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# educational considerations

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...By the year 2000 there will be 4,000 public school foundations throughout the U.S.

## Private Funding of Public Schools: Local Education Foundations in Michigan

Michael F. Addonizio

Since the beginning of this decade, public schools in the U.S. have been faced with a dramatic slowing of per pupil revenue growth (Hanushek and Rivkin, 1997) while both enrollments and expectations for academic achievement continue to rise. To meet their students' and communities' expectations, local school districts in recent years have turned increasingly to a new form of nonprofit organization—the educational foundation. In Michigan, 144 such nonprofit organizations have been established by local districts to raise revenue for curriculum improvements, enrichment activities, capital projects, and instructional materials and to strengthen links between schools and communities. This activity in Michigan is representative of activity nationally. The National Association of Educational Foundations (NAEF) estimates that by the year 2000 there will be 4,000 public school foundations throughout the U.S. (NAEF, 1996).

While the rise of these organizations is not unexpected in light of the slowing of revenue growth for public schools, this development has not been viewed with universal approval. The equalization of educational opportunities for all children, regardless of the wealth of their respective local communities, has long been an important goal of educational policymakers. Virtually every state allocates school aid to local districts by means of "equalizing" formulas designed to offset disparities in local fiscal resources. Local education foundations have aroused concern that they may exacerbate fiscal disparities. For example, political economist and former U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich has characterized these organizations as "another means by which the privileged are seceding from the rest" (*New York Times*, May 17, 1992).

This study examines the organization and operations of local education foundations in Michigan and the fiscal and programmatic impact of nonprofit education foundations on Michigan public schools. The study also compares the socioeconomic characteristics of foundation and nonfoundation districts and tests the hypothesis that residents of local districts with education foundations differ from residents of nonfoundation districts in terms of preferences for public school spending.

Section I summarizes national trends in K-12 public school spending. Section II summarizes recent trends in Michigan, including the state's fundamental reforms of 1994. The rise of local education foundations in Michigan is discussed in Section III. This section summarizes key findings from our survey of local education foundations and local district superintendents and compares foundation and nonfoundation districts on selected socioeconomic and

educational variables. Section IV presents a model of local education demand to test for behavioral differences between residents of foundation and nonfoundation districts, along with data for estimation of the model. Empirical results are presented in Section V. A summary and conclusions are presented in Section VI.

### I. National Trends in Public School Spending

For the past century, public elementary and secondary education in the U.S. has enjoyed remarkably steady revenue growth. Hanushek and Rivkin (1997) report that real expenditure per pupil increased at 3.5 percent per year over the entire period of 1890-1990, with total annual expenditures rising from \$2 billion to more than \$187 billion, in constant 1990 dollars, over this period. This nearly 100-fold increase is more than triple the growth of the U.S. Gross National Product (GNP) over this period, with K-12 public school expenditures increasing from less than 1 percent of GNP in 1890 to 3.4 percent in 1990.

Since 1990, however, the growth rate in per pupil expenditures appears to have fallen precipitously. While real spending per pupil grew at a 3.75 percent rate in the 1980s, the growth rate from 1990 to 1993 was a mere 0.6 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995). This lower growth rate is due, in part, to the return of growth in school enrollments, which have been rising nationally since 1981. Further, resulting fiscal pressures on public schools are exacerbated by the steady growth of the special education population, for whom financial support is mandated by federal law. On average, per pupil expenditures for special education equals approximately 2.3 times per pupil expenditures for regular education (Chaikand, Danielson and Brauen, 1993). Moreover, the special education population continues to grow more rapidly than the general student population, rising from 11.6 percent of total enrollment in 1990 to 11.9 percent in 1992.<sup>1</sup>

### II. School Revenue Trends in Michigan

#### A. Spending Since 1981

Trends in state and local revenue per pupil from 1981-82 through 1994-95, in constant 1992-93 dollars, are presented in Table 1.

As Table 1 reveals, total per pupil revenue fell in 1982-83 and 1983-84, as Michigan and the U.S. weathered a recession that began in 1979 and persisted until 1983. Real revenue then rose slowly through 1985-86, and increased a robust 9.6 percent in 1986-87. Following a modest 1.2 percent increase in 1987-88, revenue rose by fully 14.5 percent in 1988-89. The rate of real growth then fell steadily from 1989-90 through 1992-93, turning negative in that year. This decline in real per pupil revenue growth, combined with flat or falling enrollments in many Michigan school districts and increasing academic expectations as reflected by more challenging state assessments of pupil achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science and an achievement-based school accreditation program created by the legislature in 1994 led some districts to search for nontraditional sources of support.

#### B. Michigan School Finance Reform

In 1994, the Michigan legislature enacted the state's most sweeping fiscal reforms in more than 20 years, reducing property taxes, increasing the state share of school funding and substantially reducing local discretion regarding school taxation and expenditure decisions. On the allocation side, the new legislation replaced a 20-year-old district power equalizing (DPE) school aid formula and numerous categorical grants with a foundation formula which closely regulated local per pupil revenue. Each district's 1993-94 combined

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state and local ("base") revenue for school operations became the basis for determining its 1994-95 foundation allowance. The major components of a district's base revenues were local ad valorem property taxes, DPE state aid and most state categorical aid.

**Table 1**  
**Real State and Local Revenue per Pupil, 1981-82 through 1992-93 (Constant 1992-93 Dollars)\***

Year	Local Revenue	State Revenue	Total Revenue
1981-82	\$2,933	\$1,577	\$4,510
1982-83	2,862	1,452	4,314
1983-84	2,835	1,427	4,262
1984-85	2,884	1,563	4,446
1985-86	2,832	1,654	4,486
1986-87	3,103	1,814	4,917
1987-88	3,114	1,859	4,973
1988-89	3,732	1,963	5,695
1989-90	3,919	2,039	5,958
1990-91	4,065	2,096	6,160
1991-92	4,170	2,154	6,324
1992-93	4,163	2,150	6,313
% change	+ 41.9	+ 36.6	+ 40.0

\*Revenue was deflated by the implicit deflator for state and local government spending.

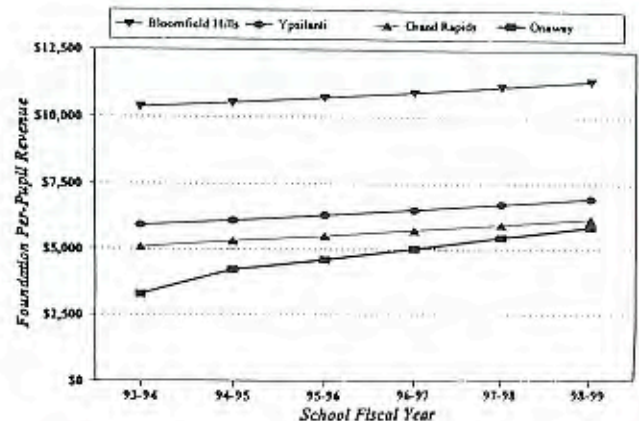
Source: National Education Association, as reported in *American Education Finance Association* (1995).

The legislature provided that every district have a foundation allowance of no less than \$4,200 per pupil and that every district receive an increase in per pupil revenues over 1993-94 levels, with such increases inversely related to 1993-94 baseline levels. As such, the new state formula substantially constrained per pupil revenue growth for high-spending districts.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 shows the range of per pupil revenue increases allowed districts in 1994-95 as a function of prior year revenue.

Further, the state-imposed constraint on per pupil revenue growth was designed to become binding on more local districts in the 1995-96 fiscal year and beyond. This constraint is imposed on local districts in the form of a state "basic foundation allowance," set at \$5,000 for 1994-95 and indexed annually to nominal school-aid-fund revenue per pupil. This basic allowance rose to \$5,153 in 1995-96 and \$5,308 in 1996-97. Local districts at or above the basic foundation allowance simply receive an absolute dollar increase in their district foundation allowances equal to the dollar increase in the basic foundation allowance.<sup>4</sup> Districts below the basic foundation

allowance in 1995-96 and subsequent years receive increases up to double that amount. This constraint, and its "range preserving" effect over time, are depicted in Figure 2. As the finance system is currently designed, the number of local districts subject to this constraint will rise each year, as relatively low-spending districts are boosted to the basic foundation allowance and then "locked in" at that level.

**Figure 1**  
**FY95 Per-Pupil Foundation Increase**



Now in its third year, Michigan's foundation formula has constrained per pupil revenue growth for local districts with foundation revenues in excess of the state basic level. This slowdown in growth arises from new restrictions on both local school district tax rates and state revenue dedicated to K-12 programs. This slowdown has been particularly acute for districts with exceptionally high tax bases and per pupil revenue.

**Figure 2**  
**Foundation Simulation Effect Over Time**

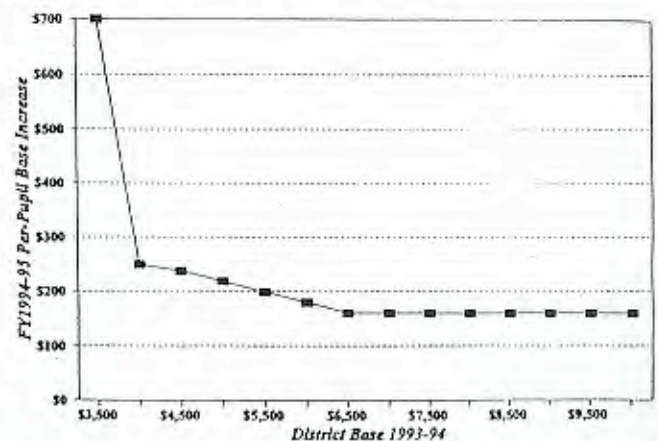


Table 2 provides some context for viewing the rise of local education foundations in Michigan, the oldest of which date from 1981, when the nation's economy was in recession and Michigan's K-12 operating expenditures were falling in real terms. Indeed, beginning in 1979-80, real current operating expenditures fell four consecutive years and did not regain the 1979-80 level until 1991-92. Such a slowdown in real public revenue growth provides at least some rationale for the rise of local education foundations in Michigan.

**Table 2**  
**Total Current Operating Expenditures (TCOP) for Local School Districts in Michigan, 1978-79 through 1995-96**

Year	Total Current Operating Expenditures	
	Current \$	Constant (1978) \$
1978-79	\$3,500,835,368	\$3,500,835,368
1979-80	3,826,569,438	3,552,989,265
1980-81	4,121,362,304	3,438,193,296
1981-82	4,311,715,359	3,169,213,788
1982-83	4,389,380,997	2,922,357,521
1983-84	4,614,552,543	2,895,678,052
1984-85	4,899,844,003	2,979,353,036
1985-86	5,279,439,298	3,081,264,911
1986-87	5,578,143,123	3,138,902,213
1987-88	5,942,575,941	3,281,559,413
1988-89	6,288,766,404	3,348,829,226
1989-90	6,724,945,765	3,440,045,918
1990-91	7,203,792,607	3,516,275,007
1991-92	7,701,674,138	3,566,745,769
1992-93	8,036,838,341	3,571,928,152
1993-94	8,748,283,541	3,774,879,629
1994-95	9,606,041,491	4,024,147,078
1995-96	10,253,359,164	4,186,582,485

Source: Michigan Department of Education

**III. Local Education Foundations**

Generally, a foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt entity with a board of trustees engaged in raising, managing and disseminating resources for one or more designated purposes, such as charitable, religious, literary, scientific or educational. Foundation trustees are generally selected from the local community and focus on raising resources, while directors implement policies and programs.

