
Elmsford U.F.S.D.
Greenburgh Central School
Hastings-On-Hudson U.F.S.D.
Hendrick Hudson Central School
Irvington U.F.S.D.
Katonah Lewisboro U.F.S.D.
Lakeland Central School
Mamaroneck U.F.S.D.
Mount Pleasant Central School
North Salem Central School
Ossining Public U.F.S.D.
Pelham U.F.S.D.
Pleasantville U.F.S.D.
Pocantico Hills Central School
Port Chester-Rye U.F.S.D.
Public Schools-Tarrytown U.F.S.D.
Rye Neck U.F.S.D.
Scarsdale U.F.S.D.
Somers Central School
Tuckahoe U.F.S.D.
Valhalla U.F.S.D.
Yorktown Central School

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEW RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Type of school organization:

   (a) _____ elementary
   (b) _____ middle school
   (c) _____ junior high school
   (d) _____ junior-senior high school
   (e) _____ other_____

2. Position title:

   (a) _____ Principal
   (b) _____ Assistant Principal

3. Sex of respondent:

   (a) _____ Male
   (b) _____ Female

4. Total years in present position:

   (a) _____ less than one year
   (b) _____ beginning second year
   (c) _____ beginning third year
   (d) _____ beginning fourth year
   (e) _____ beginning fifth year
   (f) _____ six to ten years
   (g) _____ eleven to fifteen years
   (h) _____ sixteen to twenty years
   (i) _____ twenty-one or more years

5. Total years in education:

   (a) _____ three or less years
   (b) _____ four to five years
   (c) _____ six to ten years
   (d) _____ eleven to fifteen years
   (e) _____ sixteen to twenty years
   (f) _____ twenty-one to twenty-five years
   (g) _____ twenty-six to thirty years
   (h) _____ thirty-one to thirty-five years
   (i) _____ thirty-six or more years

6. Highest degree earned:

(a) _____ B.S.
(b) _____ B.S. plus 30 hours
(c) _____ M.A.
(d) _____ M.A. plus 30 hours
(e) _____ M.A. plus 60 hours
(f) _____ M.A. plus 90 hours
(g) _____

7. Number of administrators within your school

(a) _____ Principal
(b) _____ Assistant principal(s)
(c) _____ Administrative assistant(s)
(d) _____ Administrative intern(s)
(e) _____ Other (list) _____

8. Number of guidance counselors within your school

(a) _____ none
(b) _____ one
(c) _____ two
(d) _____ three
(e) _____ four
(f) _____ five or more

9. Grades under school administrator's authority:

(a) _____ K
(b) _____ 1
(c) _____ 2
(d) _____ 3
(e) _____ 4
(f) _____ 5
(g) _____ 6
(h) _____ 7
(i) _____ 8
(j) _____ 9
(k) _____10
(l) _____11
(m) _____12

10. Total enrollment in your school:

(a) ___ 0-200
(b) ___ 201-300
(c) ___ 301-400
(d) ___ 401-500
(e) ___ 501-600
(f) ___ 601-800
(g) ___ 801-1000
(h) ___ 1001-1200
(i) ___ 1201-1400
(j) ___ 1401-1600
(k) ___ 1601-1800
(l) ___ 1800-2000
(m) ___ 2001-2500
(n) ___ 2501 or mo43

11. Student enrollment by grades:

(a) _____ sixth
(b) _____ seventh
(c) _____ eighth

12. School setting:

(a) _____ urban
(b) _____ suburban
(c) _____ suburban/rural
(d) _____ rural

13. Date original building constructed that you occupy:

(a) _____ 1919 or before
(b) _____ 1920-1929
(c) _____ 1930-1939
(d) _____ 1940-1949
(e) _____ 1950-1959
(f) _____ 1960-1969
(g) _____ 1970-present

14. School district pupil enrollment:

(a) _____ 9-1000
(b) _____ 1001-1500
(c) _____ 1501-2000
(d) _____ 2001-2500
(e) _____ 2501-3000
(f) _____ 3001-3500
(g) _____ 3501-4000
(h) _____ 4001-4500
(i) _____ 4501 and over

15. Indicate the dominant characteristics of the "socio-economic" status of the student body of the unit(s) you administer:

(a) _____ low socio-economic status, high minority group make-up
(b) _____ low socio-economic status, low minority group make-up
(c) _____ middle socio-economic status, high minority group make-up
(d) _____ middle socio-economic status, low minority group make-up
(e) _____ high socio-economic status, high minority group make-up
(f) _____ high socio-economic status, low minority group make-up
(g) _____ other _____

16. Do you group students by ability:

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

17. Basis for ability grouping:

	6th	7th	8th
I.Q.	___	___	___
Reading level	___	___	___
Grade level achievement	___	___	___
Teacher recommendation	___	___	___

18. In what areas does your school provide remedial instruction during the regular school day:

	6th	7th	8th
Reading	___	___	___
Mathematics	___	___	___
Study skills	___	___	___
Foreign language	___	___	___
Other _____	___	___	___

19. During the last three years has the district provided any significant time for workshops or in-service training in the area of student evaluation and reporting?

(a) _____ Yes
(b) _____ No

20. Have you, in the last three years, conducted any formal follow-up studies on subject failure?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

21. Have you, in the last three years, conducted any formal follow-up studies on student retention?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

22. During the last three years has your school re-evaluated your grading system?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

23. During the last three years has your school re-evaluated its retention policy?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

24. In relation to student report card or evaluation conferences, do you have a written district policy?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

25. In relation to student report card or evaluation conferences, do you have a written building practice or guideline?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

26. What general practice is used in your school to report student progress to the students and parents:

(a) _____ Report cards only
(b) _____ Parent conferences only
(c) _____ Parent, student, teacher conferences
(d) _____ Written reports
(e) _____ Combination of report cards and parent conferences
(f) _____ Teacher, student conference
(g) _____ Other _____

27. In the determination of your present reporting procedure, which of the following individuals were involved in the formation of the policy or procedure:

	6th	7th	8th
(a) B.O.E. member	___	___	___
(b) Administrators	___	___	___
(c) Counselors	___	___	___
(d) Teachers	___	___	___
(e) Students	___	___	___
(f) Parents	___	___	___
(g) Others (list)	___	___	___

28. Do all teachers and counselors have written copies of the guidelines or policies for completing student evaluation reports?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

29. Frequency of required report card distribution or parent conferences:

Times Per Year	6th Rpt. Card	6th Conf.	7th Rpt. Card	7th Conf.	8th Rpt. Card	8th Conf.
none	___	___	___	___	___	___
one	___	___	___	___	___	___
two	___	___	___	___	___	___
three	___	___	___	___	___	___
four	___	___	___	___	___	___
five	___	___	___	___	___	___
six	___	___	___	___	___	___

30. Are parent conferences required as part of the student reporting procedure?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

31. Method of distributing student reports:

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Mailed home	___	___	___
(b) Sent home with students	___	___	___
(c) Sent home with students, signed by parent, and returned	___	___	___
(d) Delivered during conference period	___	___	___

32. Are interim progress reports used?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

33. If interim progress reports are used, do they identify:

Select one (1)	6th	7th	8th
(a) Commendation only	___	___	___
(b) Deficiency only	___	___	___
(c) Both commendation and deficiency	___	___	___

34. Is the student reporting form:

Select one (1)	6th	7th	8th
(a) Teacher write-in	___	___	___
(b) Mark sense/data processed	___	___	___
(c) Multiform ditto	___	___	___

35. Is the student reporting form locally processed?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

36. Is the student reporting form B.O.C.E.S. processed?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

37. Does the student reporting form provide for:

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Achievement grades	___	___	___
(b) Behavior comments	___	___	___
(c) Effort remarks	___	___	___
(d) Requests for parent conference	___	___	___
(e) Descriptive comments	___	___	___
(f) Attendance information	___	___	___
(g) No report form used	___	___	___

38. By grade level and subject area, how is the student progress reported?

	Grade 6					
	Let. Grd.	Num. Grd.	Pass/ Fail	Narr. Com.	Par. Conf.	Other
Lang. Arts	___	___	___	___	___	___
Soc. St.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Math	___	___	___	___	___	___
Science	___	___	___	___	___	___
For. Lang.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Typ./Bus.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Phys. Ed.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Health	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ind. Art./Home.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Music	___	___	___	___	___	___
Art	___	___	___	___	___	___
Other	___	___	___	___	___	___

Grade 7

	Let. Grd.	Num. Grd.	Pass/ Fail	Narr. Com.	Par. Conf.	Other
Lang. Arts	___	___	___	___	___	___
Soc. St.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Math	___	___	___	___	___	___
Science	___	___	___	___	___	___
For. Lang.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Typ./Bus.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Phys. Ed.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Health	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ind. Art/Home.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Music	___	___	___	___	___	___
Art	___	___	___	___	___	___
Other	___	___	___	___	___	___