Creating a local education foundation in Michigan is relatively simple. Organizers file a four-page "Articles of Incorporation" form, along with a \$20 fee, with the Corporation Division, Corporation and Securities Bureau, Michigan Department of Commerce, as required by Michigan's Nonprofit Corporation Act (P.A. 162 of 1982). Foundations generally begin operations within 4 to 6 months of filing "Articles," and often exist alongside booster and parent groups that

**Table 3**  
**Profile of Local Education Foundations Responding to Survey, 1996**

Year Established	Years of Operation	Number of Foundations			
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Total
1995	1	1	1	1	3
1994	2	0	1	2	3
1993	3	1	2	1	4
1992	4	0	2	3	5
1991	5	1	3	4	8
1990	6	0	0	1	1
1989	7	0	1	0	1
1988	8	0	2	2	4
1987	9	0	2	3	5
1986	10	1	4	4	9
1985	11	1	2	2	6*
1984	12	2	1	0	3
1983	13	0	0	0	0
1982	14	0	0	1	1
1981	15	0	0	1	1
Total	---	7	21	25	54
Avg. Foundation revenue, 1994-95		\$64,891	\$19,734	\$11,258	\$19,539

\*One foundation did not respond to "urban/suburban/rural" question.

also raise funds for the local public schools. Although their fundraising activities may overlap (e.g., raffles, sales, etc.), foundations often focus on developing partnerships with corporations, individual major donors and other foundations, and seek planned gifts through wills and memorials. Grants are often made to teachers for innovative instructional practices, visual arts, and technology, areas seldom supported by booster groups. Further, education foundations usually limit grants to items not normally part of the local school district budget.

### A. Surveying Foundations in Michigan.

Local educational foundations in Michigan were identified through a computer search of files of both the Corporation Division, Corporation and Securities Bureau, Michigan Department of Commerce and the Charitable Trust Division of the Michigan Attorney General's office. A total of 144 local education foundations was identified. Questionnaires were then mailed to the education foundations and, as a follow-up, to their associated local school district superintendents. A profile of the respondents is presented in Table 3.

As Table 3 indicates, local education foundations are generally found in rural and suburban school districts. Organizational activity accelerated during the period of 1985 through 1988, a period marked by variable growth in real per pupil revenue growth. (Indeed, the greatest increase in local foundations occurred in 1986, while real state and local per pupil revenue rose fully 9.6 percent during the 1986-87 school fiscal year). Formation of new foundations has accelerated since 1991, when eight responding foundations were established. Annual foundation revenues, however, has been quite modest, averaging a mere \$19,539 in 1994-95.

### B. Comparison of Foundation and Non-Foundation Districts.

While total foundation revenues to date have been modest thus far, the presence of a local education foundation provides a potential source of supplemental revenue for and suggests a heightened community interest in local public schools. To begin testing for educationally relevant differences between foundation and non-foundation districts, one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the mean values of selected district revenue measures, household economic characteristics, district size, and measures of student achievement of each district group. The "foundation" districts consist of all 144 districts identified through the state databases described above, not merely the survey respondents. These mean values and associated significance levels are presented in Table 4.

As Table 4 indicates, local districts with educational foundations, on average, enjoy higher unrestricted public revenue per pupil, greater enrollments, higher household income and higher student achievement than their nonfoundation counterparts. The differences in the group means are statistically significant for every variable except taxbase per pupil and tenth grade reading achievement. Some differences are striking. For example, household incomes are more than 20 percent higher, on the average, in foundation districts as compared with their nonfoundation counterparts. Foundation districts also have a lower percentage of children eligible for free and reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Act and lower Federal Chapter 1 (now renamed Title I) expenditures than their nonfoundation counterparts. Further, the average percent of students earning satisfactory scores on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) are significantly higher among foundation districts on five of the six measures.

These results, while not unexpected, raise concerns regarding the equity in the distribution of educational resources across local school districts in Michigan. Michigan, along with virtually every other state, has adopted state school aid formulas designed to distribute more state aid to local districts with relatively low fiscal capacity, generally measured in terms of taxable property wealth per pupil. Further, state categorical grant programs such as special education, compensatory education and bilingual education are designed to target additional resources to local districts with relatively large concentrations of low-income children and other children who are educationally at-risk. The

**Table 4**  
**Comparison of Foundation and Nonfoundation District Means of Selected Measures of Revenue, Household Income, Enrollment and Pupil Achievement: One-Way ANOVA**

Variable	Foundation	Non-foundation	P-value
Household Income	\$29,336	\$24,359	< .0001
% Subsidized Lunch	23%	30%	< .0001
Taxbase per Pupil	\$116,937	\$114,483	.7748
Math Achievement Gr. 4	64.60%	60.66%	.0023
Math Achievement Gr. 7	53.11%	48.65%	.0024
Math Achievement Gr. 10	38.72%	35.64%	.0116
Reading Achievement Gr. 4	45.18%	40.95%	.0005
Reading Achievement Gr. 7	37.40%	33.98%	.0030
Reading Achievement Gr. 10	45.11%	43.44%	.1567
Enrollment	4,267	2,605	.0421
Ch. 1 Rev. per Pupil	\$109.59	\$163.17	.0130
Unrestricted Public Revenue per Pupil	\$5,336	\$5,148	.0537

Source: Compiled by author with published data from the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Department of Treasury.

rise of local educational foundations in relatively high-expenditure and high-income districts may offset to some degree the equity effects of the state's school aid system. Further, students enrolled in foundation districts were overwhelmingly white, with an unweighted average of 91 percent among these districts, thus raising additional equity concerns. These concerns are mitigated, however, by the relatively small financial contributions of the local educational foundations, averaging \$19,539 in 1994-95 among responding school districts. These effects may be further mitigated by the relatively large foundation contributions made to urban districts.

### IV. A Model of Local School District Spending

The demand for education spending is assumed to be derived from a median-voter, majority-rule model where it can be shown that, under certain conditions, a community's effective demand for education will be that of its median income voter (see Bergstrom and Goodman, 1973).<sup>5</sup>

If the price of private goods  $x$  is denoted by  $p$ , the individual's budget constraint with private income  $Y$  is:

$$Y = px + T(1-F) \quad (1)$$

where

$T$  = local property taxes

$F$  = the proportion of local property taxes offset by the deductibility of property taxes from state and federal income taxes



Property taxes are supplemented by lump-sum and matching aid to cover the total cost of local public education. Further, the median voter pays only a fraction of the total local cost, based upon her share of total taxable property in the school district. Thus, the tax obligation of the median voter is given by:

$$T = (c-k)(1-s)(V_m/V_t) \quad (2)$$

where

c = total cost of public education in district

k = lump-sum aid paid to district

s = state share of additional dollar of educational expenditures

$V_m$  = median household property valuation

$V_t$  = total property valuation of district

Substituting (2) into (1) and rearranging, the median voter's budget constraint becomes:

$$Y + K\left(\frac{V_m}{V_t}\right)[(1-S)-(1+S)] = px + c[(1-S)-f(1+S)]\left(\frac{V_m}{V_t}\right) \quad (3)$$

Thus, the total income of the median voter consists of private income and her share of lump-sum aid received by the district, while the voter's price of education is the marginal cost of increasing education expenditures per pupil by one dollar.

The median voter is assumed to maximize a utility function  $U = U(x, c)$  subject to the budget constraint given by (3). A demand function for local public education can then be derived in terms of price and income. A simple model of education demand is:

$$E = b_0 + b_1 \text{ PRICE} + b_2 \text{ INCOME} + b_3 \text{ FREE} + b_4 \text{ ENROLL} \quad (4)$$

where

E = educational expenditures per pupil, including local, state and federal funds

PRICE = marginal tax price faced by the district's median voter

INCOME = median family income in the district

FREE = percent of children in district eligible for free or reduced price lunch under the national school lunch act (a proxy for educational need)

ENROLL = total district membership (to test for economies of scale in the supply of education)

**Marginal Tax Price.** A district's marginal tax price of school spending is the cost to the district's median voter of increasing per pupil spending by one dollar. In a guaranteed tax base (GTB) aid system, used in Michigan in 1993-94 to establish "foundation" spending levels for 1994-95 and subsequent years, the matching rate (m) for a local district is the state share of an additional dollar in locally financed educational expenditures. This matching rate, in combination with district enrollment and the median voter's share of the local district property tax base, determines the marginal tax price:

$$\text{PRICE} = n(V_m/V_t)\{1/(1+m)\} \quad (5)$$

where

n = number of students in the district

$V_m$  = average residential state equalized valuation (SEV) in the district (proxy for median household SEV)

$V_t$  = total SEV of the district

**Table 5**  
**Variables Associated with Public School Expenditures:**  
**Descriptive Statistics — 1994-95**

Variable	Foundation Districts		Non-foundation Districts	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Expenditure (E)	5.336	.934	5.148	1.018
PRICE	.8504	.1800	.7774	.2112
INCOME	29,335.51	8,044.58	24,358.86	7,783.37
FREE	23.02	13.97	30.10	16.15
ENROLL	4,267.03	4,375.61	2,605.01	9,418.08
N	144		390	

**Table 6**  
**WLS Regression Coefficients for Michigan School District**  
**Expenditure Equation, 1994-95**  
**(standard errors in parentheses)**

Independent Variable	WLS Coefficient	P-value
Constant	3147.36 (373.80)	.0000
DUMMY	2584.09 (708.78)	.0003
PRICE	-.33.54 (47.59)	.4813
D*PRICE	-.3232.64 (356.64)	.0000
INCOME	.06899 (.00970)	.0000
D*INCOME	-.01196 (.01808)	.5086
ENROLL	.0046 (.0019)	.0149
D*ENROLL	.0179 (.0133)	.1768
FREE	.914.52 (476.38)	.0554
D*FREE	-.2566.69 (894.63)	.0043

Adj.  $R^2 = .313$

- $m = \{(V^* - V_i)/V_i\}$  if the district receives GTB formula aid, 0 otherwise
- $V^* =$  nominal GTB formula SEV per pupil guarantee
- $V_i =$  district's SEV per pupil

**Data.** The data on local school district enrollments, expenditures, SEV, and free and reduced-price eligibles were obtained from the Michigan Department of Education. The data on district average household income were obtained from the Michigan Department of Treasury.

## V. Empirical Results

The model of school expenditures (equation 4) is estimated with tax price term PRICE calculated according to equation 5. Descriptive statistics for each variable are presented in Table 5. To test for behavioral differences between residents of in-formula and out-of-formula districts, dummy variables are used for the intercept and for each independent variable. The equations are estimated by weighted least squares, where the weighting factor is the square root of the number of families in the school district.<sup>6</sup>

As shown in Table 5, residents of foundation districts spend more per pupil from public (tax) sources than nonfoundation district residents, although they face a higher tax price for school spending. Average household income is fully 20.4 percent higher in foundation districts, while the percent of pupils eligible for free and reduced price lunch is 30.8 percent higher in nonfoundation districts. Mean enrollment is higher among foundation districts, while enrollments vary much more among nonfoundation districts.

The regression results in Table 5 reveal structural differences in the demand for public school spending across the two voter groups. The coefficient on DUMMY has the expected positive sign and is statistically significant, indicating a preference for higher public school spending on the part of foundation district residents that is not explained by price, income, enrollment or high educational need (i.e., FREE). The coefficient on PRICE has the expected negative sign but is statistically insignificant. The coefficient on D\*PRICE, however, is negative and significant, indicating more price-elastic demand for school spending on the part of foundation district residents. Estimated point price elasticities of demand, calculated at mean per pupil expenditure levels and marginal tax prices, are  $-.5203$  for foundation district voters and  $-.0051$  for voters in nonfoundation districts.<sup>7</sup>

The coefficient on income has the expected positive sign and is significant at the .01 level. The coefficient on D\*INCOME is insignificant, however, indicating that the relationship between income and desired school spending does not vary across district groups. The positive and significant coefficient on ENROLL (P-value of .0149) and the insignificant coefficient on D\*ENROLL indicate the presence of comparable scale effects among both district groups. Finally, the co-efficient on FREE is significant (P = .0554) and of the expected positive sign, indicating higher school spending in districts with greater proportions of children with exceptional educational need. In contrast, the negative and significant sign on D\*FREE indicates a negative relationship between school spending and concentrations of low-income children among foundation districts. Among this district group, higher spending among high-income and high tax base (i.e., low PRICE) districts may swamp the effects of compensatory spending in less affluent foundation districts.

## VI. Summary and Conclusions

Since the beginning of this decade, public schools in the U.S. have been faced with a dramatic slowing of per pupil revenue growth, while both school enrollments and expectations for academic achievement continue to rise. To meet community expectations, local school districts in recent years have turned increasingly to a new form of nonprofit organization – the educational foundation. In Michigan, 144 such nonprofit organizations have been established by local districts to raise revenue for curriculum improvements, capital projects, instructional materials and enrichment activities and to strengthen links between schools and communities. This activity in Michigan is representative of activity nationwide. The National Association of Educational Foundations estimates that by the year 2000 there will be 4,000 public school foundations throughout the U.S.

While the rise of these organizations is not unexpected in light of the slowing of revenue growth and rising expectations for public schools, this development has not been viewed with universal approval. The equalization of educational opportunities for all children, regardless of the wealth of their respective local communities, has long been an important goal of education policymakers. Virtually every state allocates school aid to local districts by means of "equalizing" formulas designed to offset disparities in local fiscal resources. Local education foundations have aroused concern that they may exacerbate the very fiscal disparities public policy seeks to reduce.

The Michigan research has revealed that total foundation revenues to date have been modest, averaging a mere \$19,539 per participating district in 1994-95. However, striking differences were found between foundation and nonfoundation districts, with average household income among the former group exceeding the latter by more than 20 percent. The foundation districts, as a group, also have a lower percentage of children eligible for free and reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Act, greater per pupil revenues from traditional tax sources, and uniformly higher measures of student achievement in reading and mathematics, as measured by the Michigan Education Assessment Program. Further, students enrolled in foundation districts were overwhelmingly white, with an unweighted average of 91 percent across these districts. Again, however, these equity concerns are mitigated somewhat by the relatively small financial contributions of the local educational foundations.

In general, the demand for goods and services, including education, depends on price, income and tastes. A one-way analysis of variance found price and income to differ significantly between the foundation and non-foundation district groups. Further, the estimated school expenditure model, however, revealed some difference in taste preferences for school spending between residents of the two district groups. The substantial per pupil spending differences across the groups were partially explained by differences in price, income, enrollment levels and concentrations of low-income children.

In light of these findings, it appears that the rise of local education foundations in Michigan has not measurably negated that state's efforts to reduce interdistrict disparities through the reform of public funding mechanisms. This result could change, however, as the state funding reform continues to constrain per pupil revenue growth in historically high-spending and high-income districts and such districts seek additional revenue from nontraditional sources.

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**Endnotes**

1. Nationally, states provided 46 percent of K-12 public school revenues in 1993-94, with most aid distributed so as to offset differences among local districts in the ability to finance education. The sole exception is New Hampshire, where state aid comprises a mere 7 percent of K-12 public school revenue. Local property taxes, on the other hand, provide 90 percent of school revenue, while federal sources provide 3 percent. (American Education Finance Association, 1995).
2. further, because of the mandated status of special education, the expansion of special education in either scope or intensity would take a larger share of any new revenue in times of slow budget growth.
3. The foundation formula guaranteed each local district a per-pupil allowance that ranged from the \$4,200 minimum to a maximum of \$6,660, provided the district levies a local property tax rate of 18 mills on nonhomestead property. Specifically, local districts with 1993-94 base per pupil revenue below \$4,200 are raised either to \$4,200 or to \$250 over their 1993-94 level, whichever is greater. Districts between \$4,200 and \$6,500 in 1993-94 received a per pupil increase varying linearly from \$250 at \$4,200 to \$160 at \$6,500. Finally, local districts with 1993-94 base per pupil in excess of \$6,500 were allowed an increase of up to \$160 per pupil if local voters approved "hoid harmless" millage sufficient to raise the additional revenue. This local millage is levied against homesteads, up to a maximum of either 18 mills or the district's prior year millage vote, whichever is less.
4. The annual change in the basic foundation allowance is determined by a "final index," which may be written as follows:

$$I = (R_t/R_{t-1})(M_{t-1}/M_t)$$

where

I = final index

$R_t$  = total school aid fund revenue in current year

$R_{t-1}$  = total school aid fund revenue in prior year

$M_{t-1}$  = total pupil membership in prior year

$M_t$  = total pupil membership in current year

The annual basic foundation allowance is determined by:

$$BF_t = BF_{t-1} * I$$

where

$BF_t$  = current year basic foundation

$BF_{t-1}$  = prior year basic foundation

The local foundation allowance for an individual district is determined as follows:

$$LF_t = LF_{t-1} + 2b - [(b - \$50) * (LF_{t-1} - \$4,200) / (c - \$4,200)]$$

where

$LF_t$  = district's current year foundation allowance

$LF_{t-1}$  = district's prior year foundation allowance

$b = I * BF_{t-1}$  = current year increase in basic foundation allowance

$c = BF_t$  = current year basic foundation allowance

5. From 1973 through 1993-94, Michigan required direct voter approval of local school taxes. Since 1994-95 district spending levels under the foundation system were linear transformations of prior year spending (see Addonizio, Kearney and Prince, 1994) and local school districts serve a single purpose, 1994-95 district expenditures are likely to conform to the predictions of a median-voter model.

6. Because sampling theory reveals that the error term will be a function of the size of the population tested (heteroscedasticity), ordinary least squares would be an inappropriate estimation technique (see, for example, Kmenta, 1971, 322-26).

7. The estimated price elasticity of demand for education spending for the combined sample obtained from a natural log form of spending model is approximately equal to the point elasticities reported above. This estimated expenditure equation is:

$$\ln E = \ln 5.72 - .1294 \ln PRICE + .2699 \ln INCOME$$

(.21) (.0130) (.0207)

$$\text{Adj. } R^2 = .278$$

The small standard errors indicate that the coefficients are statistically significant at the .01 level. This log form is a popular functional form for economic models because each slope coefficient may be interpreted as the (constant) elasticity of the dependent variable with respect to the independent variable (see, for example, Kelejian and Oates, 1981, 102-4).

...Finance reform has allowed [school districts] to maintain the status quo with only modest programmatic changes

## The Changes in Revenue and Its Use in Three Low Spending Districts Following Michigan's Finance Reform

Catherine C. Sielke

While finance reform is an issue in most if not all of the 50 states, Michigan's approach to reform has been somewhat different. Like most states, Michigan had relied heavily on local property taxes to support schools. Even though Michigan used a guaranteed tax base funding approach that rewarded for local effort to provide state support, disparities existed. According to Michigan Department of Education Reports per pupil local and state revenues for 1993-94 varied from \$3,277 in Onaway to \$10,358 in Bloomfield Hills, a range of \$7,081. There were several reasons for these disparities.

In Michigan, property value for taxation purposes is referred to as the state equalized value (SEV), and it is equal to 50 percent of the market value. The state aid membership formula was a combination flat grant plus a dollar amount per mill levied; this amount was called the gross membership allowance or GMA. State aid was the difference between what could be generated locally and the GMA. Those districts whose local dollars exceeded the GMA were called "out-of-formula," and although there was no provision for recapture of revenues generated locally, categorical grants in out-of-formula districts were subject to recapture.

According to MDE reports, 1993-94 operating millage rates for districts in Michigan varied from a low of 7.8 mills to a high of 45.67 mills with a mean of 33.39 mills and a median of 33.89 mills.<sup>1</sup> Total school district property wealth varied from a low of \$15,057,180 to a high of \$6,442,484,436. The district at the fifth percentile had an SEV of \$32,833,812 while the district at the 95th percentile had an SEV of \$1,195,962,846. The SEV per pupil varied from a low of \$32,285 to a high of \$1,085,346. Clearly, a mill levied in one district did not generate the same number of dollars as a mill levied in another district.

There were a number of districts that levied low millage and had SEVs per pupil that were high enough to put them out-of-formula, made their categorical grants subject to recapture, and kept them low spending. Onaway is an example of such a district. Onaway had an SEV per pupil of \$113,691 and levied 22.65 mills. Under Michigan's 1993-94 state aid formula, Onaway was out-of-formula even though it generated only \$3,277 per pupil. On the other hand, Bloomfield Hills, with its high SEV per pupil of \$400,540, could raise over \$10,000 per pupil by levying 24 mills. Clearly, a mill levied in one district did not generate the same number of dollars as a mill levied in another district

giving rise to both taxpayer and pupil inequities.

In July of 1993, the state legislature, in a surprise move, voted to eliminate property taxes altogether for the support of schools. The history and politics of the remaining six months of 1993 are well documented by Addonizio, Kearney, and Prince<sup>2</sup> and by Vergari<sup>3</sup>. The end result was a ballot proposal, Proposal A, to amend the constitution, which was overwhelmingly approved by Michigan voters in March 1994. The amendment called for increases in the sales tax and other miscellaneous taxes and the restoration some property taxes. Under Proposal A, property is classified as either homestead (primary residence) or non-homestead. Eighteen mills are levied by local districts on non-homestead property and six mills are levied by the state on all property.

In addition to revenue changes, allocation of state dollars to local school districts was changed.<sup>4</sup> Districts were divided into three funding tiers which were determined by their 1993-94 state and local revenues. Those districts that had revenues less than \$4,200 were raised to that level or received an increase of \$250 per pupil, whichever was greater. Districts with revenues above \$6,500 received a minimum increase of \$160 per pupil. These districts can levy hold harmless millage by seeking voter approval for enough millage to allow them to remain at their high spending rate. Those districts in the middle tier received a per pupil increase that ranged from \$250 to \$160 depending on the district's place on the continuum. This meant that districts received increases in revenue that ranged from 23.60 percent (Onaway) to 1.55 percent (Bloomfield Hills). The calculation of the district's 1993-94 local and state revenues (both general membership aid and most categorical grants) plus the additional dollars as described above became the district's foundation allowance. Categorical grants have, for the most part been eliminated as they have been subsumed into the district's foundation allowance. A new categorical, funding for at-risk students, has been created. Districts below the \$6,500 level are eligible to receive dollars for at-risk students. The amount is a function of the district's foundation allowance and the number of students eligible for the Federal free lunch program. Students eligible for reduced lunch are not counted for the state at-risk dollars.

The new plan also called for the determination of a basic foundation allowance of \$5,000 for 1994-95.<sup>5</sup> The basic foundation allowance can best be described as a target minimum foundation allowance. However, the Michigan legislature decided not to raise all low spending districts to that amount immediately, choosing instead to raise revenues in the low spending districts over a number of years. In addition, the legislature decided to not lower the higher spending districts to the \$5,000 level. The legislature chose to increase revenues in districts below the basic foundation allowance at a faster rate than those above the \$5,000 amount. In subsequent years, the increase granted to districts will be based on an index factor calculated by the Consensus Revenue Estimating Committee.<sup>6</sup> The committee forms a consensus on state revenues based on economic indicators such as the CPI, unemployment rate, etc. This increase is then applied to the basic foundation allowance. Districts at the minimum revenue level receive twice the calculated increase. Those districts between the minimum and the basic allowance receive an amount between the calculated increase and twice the increase in an amount not to exceed the new basic foundation allowance. Districts above the basic foundation allowance receive the calculated increase. This method allows the lower revenue districts to experience greater revenue growth than the

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other districts so that disparities continue to be lessened. Local districts were given the option of requesting voter approval for three additional enhancement mills for up to three years. This local option will be replaced by a regional enhancement millage option beginning with the 1997-98 school year. The regional enhancement millage must be approved a majority of voters within an intermediate school district thereby broadening the tax base and improving equity in terms of property wealth.

### A Study of Reform's Impact

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact Michigan's finance reform has had on three of the low revenue districts. This research is very important because other researchers' have pointed out that while total dollars for education have increased significantly over the years, the number of new dollars coming into any district at one time has been relatively small. This research focuses on three Michigan districts that received significant revenue increases for the 1994-95 school year. Although these districts will continue to receive more dollars per pupil over the next five or six years, the amount of the increase will not be nearly as much as they received during the first year.