Grade 8

	Let. Grd.	Num. Grd.	Pass/ Fail	Narr. Com.	Par. Conf.	Other
Lang. Arts	___	___	___	___	___	___
Soc. St.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Math	___	___	___	___	___	___
Science	___	___	___	___	___	___
For. Lang.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Typ./Bus.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Phys. Ed.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Health	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ind. Art/Home.	___	___	___	___	___	___
Music	___	___	___	___	___	___
Art	___	___	___	___	___	___
Other	___	___	___	___	___	___

39. Does the student's report form or conference reflect his progress during a:

Select one (1)	6th	7th	8th
(a) Specific period of time	___	___	___
(b) Cumulative evaluation to date	___	___	___

40. Are the reporting dates for student report card periods published?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

If yes, are they published in:

(a) _____ student handbook
(b) _____ faculty handbook
(c) _____ parent handbook
(d) _____ P.T.A. newsletter
(e) _____ local newspaper
(f) _____ displayed on bulletin board
(g) _____ other _____

41. Within your school, are the reporting practices uniform on all grade levels?

(a) _____ yes
(b) _____ no

If no, please list grades using common practices

_____

42. Does the Board of Education have a written policy relating to promotion?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

43. Are there written administrative guidelines for student promotion to the next grade level?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

44. In your school, is advancement to the next grade level automatic?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

45. Is there a formal promotion exercise or program at the conclusion of:

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

46. Does promotion to the next higher grade reflect achievement of minimum standards established by the teacher?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

47. Does promotion to the next higher grade reflect achievement of minimum standards established by the school system?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

48. Does the Board of Education have a written policy relating to student retention?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

49. Are there written administrative guidelines for student retention on grade level?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

50. Is there a summer school program within commuting distance, available to students who have failed one or more subjects?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

51. Does your school encourage attendance at summer school to make-up subjects that have been failed?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

52. Did your district sponsor an accredited summer school program in 1974?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

53. Are alternatives available in your school district for students who have failed one or more courses?

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Summer school	___yes ___no	___yes ___no	___yes ___no
Special project	___yes ___no	___yes ___no	___yes ___no
Special exam at end of summer	___yes ___no	___yes ___no	___yes ___no
Student adv. to next grade with remedial help	___yes ___no	___yes ___no	___yes ___no

54. How many students were retained on grade level in:

	6th	7th	8th
June 1974	___	___	___
June 1973	___	___	___

55. How many students failed courses in the following subject areas in June 1974?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) English	___	___	___
(b) Social Studies	___	___	___
(c) Mathematics	___	___	___
(d) Science	___	___	___

56. When considering retention on grade level, how many academic subjects must a child fail to be considered for retention?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) One	___	___	___
(b) Two	___	___	___
(c) Three	___	___	___
(d) Four	___	___	___

57. Presently, what are the conditions under which a student may be retained on grade level in your school?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) No retention on grade level	___	___	___
(b) Failure of one or more courses	___	___	___
(c) Immaturity	___	___	___
(d) Frequent illegal absence	___	___	___
(e) Prolonged illness	___	___	___
(f) Psychological problems	___	___	___

58. In your school, do you permit students to repeat courses by straddling or crossing grade lines?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

59. Can parents reject retention on grade level?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Yes	___	___	___
(b) No	___	___	___

60. Who must approve retention on grade level?

	6th	7th	8th
(a) Student	___	___	___
(b) Teacher	___	___	___
(c) Counselor	___	___	___
(d) Psychologist	___	___	___
(e) Principal	___	___	___
(f) Superintendent	___	___	___

APPENDIX D

PANEL OF PRACTICING EDUCATORS

Mr. Joseph Casagrande:	Principal Onaway Elementary School Shaker Heights, Ohio
Dr. Terence Davidson:	Assistant Research Scientist Institute of Social Research The University of Michigan Ann Arbor, Michigan
Mr. Joseph Karczmit:	Guidance Counselor Pelham Junior High School Pelham, New York
Dr. Daniel Kneuppel:	Principal Tenefly High School Tenefly, New Jersey
Mr. Thaddeus Kuczinski:	Principal E. M. Baker Elementary School Great Neck, New York
Dr. Michael Mattioli:	Associate Professor of Education Graduate Division, School of Education, Brooklyn College City University of New York
Mr. Thomas Rohanick:	Principal Eastchester Junior High School Eastchester, New York
Dr. Melvin Schwager:	Psychologist Pelham Public Schools Pelham, New York and Adjunct Associate Professor of Education Pace University New York, New York
Dr. Kenneth Vogt:	Principal Copper Beach Middle School Lakeland, New York

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