This study examines changes in revenue and how these revenues were used by the districts. Analysis has been limited by the fact that the 1994-95 was the first year of reform. Financial reports were not completed by the districts until December 1995, and the MDE released the information in January 1996.

There were 31 districts (out of 524) whose local and state revenues were below \$4,200 in 1993-94. The low revenue districts are located in the upper peninsula, northern lower Michigan, and southwestern Michigan. Constraints, such as lack of funding and professional commitments, limited travel to distant sites. The three districts that were selected for analysis are all located in southwestern Michigan. The three districts do differ in many ways, including enrollment growth and socio-economic status.

In addition to five years of financial data obtained from MDE, 1994-95 board minutes for each district were reviewed for information on changes in staffing, curriculum, and other areas that may have been impacted by reform. After a review and analysis of the financial data and the board minutes, conversations were held with the superintendent and/or business administrator to clarify and respond to questions about the data. These central office personnel offered insights into the effects of reform on their districts that may not have been evident in the other data. Each conversation lasted approximately 1-1/2 hours. District personnel were promised anonymity.

### Changes in Revenue in the Districts

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the three selected districts. All three districts levied below the state average mill rate in 1993-94. Since the state aid membership formula rewarded for local effort, these districts placed themselves in the low revenue category. District C had the highest State Equalized Value (SEV) per pupil; in fact, the property wealth in District C combined with its low millage rate put this district (like Onaway) into the position of being a low revenue, out-of-formula district, thus making its state aid categorical grants subject to recapture.

**Table 1**  
**District Characteristics - 1993-94**

	District A	District B	District C
State Equalized Value/Pupil	\$90,826	\$84,855	\$110,656
Pupils (FTE)	2,935	2,275	3,472
Operating Mills	25.98	27.76	30.42
Total Revenues	\$11,639,452	\$8,822,812	\$13,464,419
Total Expenditures	\$13,052,616	\$9,431,230	\$13,676,139
Total Expenditures/Pupil	\$4,447	\$4,145	\$3,939
Fund Balance	\$2,359,468	\$406,948	\$1,944,267
Average Teacher Salary	\$34,896	\$40,396	\$44,503
Rank in State	446	269	150
Administrative & Business Costs/Pupil	\$129	\$527	\$348
Rank in State	457	284	521
Free & Reduced Lunch	41.2%	20.5%	9.4%
Drop Out Rate	12.2%	4.6%	0.8%
Completion Rate	59.4%	84.0%	96.4%

Rankings were computed by MDE based on 524 districts.  
Source: Information provided by Michigan Department of Education.

Lack of taxpayer support of millage requests is part of the history of these districts, which is why they are low revenue. District A is a resort area; a lot of the property is owned by non-residents. Many students are transient, children of migrant workers who come here to work during the tourist season. The residents of the district have low incomes, as evidenced by the high percentage of free and reduced lunch students, and not inclined to increase property taxes. Administrators in Districts B and C described their voters as conservative. In District B, property owners have seen the valuation of their property increase as new, expensive houses are being built on many of the small lakes within the district. District C has a large number (approximately 2,000) of private, parochial school students within its boundaries. Although the district has no proof, administrators are inclined to believe that the parents of these students were unwilling to tax themselves for schools they do not use.

Table 2 provides the information used by the Michigan Department of Treasury to calculate each district's 1993-94 base foundation allowance. Included in this calculation were the amounts collected in local property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT). Revenues received from the state in the form of state membership aid and categorical aid were added. FICA was a categorical that had been added during the 1992-93 school year. For many years the state had paid the employer share of FICA. In the late 1980s, the state had local districts pay FICA but directly reimbursed the districts. In 1992-93, districts began accounting for FICA as a revenue and expenditure, and because it was labeled a categorical grant, it was subject to recapture for those districts that were out-of-formula. In 1993-94, FICA reimbursement was frozen at 70 percent of the amount received in 1992-93. Since the mid-1970s, Michigan districts had been paying five percent of retirement costs for its employees; the state paid the remaining amount. The base foundation calculation included the amount the state had paid for the district's employees during the 1993-94 school year. In addition, 15.7 percent of what a district had spent in fund balance was rolled into the calculation as revenue.

The method of calculating the base raises questions. For example, District C lost almost \$200,000 in recapture during 1993-94. While recapture was not calculated as a revenue, it also was not subtracted out of the state revenues, thereby overstating the district's revenues. In addition, central office administrators question the inclusion of the expenditure of fund balance as a revenue.

The need to use fund balance in 1993-94 was necessitated by legislative actions that were designed to provide taxpayer relief but caused loss of revenue to districts. In 1992-93, SEVs in the state were frozen. The SEVs for 1993-94 represented two years of growth, often a double digit percentage increase. A constitutional amendment (P.A. 35 of 1979, often referred to as the Headlee Amendment) requires a roll back in local millage rates if the local tax base (SEV) increases more than inflation. The rollback caused a loss of 3.19 mills in District A, 2.31 mills in District B, and 0.4 mills in District C. While District C did not ask voters for a Headlee Override, Districts A and B did. Taxpayers defeated the request in both districts. Because the state aid formula was driven by mills levied, the districts lost substantial dollars. The decision reached in all three districts was to use fund balance rather than to cut staff and programs.

District A received the greatest revenue increase in 1994-95 of the three selected districts. The increase of approximately \$400 per pupil represented a 10.5 percent rise in local and state revenues. District B's increase of \$387 per pupil (10.15 percent) was slightly more than District C's increase of \$335 per pupil (8.39 percent).

#### Expenditures for Salaries, Benefits, Staffing and Curriculum

Attention is now turned to how the districts used the new dollars they received. Tables 3, 4, and 5 provide a breakdown of objects of expenditure for instruction and support as a percentage of total expenditures for a five year time period. Instruction includes all expenses for classroom instruction including basic K-12, special education, vocational education, and other added needs such as at-risk students and gifted and talented. Support expenditures include all administration, transportation, business services, maintenance and operations, non-classroom support services for students and staff (counseling, professional development), etc. These are general fund operating expenses and under Michigan's accounting code do not include expenditures for food service, athletics, debt retirement, building and site funds, and sinking funds.

**Table 2**  
**District Base Foundation Calculation, 1994**

	District A	District B	District C
Prop Taxes	\$6,453,316	\$4,903,637	\$11,420,522
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	17,000	0	7,800
TOTAL LOCAL	\$6,470,316	\$4,903,637	\$11,428,322
State Aid			
Formula	\$2,024,838	\$1,979,442	\$496,600
Recapture <sup>a</sup>	0	0	199,813
Categorical Grants	452,290	291,051	308,786
FICA	455,132	336,937	469,747
Retirement	710,046	491,393	732,376
TOTAL STATE AID	\$3,642,306	\$3,098,823	\$2,207,304
Fund Balance	192,641	119,545	33,071
TOTAL REVENUES	\$10,305,263	\$8,122,005	\$13,468,883
Prior Year Pupils <sup>b</sup>	2,831	2,130	3,485
Base/Pupil	\$3,802	\$3,813	\$3,865
Foundation Allowance	\$4,200	\$4,200	\$4,200

a. Recapture was not considered a revenue.

b. These numbers differ slightly from Table 1.

Source: Information provided by Michigan Department of Education.

The most obvious and expected increase in expenditures occurs in benefits. There was an increase in this expenditure area in 1993-94 when FICA began to be accounted for as an expenditure and an even larger increase for 1994-95, the first year of finance reform, as districts assumed the full cost of retirement. District A, which had actually received \$1,165,178 credited to its base foundation calculation for FICA and retirement, expended \$1,861,399 for these two items that had been shifted from state responsibility to school district responsibility. District B received credit for \$828,330 but expended \$1,316,866 for these two non-discretionary expenses. District C received credit for \$1,202,123 but expended \$2,037,375 for FICA and retirement.

**Table 3**  
**District A - Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Budget**

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
<b>INSTRUCTION</b>					
Salaries	41.7	47.4	47.3	46.4	42.4
Benefits	7.6	8.4	8.9	12.1	15.5
Purchased Serv	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.1
Supplies	2.7	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.4
Other	0.3	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.3
Total Instruction	53.1	59.2	59.5	61.3	61.6
<b>SUPPORT</b>					
Salaries	17.7	20.5	20.7	18.5	16.3
Benefits	3.6	4.1	4.4	5.4	6.4
Purchased Serv	7.0	5.1	5.4	5.9	5.9
Supplies	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.3	4.5
Other	16.6	8.6	7.8	6.5	8.8
Total Support	47.0	40.5	40.4	38.6	38.4
<b>DISTRICT TOTAL</b>					
Salaries	59.4	67.9	68.0	64.9	58.7
Benefits	11.2	12.6	13.3	17.6	21.8
Purchased Serv	7.7	5.8	6.2	6.7	5.9
Supplies	4.8	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.5
Other	16.9	9.6	8.4	7.0	9.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Discrepancies in addition due to rounding.

Source: Computed by author from information from MDE.

In reviewing the data in Table 1, we can see that District A is clearly at the low end in the state for teacher salaries and administrative costs; District B is below the median for these personnel costs. Although District C was on the higher end of the rankings for teacher salaries, it is almost last in administrative costs. These are not districts that are leading the state in salaries in 1993-94, and for 1994-95 these three districts approved only three percent or less across the board salary increases. The need to use such a significant portion of the revenue increase for mandated benefits arises because of the way the base was calculated and not by increases in personnel or huge salary settlements.

District A has begun many new programs targeting its very needy, at-risk population. One such program is a four level curriculum delivery system which gives students alternatives to a traditional high school curriculum. One part of this curriculum is a half day of academic and vocational classes with the other half day devoted to

tutorial programs and other student support systems. According to board minutes, early reports by the administration to the board of education state "learning is up and discipline problems are down." A pilot school/court liaison program is in place. An all day kindergarten in a multi-age setting has been implemented. In the elementary grades, a multi-age continuous progress curriculum is provided with teams of teachers (consisting of regular classroom teachers, special education teachers and Title I teachers) working with students. These programs are serving as models for others across the state and appear to be in keeping with some of the recommendations of Miles<sup>3</sup> and Odden and Clune<sup>2</sup> as ways to reform education and better utilize existing resources. Central office administrators stress that these programs have no connection to finance reform. The new superintendent is responsible for bringing these innovations to the district, and they were started before reform. The innovations have been funded by using a fund balance that had been allowed to grow over the years by

**Table 4**  
**District B – Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Budget**

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
<b>INSTRUCTION</b>					
Salaries	51.6	52.0	51.4	46.6	46.5
Benefits	9.2	9.4	9.0	14.0	16.4
Purchased Serv	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.6
Supplies	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.5	2.5
Other	0.0	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.3
Total Instruction	64.0	65.7	64.7	65.2	66.3
<b>SUPPORT</b>					
Salaries	19.1	18.4	18.2	17.3	18.0
Benefits	3.8	3.6	3.6	4.7	5.6
Purchased Serv	5.8	5.3	5.3	5.0	4.6
Supplies	4.4	3.1	3.4	3.2	2.9
Other	2.9	3.9	4.8	4.5	2.5
Total Support	36.0	34.3	35.3	34.7	33.6
<b>DISTRICT TOTAL</b>					
Salaries	70.7	70.4	69.6	63.9	64.5
Benefits	13.0	13.0	12.6	18.7	22.0
Purchased Serv	6.3	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.1
Supplies	7.1	6.0	6.6	6.7	5.4
Other	2.9	4.7	5.2	4.9	2.9
TOTAL	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0	99.9

Discrepancies in addition due to rounding.

Source: Computed by author from information from MDE.

administrators and board members who believed they were being fiscally responsible. Administrators believe that reform does not allow them to do innovative and creative things. In fact, this district believes that it has been negatively impacted by the new at-risk dollars because the district had received significant dollars under the old categorical programs for compensatory education and low income. These categorical grants did not restrict the population for which these dollars could be targeted. At-risk dollars must be spent on a specifically defined population. Administrators say that there will be no additions in program or staff for next year; the district will just be able to meet the payroll.

District B administrators say that they used the new money to cover the shortfall from the Headlee rollback of the previous year. District B used its at-risk dollars to institute a tutoring program which is targeted at upper elementary and the middle school grades. The district hired six instructional assistants to implement this program.

The instructional assistants are certified teachers who have been unable to find full time teaching jobs, so the district and students receive the benefits of a fully certified teacher while paying non-teacher union pay. The district has had to assume more special education costs because the intermediate school district millage for special education can now support only about 70 percent of the costs. This finding is in keeping with that of Lankford and Wyckoff<sup>10</sup> who found that in New York more dollars are spent on the disabled at the expense of the regular students. For District B there was no new hiring and no expansion, other than the at-risk program. In an effort to cut costs, District B has tied salary increases to revenue increases. In addition, increases in health insurance and retirement costs will be subtracted from the salary increase. The only increase in expenditures for capital outlay are the result of the need to purchase new buses.

District C used some its dollars to rebuild and enhance fund balance. In addition, District C has used its new dollars to buy things



Table 5

## District C - Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Budget

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
<b>INSTRUCTION</b>					
Salaries	48.5	49.1	52.6	48.6	46.9
Benefits	8.8	8.8	9.9	12.7	15.8
Purchased Serv	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3
Supplies	2.9	3.3	2.8	2.5	2.6
Other	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Total Instruction	60.5	61.4	65.7	64.1	65.8
<b>SUPPORT</b>					
Salaries	19.6	19.6	19.7	17.7	16.9
Benefits	2.9	3.0	3.2	4.1	5.5
Purchased Serv	6.5	7.1	5.8	5.4	0.6
Supplies	2.4	2.2	2.3	1.9	5.5
Other	8.1	6.7	3.5	6.7	5.7
Total Support	39.5	38.6	34.5	35.8	34.2
<b>DISTRICT TOTAL</b>					
Salaries	68.1	68.8	72.3	66.4	63.8
Benefits	11.6	11.8	13.0	16.8	21.3
Purchased Serv	6.7	7.2	6.1	5.6	1.0
Supplies	5.3	5.4	5.0	4.4	8.1
Other	8.3	6.8	3.6	6.8	5.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Discrepancies in addition due to rounding.

Source: Computed by author from information from MDE.

other districts in the surrounding area already have. It added staff with its new dollars. District C is growing at the rate of approximately 200 students per year; however, the state uses a blended student count (the previous year's February enrollment and the current year's October count) for purposes of state aid, so each year the district is behind revenue for approximately 100 students. Enrollment has increased 47.1 percent between 1988 and 1994. Prior to finance reform, elementary classrooms including kindergarten, had 30 or more students per class. Additional staff reduces class size somewhat. In addition, a psychologist and social worker have been added. The district has six elementary school buildings. Prior to finance reform, the district had two elementary principals. It was able to add a principal in 1994-95 and another one in 1995-96.

District C was able to add a program for its at-risk students with the new dollars. It had not been eligible for low income dollars and even if it had been, recapture would have taken most of those dollars away

Like District B, this district is using otherwise unemployed teachers to work as instructional aides to provide services for at-risk students. District C has a very high graduation rate, so it is not surprising that additions to the curriculum have been at the high school level. Additions include advanced placement courses, advanced computer applications courses, and specialized English classes. District C is the only district of the three districts studied to have schools that have achieved summary accreditation based on their high scores on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP - Michigan's assessment tool).

District C is also working to bring change in the teacher salary schedule. For example, once a negotiated settlement is reached with teachers, \$2,000 is subtracted from steps 1 and 2. The argument for this action is that it represents the job market. There are far more teachers than positions; the board of education wants teachers to make a commitment to the district before receiving more dollars. In

addition, the district has implemented an incentive program for teachers who have demonstrated expertise in the use of classroom technology and who then act as leaders in promoting technology.

District C has a long history of site-based management in all facets of decision-making - budgeting, spending, hiring, curriculum. District C has had and continues to have many long range plans for enrollment, staffing, facilities, etc. There are many concerns. For example, the district is in the midst of a large building program due to its increasing enrollment. This will mean additional staff and also the need to add dollars to the budget for increased costs of maintaining and operating the new buildings. It is calculated that the district will need to add \$560,000 to its budget just for routine maintenance and operations when the current construction is completed. The district is going to continue to be hurt by receiving state dollars based on a blended count of current year and prior year enrollment.

The reactions to Michigan's finance reform vary across the selected districts. The administrators in District A believe that reform is not working because not enough dollars were put into the reform effort. Equity has not been achieved, and further equity must consider the population being educated. Administrators in District A, with its very needy population, believe many more dollars are needed. Administrators in District A also point out that there is a misconception on the part of the public as to how many dollars are being received by the district. The state talks about the base foundation (which began at \$5,000 and has increased to \$5,153). The administrators in District A believe that most voters do not understand that the base foundation is a target and that district foundation grants can be as low as \$4,200. District A believes it could do a lot more with \$800 more per student.

District B believes that it is better off because of finance reform. The district needed more dollars, and it was impossible to get voter approval for additional millage. As an added bonus, District B passed a bond issue for \$22,285,000 for a new high school and renovations in other buildings. It is the District's belief that the bond issue would have failed without finance reform.

District C is positive about finance reform. It now has more resources than it had before, but it still does not have the resources other districts have. In addition, the equity issue has not been resolved. The district, from all appearances, has done well - high graduation rate, low drop-out rate, high test scores - and it has a good reputation. School district administrators are concerned that as more people move into the community the district may not be able to live up to expectations because revenue increases will not keep pace with the growth.

### Conclusion

Finance reform in Michigan has increased revenues for school districts in Michigan but has not resolved the equity issue. Reform occurred at a time when districts were finding themselves unable to obtain more revenues through local millage efforts. Reform followed on the heels of circumstances that had reduced revenues coming into districts. In addition, with increased dollars also came increased costs that were shifted to local school districts. New dollars are being used to cover the costs of non-discretionary items such as mandated benefits. New dollars are also being used to recover losses experienced as a result of the Headlee rollback which forced districts to use fund balance rather than make massive cuts.

The districts studied have negotiated modest salary increases and have found themselves able to implement some new programs, particularly those aimed at at-risk students. New dollars have not

been used for administration except in District C, which was clearly understaffed. It appears that in these three low spending Michigan school districts, finance reform has allowed them to maintain the status quo with only modest programmatic changes.

### Endnotes

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Private citizens and officials... hailed the new law as the "Minnesota Miracle."

## Financing Education in Minnesota: A Tradition of Progress, 1971-1998

Mary Jane Guy

### Minnesota School Finance Background/History

Minnesota has been viewed as a progressive state in the area of education. In addition to charter schools, it has initiated many reforms since the 1970's which ushered in the "Minnesota Miracle" in the 1970's that set the state on a path of educational reform. However, when we examine the legal precedents and history of Minnesota school finance since the 1970's, we note that most K-12 educational finance reforms have not involved significant, progressive or "pacesetter" financing changes until recently and are rather conventional or traditional.

In 1997 after a tense standoff over tax breaks for private school tuition, Minnesota lawmakers agreed on a \$6.7 billion, two-year education finance bill that makes far reaching changes in the public school system of Minnesota.<sup>1</sup> The "Students First" plan constitutes a shift away from the state's traditional emphasis on funding school districts and focuses on giving students and their families money to use as they wish.<sup>2</sup> This along with legislation passed in the spring of 1997 to establish the first statewide testing program<sup>3</sup> has been hailed by Robert J. Wedl, the state education commissioner, as "...the most significant reform in our history."<sup>4</sup> The recent furor over low test scores in the Twin Cities, caused legislators in the 1997 legislative session to approve a \$100 million increase over two years in compensatory aid (anti-poverty funds) for a total of \$360 million that would go directly to schools rather than districts.<sup>5</sup>

The state's approach to educational finance is still a modified "foundation" approach, even though restrictions have been placed on local school districts to supplement the foundation level. Today, however, Minnesota is almost completely responsible for the availability of new revenue for public schools. As in many states today, elementary and secondary education in Minnesota is financed through a combination of state collected taxes (primarily income and sales) and property taxes collected locally in accordance with a constitutional mandate that requires a thorough and efficient system of schools. Minnesota's education article is one of the most strongly worded educational mandates expressing the notion of a republican system of common schooling in America:

The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state.<sup>6</sup>

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### The Minnesota Miracle

Numerous court challenges throughout the United States in the 1970's have reflected the general consensus that an overhaul of school funding was due. In Minnesota, the Governor and Legislature in the 1970's initiated changes which brought the state's school financing system more into alignment with its constitutional mandate "to establish a general and uniform system" of education. In 1971 the Omnibus Tax Act sought to equalize tax effort of property owners in Minnesota while promoting greater equalization of school expenditures throughout the state.

Minnesota state support for elementary and secondary education initially was based solely on interest income from the permanent school fund. Supplemental state aids were distributed as early as 1915 and the state attempted an equalization approach to state aids in 1947. Foundation aid, established by the 1957 legislature, was meant to provide an adequate basic education and to compensate for variations of property wealth among Minnesota to advantage poor school districts. The method of computing the foundation aid remained the same until passage of the Omnibus Tax Bill in 1971.

Prior to the *Serrano* decision<sup>7</sup>, Minnesota Governor Wendell Anderson proposed his "Fair School Financing Bill." The reform in educational finance that followed was a compromise between various forces based on this Governor's proposal. It ignored features to equalize per pupil expenditures, but made major changes in reducing tax inequities throughout the state. The shift in financing and the change in emphasis was so great that a federal bi-partisan commission composed of private citizens and officials at all government levels, hailed the new law as "the Minnesota Miracle."

School aid reform was also addressed during a special session of the 1971 legislature that made substantial changes in the philosophy and method of financing K-12 education. The foundation aid formula shifted the primary revenue-raising responsibility for school operating funds from local to state level. It defined a "standard cost" per pupil unit to provide an adequate education; it established an "allowed" level of expenditure for each district determined by the relationship of the district's maintenance expenditure to the standard cost in that year. The "allowed expenditures" were financed for the first time by a foundation aid formula which provided poorer school districts with proportionately more state financial assistance. The financial aid formula increased equalization in expenditures by providing "low cost" districts with additional power to increase allowed expenditures annually; and it placed stringent limits on school district mill rates for maintenance purposes.

Prior to 1971 schools in Minnesota were financed by a combination of state and local monies with about 6% from federal sources. The state share was divided among three aid programs, foundation aids, categorical aids, and tax relief aids. Excess referendum levies were part of the Minnesota Miracle. School districts had been able to levy, with voter approval, amounts for district operational costs beyond levies specifically authorized in Minnesota. Local school boards had much greater flexibility in deciding their own levies and the levy was limited largely by the need for money and the ability and willingness of the property taxpayers in the district to provide resources. The 1971 law was the first effective state-imposed and voter-controlled levy limit on school district levies. It prohibited school district levy increases above state statutory limits unless local voters approved the increase by referendum.<sup>8</sup>

In the decade following the "Minnesota Miracle," numerous

amendments to the original Act have reflected significant changes in schools and society not anticipated by those who drafted the 1971 law. Inflation, declining enrollment, the increasing needs of special groups, and, most recently, declining revenues in a recessionary economy prompted these amendments. Some believe in Minnesota that these changes fine-tuned the law; others saw these reforms as creating an unwieldy instrument, difficult to understand and unresponsive to present needs. However, the 1971 law remained in place with only minor changes in the 1970's through the early 1980's.<sup>9</sup>

From 1991 onward the problem of the referendum levy was addressed so that today the referendum process is much more controlled. Any referendum levies now passed must be levied against the market value of property rather than net tax capacity. This has the effect of shifting a greater burden of the referendum levy to residential, agricultural and recreational properties—classes that otherwise are taxed at lower rates than most other types of property. Referendum revenue today is limited to \$801.25 per pupil unit in 1996-1997. District referendum revenue may not exceed this amount unless a district is eligible for sparsity revenue or the referendum allowance was higher in a previous year. This not being the case, the district may not increase its referendum revenue. The duration of the referendum must be specified on the ballot and may not exceed ten years.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Skeen v. State of Minnesota<sup>11</sup>**

The "Minnesota Miracle" took unprecedented steps to reform the school financing system. It increased state fiscal responsibility for education, and reduced reliance on real estate taxes, but it was still apparent that Minnesota's school funding system could be more equitable and efficient. The state's relatively high dependence on local revenue continued to create wide district fiscal disparities and still had little relationship to local need or ability to pay.

In 1988, 52 outer ring suburban and rural school districts representing 25 percent of the state's K-12 enrollment filed a lawsuit in the district court claiming that Minnesota's school finance system was unconstitutional because the finance system was not uniform and school districts received disparate amounts of government aid. The plaintiff school districts challenged the constitutionality of the referendum and debt service levies that are based upon local property taxes and the training and experience and supplemental revenues that are fully equalized state aid components of the general education revenue program.

In December 1991, the Wright County District Court ruled that three components of Minnesota's education funding formulas were unconstitutional. These components provided for the allocation of approximately 11 percent of the state and local revenue spent on education. They were: (1) debt service levies—the levies to pay the principal; and interest on bonds used to finance facilities; (2) referendum levies—the local voter approved levy authority that allows a school board to obtain more revenue than regular funding formulas provide; and (3) the supplemental revenue—a grandfather provision that holds harmless districts that received more revenue under previous formulas.

The Minnesota Supreme Court on August 20, 1993, however, reversed the trial court and held that state's finance system constitutional. It ruled that education in Minnesota is a fundamental right and that the current system of education finance satisfies that right. The court found that all plaintiff school districts received an adequate education through sufficient funding to meet basic needs. The court

used the term "adequate" or "adequacy" to mean the measure of need that must be met and not some minimal floor. It thus established a minimum standard the state must meet in designing an education funding system that is constitutional.

In 1992, as a result of this litigation, two important changes to the structure of the state's school finance system were made by the Minnesota Legislature. It adopted and funded a debt service equalization program over a three year phase-in period, and lowered the cap on referendum revenue from 35 percent to 30 percent of the general education formula allowance, with districts above the cap "grandfathered" in at their current level of referendum revenue.

In 1993, the legislature increased the general education formula from \$3,050 per pupil unit to \$3,150 for all school districts. However, the \$100 increase was used to reduce supplemental revenue and referendum revenue. A district with at least \$100 per pupil unit of supplemental and referendum revenue, in effect, was held level. This reduced supplemental revenue statewide from \$14 million to \$3.5 million making the supplemental revenue component much less significant. Referendum revenue was reduced from \$311 million to \$260 million. At this time the state aid guarantee on the first \$315 per pupil unit of excess referendum revenue was increased from the 50 percent level to the 100 percent level, the same as the general education formula.<sup>12</sup> Excess referendum revenue was also capped at \$787 per pupil unit. (House Ways & Means Committee, 1993).

Since 1993, revenue from excess referenda has grown substantially and as a percent of total revenue is still growing. Today, over three-fourths of Minnesota school districts have referendum revenue. It grew again substantially in 1996-1997, now constituting 6.6 percent of total education revenue from the 2.9 percent in the early 1980's.

A major issue addressed by the 1997 Legislature was the revenue "caps" in K-12 education. Legislation passed in 1995 reduced the general education formula and reduced the secondary pupil unit weighting to keep projected K-12 education spending for FY 98-99 within the budget targets set in 1995. An additional \$892 million was forecast for general fund revenues and expenditures at the end of FY 99. While this forecast projected revenues exceeding expenditures by \$2.3 billion, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed a bill repealing the "caps" in K-12. The referendum equalization levy for 1999 and beyond "equals the districts referendum equalization revenue times the lesser of one or the ratio of the districts' referendum market value per actual pupil unit to \$10,000."<sup>13</sup>

The shift from property taxes to state taxes in Minnesota was the biggest jump this past 1997 legislative session. The "Minnesota Miracle" was prompted mainly by a property tax revolution where people came to the capital in arms over huge property taxes to finance public schools. The Citizens League and Governor Anderson at the time proposed an increase in the income tax. With more state funding, still allowing for local levy for add ons, the state has assumed more of the education cost, especially with additional revenue to endorse the graduation rule.<sup>14</sup>

Equity is still an issue after *Skeen v. Minnesota*<sup>15</sup>, but policy makers believe that over the past few years Minnesota has made a great deal of progress. The greatest strides in equalization have occurred in the area of debt reduction of school districts because the state has taken considerable responsibility to equalize property taxes. According to the Department of Children, Families and Learning, school district disparity and equity seems to be less of an issue now and somewhat diminished during an inflationary period.<sup>16</sup> (The court observed in

1991 that the legislature had equalized more of the state funding, with the percentage of uniform basic revenue rising roughly from 67.5% in 1984 to 90% by 1990.)

Today the general education formula is an "equalized" formula—the state pays in aid the difference between what is raised by the local levy and the formula allowance. The portion that is local levy can be determined by comparing a district's adjusted net tax capacity per pupil unit to the equalizing factor. The equalizing factor is determined by dividing the basic formula allowance by the tax capacity rate. For 1997-98, the equalizing factor calculation is:  $\$3,581 / .374 = \$9,575$ . The basic revenue allowance for each district for the 1997-98 school year is  $\$3,581$  per pupil unit. State aid of  $\$2.6$  billion and property tax levy of  $\$1.4$  billion provide the basic revenue for all districts. The total of all state aid is  $\$3.3$  billion, and the total levy amount is  $\$2.3$  billion. State revenue comes from compensatory revenue for free and reduced lunch, operating sparsity revenue for small and isolated schools. Beginning in 1996-97, the basic formula increased by  $\$300$  per pupil unit representing the "roll-in" of transportation and training and experience revenue.

Additional revenues are provided from Transportation Sparsity Revenue which provides districts with additional funding based on the number of pupil units per square mile. The operating Capital Revenue formula will allow for increases in technology this year. In 1997-98 a district's supplemental revenue is the same per pupil amount as the district received in 1992-93. However, supplemental revenue is reduced by  $\$100$ , representing the increase in the formula allowance. This revenue is an aid and levy combination in the same ratio as the district's general education revenue allow. A total of  $\$5.4$  million in supplemental revenue was allocated to about 32 districts in 1987-98.

### **Educational Investment**

The Minnesota legislature will conduct the 1998 legislative session with a record budget surplus. Today forecast revenues exceeded forecast expenditures by  $\$2.3$  billion due to a robust economy. Governor Carlson wants to spend most of the new money on property tax relief, but there will still be hundreds of millions available for opportunities for education in the form of budget supplements, tax credits and deductions, and capital improvements in the future.

The regional impact of the funding changes contained in the omnibus 1997 K-12 bill and the changes in the distribution of revenue among school districts reflects a geographic distribution of new money over baseline amounts for FY 98 and FY 99. Statewide there has been a 4.9% increase over the FY 99 base; in non metro areas a 5.6% increase; in suburban metro areas, a 3.7% increase and in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul, a 5.9% increase based on per pupil unit general education revenue amounts. Statewide per pupil increases when measured against the base amounts for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 are 3.5% and 4.9% respectively. Additional new money pumped into the K-12 system this past legislative session ( $\$6.7$  billion for the K-12 appropriation—a total revenue increase of 14% over the previous biennium) has affected the spread in school district revenue when measured by the 5th and 95th percentiles of general education revenue because of the added Compensatory Revenue—from  $\$836$  per pupil unit in FY 97 to  $\$1,005$  in FY 99 under the conference committee proposed amounts.<sup>18</sup>

In an analysis of changes in school funding in Minnesota over the past two years, Augenblick and Myers (1997) point to marginal revenue growth above inflation.<sup>19</sup> Generally in Minnesota, school

districts spend what they get. They may build up a balance or go into debt, so the best data to examine for how school districts are faring is school district revenues. Considering all funds, the most current revenue figures (including revenue to pay for buildings) in 1998, the revenue per average daily membership is  $\$6,264$ , a .0067 percent increase over FY 1997 which was  $\$6,222$ . What is slated in current law for FY 1999, however is  $\$6,786$ , a 2.5% increase.<sup>20</sup> "A few years ago in Minnesota we had 59 school districts with operating debt. This year only 10 districts have been eliminating their operating debt through consolidation, so Minnesota's 362 school districts are in pretty good shape."<sup>21</sup>

Education is the largest single item in the state's general fund budget, accounting for about 33-34 percent of total spending (this percentage includes a relevant portion of property tax reduction aid). Higher education in Minnesota receives only 10 to 11 percent.<sup>22</sup> Total state and local revenue for schools increased over 128 percent since 1985. When adjusted for inflation, the increase is 46.2 percent despite the fact that as economic growth has slowed while student population has increased. Revenue per student, adjusted for inflation has increased by 22.3 percent from FY 1994 to FY 1997. It is estimated that total school district revenue for each student (ADM) will average  $\$7,191$  during the 1996-1997 school term—this includes funding from state, local, and federal sources.<sup>23</sup>

State funds for K-12 have particularly increased for career teacher-family programs, youth service, alternative delivery of specialized instructional services and other programs to meet the needs of targeted children and youth. In 1994, an additional  $\$1$  million was appropriated for violence prevention grants with another  $\$1$  million appropriated for youth apprenticeships and establishing the connection between youth and community service.<sup>24</sup>

### **Selected Education Issues and Policy Trends Affecting Minnesota School Finance**

The constitutional requirements of Minnesota, the current statutory framework for education finance, the history of litigation, and developing legal theory have all recognized and anticipated the pacesetter reforms to achieve greater equity and accountability that have taken place recently with the passage of the 1997 Omnibus Tax Bill for K-12 education. For example in H.F. 350, Article I, Section 25 we read:

Financing the education of our children is one of the state government's most important functions. In performing this function the state seeks to provide sufficient funding while encouraging equity, accountability, and incentives toward quality improvement. To help achieve these goals and to help control future spending growth, the state will fund core instruction and related support services, will facilitate improvement in the quality and delivery of programs and services, and will equalize revenues raised locally for discretionary purposes.<sup>25</sup>

In 1989, the Minnesota legislature first addressed the issue of the proper locus for democratic control in the state. The legislature adopted general principles and a policy statement to guide state-local finance reform which stressed accountability, i.e. a preference for state funding of state-mandated activities and local funding of local decisions.<sup>26</sup> In 1991, the Minnesota legislature adopted a mission statement for education which emphasized such concepts as "participatory decision-making," "accountability," and integration and coordination

of "human services for learners."<sup>27</sup> In 1992, the Minnesota legislature enacted the Minnesota Education Finance Act. It specified in general terms a finance system based on "basic instructional aid," "elective instructional revenue," and "local discretionary revenue."<sup>28</sup>

Public school enrollment has grown in recent years, rising to an estimated 837,231 (ADM) in the 1996-1997 school year (after several years of declining student populations.) Minnesota Planning has projected it will grow to 868,000 by the year 2005 which would cost an additional \$320 million each year. This predicted student growth will be concentrated in a small number of the state's 362 school districts. Half of all growth from 1993 to 1999 is expected to be in just 10 districts surrounding the Twin Cities. This could put pressure on the legislature from the various poor rural "out state" school districts.<sup>29</sup>

The Minnesota legislature has adopted the following policies that encourage greater equity and accountability in this state. Five basic policies have expanded parental/student choice. Choice, including charter schools, which began in Minnesota, is viewed as one of several ways to encourage a healthy competition among schools and within schools and districts.

### **Income Tax Deductions and Credits for Public and Nonpublic Education**

In 1996 Governor Carlson proposed a test voucher program similar to the one in Milwaukee, WI. for the districts of Minneapolis, St. Paul, Brooklyn Center, and one small rural district. In *Minnesota in Mueller v. Allen* case in 1983<sup>30</sup> determined that tuition tax credits were constitutional. The heart of the Governor's proposed voucher system was therefore to give parents a certain amount of money redeemable only for tuition at a private school. Under the Governor's proposal, if the voucher amount was less than the tuition for the private school chosen, parents would have had to pay the difference. This proposal was defeated in the legislature in the 1997 session, however the legislature did propose \$39 million per year and another \$15 million for increases in the tax deduction in the 1997 Special Session, June 26, 1998.<sup>31</sup>

The 1997 "Student First" plan in Omnibus Tax Bill of 1997 is a compromise bill approved June 26 in a special legislative session which includes new tax credits for families earning \$33,599 and below to purchase a wide range of education-related services. The credits also can be used to help offset transportation expenses and pay for summer school and camps. Families that don't earn enough to owe taxes will get checks for the amount of credits they qualify for.<sup>32</sup> Before the first 1997 special session, taxpayers could deduct \$1,000 for students in grades 7 to 12, and \$650 for students in grades kindergarten to 6. These limits will increase to \$2,500 and \$1,625, beginning in the tax year 1998. This deduction can be used to help offset the cost of private school tuition, in addition to the kinds of services covered under the new tax credit. Finally, the 1997 \$6.7 billion, two year education finance bill also expands the state's working-family tax credit to provide households that have children and earn \$29,000 a year or less with an additional \$2000- \$350 credit, which can be used for any purpose, including private school tuition.

### **Open Enrollment**

In 1987, the legislature, following the request of Governor Rudy Perpich, authorized kindergarten through twelfth grade students to enroll in a school district other than one in which the student lived.

The 1988 legislature made the program mandatory for districts with at least 1,000 students for the 1989-90 school year, and for all districts for the 1990-91 year. School districts with desegregation plans approved by the state board of education can limit transfers in and out of their districts to ensure compliance with those plans. The 1997 law change supported by Governor Carlson permits a non resident school district to provide pupil transportation for a non resident student without first seeking approval from the resident district. This amendment eliminates any impediment faced by some parents and students seeking school choice beyond their home district. The underlying fiscal rationale and justification is that school districts simply get aid for the number of pupils they actually have.

### **Post Secondary Enrollment Option**

Another Minnesota policy that enhances choice in Minnesota is the Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO). The PSEO was enacted during the 1985 legislative session and first made available to students during the 1985-86 school year. This program allows 11th and 12th grade public school students to attend a Minnesota post secondary institution at state expense. Like the open enrollment option, participation in this program has increased steadily since it was first made available. The number of students taking advantage of the PSEO has increased from 3,528 students in 1985-86 to 6,375 in 1995-96. Some analysts and district administrators observe that PSEO tends to draw the high achievers away from high schools leaving lower achievers behind. Since the money goes with the student, the district is left with less money and a higher concentration of problem students. Many school administrators feel that PSEO exacerbates the problem in a system already short of funds. In addition small, rural districts may not have the critical mass of students necessary to offer college courses in the high school. The cost of such a program with less than a full class of students would be much higher in those school districts.

Changes in the PSEO funding process since 1992 (which have cost the state about \$2.2 million) have resulted in school districts receiving significantly less funding for PSEO students. Today post secondary institutions receive the cost of tuition, books, and fees for a PSEO course from the K-12 budget as they had in FY 1991. Funding for PSEO students from the post secondary budget is reduced from average cost funding to marginal cost funding which provides only about 32% of the average cost of instruction. Under this funding process, the revenue the school district receives is no longer dependent on the amount of tuition that was paid for the student. School districts receive a small portion of general education revenue while post secondary institutions receive a flat reimbursement per credit plus marginal cost funding. This funding process eliminates almost all of the extra revenue school districts received under the original (1991) funding process. The total cost to the state in FY 1993 and later funding was \$31,423,000. Analysts argue that "In the long term, the state may save money if students participate in PSEO because the state pays less in post secondary funding for a PSEO student than for a regular public college student. More research is needed to determine whether benefits exists for students.

### **Compensatory Aid and Site-Based Management**

The state's new method of distributing its compensatory money is a great challenge to school districts' site based management plans, because with the new performance standards so much depends on accountability for student achievement. The Minnesota legislature

passed permissive legislation in 1987 allowing school boards to enter into an agreement with a "school site decision making team." This council can be thought of legally as a "mini-school board," that can decide tools and policies in curriculum, discipline, budgeting, hiring and firing of personal as a team consisting of the principal, representatives from staff, parents, students, members of the community. Schools may now voluntarily enter into performance contracts, but more pressure may be brought to bear on accountability for previous state compensatory dollars. The 1997 compensatory aid package provides \$100 million more aid that would not go to the school districts but directly to school sites, based upon the number of students qualified for free and reduced lunch. Discussion in the last session, however, hinged upon how the aid should be calculated and defining what is a learning site.<sup>33</sup>

### **Charter Schools (Formerly called Outcome-Based Schools)**

In 1991, the Minnesota legislature enacted a bill authorizing school districts to sponsor a limited number of charter schools. The original authorization of 35 charter schools was increased to 40 in 1995. By 1996-97, 20 charter schools have been approved for operation, but only 19 are operational. The number of students now enrolled in charter schools in Minnesota authorized as of January, 1997 is 1,814 (Minnesota Tax Payers Association, 1996, p. 26). Lawmakers in 1995 appropriated \$75,000 for the state board of education to evaluate the performance of charter schools. Money for the school comes from the state in the form of general education aid (which now includes both transportation aid and capital equipment aid. The 1991 law authorizing school boards or the state board of education to permit one or more teachers to form schools made charter schools eligible for other aids, grants, and revenues from the state as though the school were a school district.<sup>34</sup>

The 1997 "Students First" plan lifts the current 40-school cap on the number of charter schools in the state and mandates that the \$350 million in compensatory aid contained in the bill follow students to schools, rather than be spent at the district level. It designated \$50,000 grants to help with start-up costs of charter schools, created grants for building repairs, and allowed higher education institutions to sponsor charter schools. This plan could benefit large urban school districts in Minneapolis and St. Paul that serve large number of low-income children. "Some sites could receive as much as \$1 million to spend as they see fit to improve educational outcomes for poorly performing students."<sup>35</sup>

### **Standards-Based Reform**

Minnesota has ranked very high compared to other states on most standard measures of student achievement, while spending only slightly higher than the national average per pupils.<sup>36</sup> The state board of education led the nation in adopting Outcome-Based Education (OBE)<sup>37</sup> and new graduation standards. By 1991, funding (\$1.35 million for the biennium) was provided for grants to selected school districts to serve as demonstration sites.<sup>38</sup> In 1993 the Minnesota legislature updated the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP) to specify expected program outcomes.<sup>39</sup> In August 1995, the mission of MEEP has been to prepare schools for implementing graduate standards and the federal "Goals 2000" efforts. The 1995 law appropriated \$775,000 each year (FY 1996-1997) to achieve educational effectiveness.<sup>40</sup>

### **Technology**

In 1995, the Omnibus Education Act included an entire article devoted to technology initiatives with a total of \$26.8 million appropriated over the FY 1996-97 biennium. \$5.4 million was funded for instructional transformation technology grants; \$300,000 in FY 1996 for regional library telecommunications aid for data access, technology, and technical support, and promotion to electronic access to the public; \$800,000 for grants to continue Internet access; \$6,387,000 for Interactive television with substantial increases for capital expenditure equipment and statewide telecommunications access routing system. In 1996, lawmakers added another \$11.9 million to fund various technology projects during the 1996-97 biennium.

### **Conclusion**

Many Minnesotans today see these educational initiatives in the 1990's as a triumph for choice. Tax dollars can now be provided on a tuition basis either by public schools or by groups of public school teachers. Minnesotans can probably look to many more charter schools as families create a market for summer schools and other services with newly acquired tax-credit dollars. Educational Commissioner Wedle commented on these revolutionary developments in the state of Minnesota: "It's no longer what the system can provide... Now parents have some resources to purchase educational services."<sup>41</sup>

Greater demands are now being placed on a traditional finance system and the taxpayers in Minnesota to effect these progressive policies. Because of the ever-increasing concentration of poor and needy children in urban schools, inadequacies in the levels of basic funding are becoming more apparent. Minnesota education was found by the Minnesota Supreme Court to be "adequate" in 1991. Indicators of inadequacy today, however, include low achievement and test scores, high dropout rates and poor attendance, particularly among disadvantaged students in urban areas. As more and more courts throughout the United States begin to target "adequacy" in equity rulings, adequacy and accountability will become more central issues. The growing revelation of educational "inadequacies" in Minnesota may force lawmakers in this state to redefine a basic education relative to the proper funding of standards-based reform.

### **Endnotes**

1. Laws 1997, 1st Special Session, Chapter 4.
2. *Id.* Article 13.
3. Minnesota Statute 121.11, Subd. 7-C, 1997 Supplement.
4. Bradley, A. *Education Week*, 184, (July 9, 1997).
5. *Supra* note 1, Article 1, Sec. 43, 124A.11, Subd. 3.
6. Minnesota Constitution, Article XIII, Section 1.
7. *Serrano v. Priest*, 5 Cal. 3d 584, 96 Cal. Rptr. 601, 487 P. 2d 1241 (1971).
8. Strom, T. & Novak, K. *Minnesota School Finance: A Guide for Legislators*, Research Department, Minnesota House of Representatives (n.d.).
9. In 1973, an amendment prohibited districts from holding more than one referendum election per year (Laws 1973, Ch. 683, Sec. 18). In 1977, the referendum law was amended to permit ballot language specifying the years of duration of the levy, and requiring that the ballot disclose the amount of referendum levy in mills and the total to be raised in the first year in dollars (Laws 1977, Ch. 447, Art. 1, Sec. 19). In 1982, the referendum revocation provisions were amended to allow for an election to reduce- as well as revoke, a referendum levy

- (Laws 1982, Ch. 548, Art. 1, Sec. 12). In 1983, a 1982 provision that allowed districts to hold two referendum levy elections in one year was made permanent (Laws 1983, Ch. 314, Art. 7, Sec. 34). In 1989, significant additional amendments to referendum provisions were made. Districts were limited to one referendum vote per year (Laws 1989, Ch. 329, Art. 1, Sec. 4). School districts also were required to mail notes to taxpayers and to specify on the ballot the number of years for which a referendum levy could be in effect (*First Special Session Laws*, 1989, Ch. 1, Art. 9, Sec. 5).
10. Amending Minnesota Statutes 1996, Section 124A.03, subd. 1f and 3c.
11. *Skeen v. State of Minnesota*, 505 NW 2d 299.
12. House Ways and Means Committee. *Money Matters: A Publication of the House Ways and Means Committee Staff on Government Finance Issues*. (1993).
13. This is an amendment to the 1996 Tax Bill. See *Supra* note 11, Section 124.02, Subd. 3b.
14. Augenblick and Myers, Inc. "An Analysis of Changes in School Funding in Minnesota Over the Past 20 Years." A Commissioned Study for the Minnesota School Boards Association (January 15, 1997).
15. Two lawsuits are now pending in the Twin Cities area. Plaintiffs are not arguing equity between districts, but adequacy in that there are special needs that are not being met. One of the equity-related lawsuits has been initiated by the St. Paul Public School Board, which voted September 7, 1996 to file a lawsuit in Ramsey County District Court. This suit contends that the state is providing insufficient funding to educate the district's growing population of non-English speaking, poor, minority and special education students. The St. Paul case will be heard in the fall of 1998 and the NAACP case is scheduled for judgement in February to decide on a later date. (Farland, G., Interview, January 9, 1998). Department of Children, Families, and Learning, Financial Office of Management Services, St. Paul, MN.
16. Each year, as required by statute, the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning creates a table that summarizes the disparity ratio of districts at the 95th and the 5th percentiles. This ratio, looking at basic general revenue (which includes both supplemental and referendum revenue) at the 99th percentile in relation to the 5th percentile is currently 1.298. Over a seven year period the financial aid formula has continued to decrease that ratio from 1.371 to 1.298. Ranges of richest to poorest districts at the 99th percentile and at the 1st percentile in FY '92 was \$1,780; in 1998 it is \$1,519. Department of Children, Families, and Learning, October 1, 1997.
18. T. Strom, "A Report on the Regional Impact of Funding Changes Contained in the 1997 K-12 Bill." Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department, 1-2 (1997).
19. This study showed that with the present "formula allowance," the basic level of state support for education has not kept pace with inflation, that total per pupil revenue has deteriorated steadily in the last 12 years, and that on a national level, Minnesota has fallen from well above to below national averages in K-12 spending. Analysts argue that in 1996-97, the State of Minnesota would need to provide more than \$364 million in order to accomplish the objective of maintaining the K-12 education formula allowance at its inflation-adjusted (1988-1989) levels. Augenblick and Myers, Inc. "An Analysis of Changes in School Funding in Minnesota Over the Past 10 Years." A Commissioned Study for the Minnesota School Boards Association (January 15, 1997).
20. *Supra* note 1.
21. Farland, G. Department of Children, Families, and Learning, Financial Office of Management Services, St. Paul, MN. (Interview, January 9, 1998). Figures provided by the Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department show that there has been an increase from the formula allowance over the past nine years. From 1989-90 to 1998-99, the basic revenue and general education levy has increased 24.4%. Crowe, G. "Financing Education in Minnesota, 1997-98." A report by the House Fiscal Analysis Staff, (1997). Based on these figures, if inflation was 3% a year, you would expect a 27% increase, so this increase over the past decade can probably be accounted for by inflation.
22. (However, in the 1997 session, the Minnesota Legislature voted for \$85 million for higher education and an additional \$40 million to shore up higher education in the 1997 Special Session.)
23. Sullivan, B. "Selected Education Reforms and Policy Trends Since 1983." Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning, Office of Government Relations (1997).
24. *Id.*
25. The Minnesota Business Partnership *Education Finance: Education Quality and Funding Reform: A Report of the Education Finance Subcommittee*. (March, 1993).
26. Minnesota Statutes, Section 3.882.
27. Minnesota Statutes, Section 120.0111.
28. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 124A.697 to 124A.73.
29. Bradley, A. *Education Week*, 186-189 (January 8, 1998).
30. 463 U.S. 388 (1983).
31. *Supra* note 1, Article 13.
32. Urahn, S., Cleary, J., Berg, D., & Emerson, R. *The Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program: A Research Report*. Research Department, Minnesota House of Representatives (February, 1993).
33. *Laws* 1997, First Special Session, Ch. 4, Article 8.
34. Sullivan, *supra* note 23.
35. Bradley, *supra* note 29 at 30.
36. In 1994, the average SAT score in Minnesota was over 17% above the national average while the per pupil spending in that year was above the average. Of course, no one measure or even combination of measures gives a complete indication of school performance. Minnesota students, however, have consistently performed well on standardized test scores, although the trend in school financing in Minnesota reflects the public concern today that too many students are not adequately prepared for the challenges of the next century and that standards-based reform must be significantly funded if it is to succeed.
37. OBE is defined in Minnesota as a "pupil centered, results-oriented system premised on the belief that all individuals can learn." Minnesota Statute 126.661, Subd. 7. The law defining OBE was repealed on August 1, 1996. See Sullivan, *supra* note at 6.
38. Minnesota Statute 126.661, Subd. 7.
39. This incentive was to increase parental involvement; improve results-oriented instructional processes; create flexible school-based organizational structures; and to improve student achievement. The 1993 law provided state incentive grants to selected school sites.
40. Sullivan, *supra* note 37.
41. Wedle cited in Bradley, *supra* note 35.



He was a prophet... but without appropriate honor in his own land.

## W.E.B. DuBois as Educational Philosopher: Will the Real DuBois Please Stand Up?

Don Hufford

The "who" of W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) is in "the eye of the beholder." He has been interpreted as being an historian, sociologist, journalist, editor, novelist, poet, and scholar. He has been credited with- and blamed for- being a politically agitating gadfly who grandfathered the Civil Rights Movement. He has also been denigrated by those who do not consider him to be radical enough as a traitor to this same "cause." He has been recognized as a passionate, articulate defender of the ideals and principles of a democratic society, yet condemned for articulating socialist ideals and for joining the Communist Party in his 95th year. He was a pragmatic patriot who could write: "Our country is at war . . . this is OUR war. We must fight it with every ounce of blood and treasure;"<sup>1</sup> but who later renounced his U.S. citizenship to become a citizen of Ghana. He was a champion of the powerless masses, but was criticized for his failure to interact and to personally "connect" with the common man. He was a prophet- in the Biblical sense- but without appropriate honor in his own land.<sup>2</sup>

The list of differing understandings of DuBois the "individual" goes on. To interpret DuBois as an educational philosopher- as this paper does- is to open the door to divergent hermeneutical possibilities, and to definitional challenges from both philosophers and educators. A thesis may, however, be offered- and defended- that there is an implicit philosophy of education woven into the fabric of the writings of W.E.B. DuBois. This philosophy is found imbedded in his works of creative fiction as well as in his non-fiction, autobiographical, and academic writings. It is possible to extract from his writings- and life experiences- an educational philosophy which may be used to better understand the contentious educational battles of the 1990s- battles which in his words are "as old as the world and as young as the babe born tonight."<sup>3</sup>

DuBois had an early flirtation with academic philosophy, and he once defined the core of his "self" by proclaiming, "I am a teacher!"<sup>4</sup> And, of course, he was. He spent much of his 95 years as an educator. Many years were spent in front of a classroom, and many with pen in hand producing the words that would sting the conscience of a nation. But in defining DuBois as an "educator" it is important to recognize an expanded definition of the word. DuBois was an educator not just because of his classroom experiences- not because he taught young children in a one-room schoolhouse in a culturally and economically impoverished rural area of Tennessee<sup>5</sup>- not because he taught classic languages, and German and English, and history, and economics at the university level- not because he was a qualitative and quantitative researcher<sup>6</sup>- not because he was a

prolific and well-published scholar- not because he was a "critical pedagogue" and "liberatory educator" (in the Paulo Freire mold) before these terms were invented.

DuBois was an "educator" in the broadly defined sense of one who communicates; who stimulates, challenges, critiques, stirs-up, arouses . . . who questions. A classroom is one arena for this education to take place. But we must move beyond the classroom to pursue a meaningful definition of W.E.B. DuBois as "educator," or to interpret an understanding of his educational philosophy.

DuBois educated as a social critic, as a social activist, as a challenger of the political and economic status-quo. He educated as a voice for the powerless; as a foe of injustice, racism, discrimination, capitalist exploitation, and imperialism. He educated as a champion of the oppressed, of women's rights, of the disenfranchised, of the miseducated. He educated through the pages of *The Crisis* and other periodicals. He educated through his novels, his poetry, his research and scholarly writing, his newspaper columns. He educated through journal articles, and lectures. He educated through his extensive correspondence with both the powerbrokers and the powerless of the world.

A caveat may be necessary at this point. The attempt to distill an educational philosophy from the prolific literary productivity and long-life experiences of a man such as W.E.B. DuBois is by its very nature an interpretive process. And... it must be remembered that such an interpretation is always circumscribed by the existentially defined "self" of the interpreter. We often find what we are looking for, and may create an hermeneutical "self-fulfilling prophecy."

The process of defining a DuBois "educational philosophy" involves not just an intellectual analysis and evaluation, but also an emotional - even spiritually tinged - assessment of a man who was complex, not always consistent, sometimes ambiguous in word and deed. DuBois was not a perfect man. He made mistakes. His life was a mirror reflecting both human strength and frailty. He could be a paradox of controlled rage and reconciliation. He was a man whose life bridged two centuries- who possessed the genetic strains of divergent biological and cultural inheritances, who merged classical learning with practical educational expediency, and who was continually forced to seek reconciliation of opposite tendencies in both his own personality and the world in which he lived.

DuBois left an intellectual and moral legacy for scholars to interpret and for social activists to apply. To study the educational thought of this man is to find oneself replenished in mind and spirit- but strangely discontented. There is much in such an intellectual/spiritual exposure that is paradoxical, conflicted, inconsistent, and disturbing. There is also much that is steady, uplifting, intellectually stimulating, and spiritually healing. To experience with DuBois an educational search for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty is to experience a parallel search for Social Justice and Human Dignity for all. It is to be reminded of how mankind has trivialized the great questions about life's meaning, falsified the answers, and sullied the search. But to engage in the search is to experience the hope that it represents a continuous process of renewal of both self and society. It is to restate basic questions, the answers to which must be lived in the present moment.

In evaluating DuBois as an educational theorist and practitioner, Herbert Aptheker affirmed that in his lifetime "no one in the United States was more expert in the area of the nature, theory, and the purposes of education."<sup>7</sup> This may be an arguable conclusion when considered in light of Aptheker's personal affinity for DuBois and the

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ideas he articulated. The life and writings of DuBois do, however, provide philosophical and historical insights into educational ideas, ideals, and practical applications— into the nature, theory, and purposes of education.

DuBois' educational philosophy involved a metaphysical understanding of Truth— an epistemological search for how Truth is known, and an axiological application of Truth in the world of people and events. It is significant in interpreting DuBois as an "educator" to recognize that he was able to hold the absolutes of capital letter "Truth" in a creative, dynamic tension with small letter "truths" that are created by human beings in the fluid, changing world of historical progression. He was able to intellectually choreograph the tension coming from the merging of opposite poles of thought, and to direct the energy produced into creative endeavor.

In terms of education DuBois understood— and applied— the reality that "human education (is) that ever necessary combination of the permanent and the contingent - of the ideal and the practical in workable equilibrium (which) has been, as it must be in every age and place, a matter of infinite experiment and frequent mistakes."<sup>8</sup> In today's educational arena— as the politically charged reform battles rage on— it is the "workable equilibrium" that seems to be neglected in favor of "infinite experiments and frequent mistakes." Those who take up implacable positions regarding educational purposes and methods might well take heed of DuBois' admonition that "to no one type of mind is it given (the ability) to discern the totality of truth."<sup>9</sup> It may be inferred from DuBois' writings that— in educational philosophy— it is best to be flexible and open rather than rigid and dogmatic. It is best to make connections between the poetic and the scientific, the intuitive and the empirical, the contemplative and the active; the worldview of the Idealist and the Realist, of the Pragmatist and the Existentialist; the methods of the behavioristic and the humanistic teacher.

DuBois' educational philosophy was certainly not systematic in form, or consistent in presentation. In words used to describe an alter-ego character in one of his novels, "he had a mind too keen to be consistent."<sup>10</sup> David L. Lewis, a DuBois biographer, has noted that "he struck up so many positions so articulately and so perceptively and contradictorily."<sup>11</sup> It may have been a lack of systematic "consistency" in relating to contentious issues— which emerged and reemerged over nine decades of life— that has led to the seemingly "contradictory" in DuBois. It may, however, be posited that it was not so much inconsistency in thought that caused DuBois to reevaluate positions as it was an understanding of the existential reality of divergent worldviews.

Arnold Rampersad has noted that DuBois was a man "with the soul of a poet and the intellect of a scientist; he lived at least a double life, continually compelled to respond to the challenge of reconciling opposites."<sup>12</sup> But DuBois could open his mind to "opposites" only when such a situational reconciliation did not compromise a moral absolute. Sydney Harris has written of this kind of emotional/intellectual strength as residing in the person who understands that "no principle, no concept, and no system is valuable or long viable unless it learns to tolerate, to absorb, or to maintain an equilibrium with the other. Not with its 'opposites'— truth cannot temporize with falsehood— but with its Yin and Yang sustaining and complementing each other."<sup>13</sup>

DuBois refused to compromise with falsehood. The True, the Good, and the Beautiful— the Right and the Just— must be served. But he had an open, inquiring, questioning mind which allowed him to maximize

the power of creative tension generated between the poles of divergent viewpoints.<sup>14</sup> It is here suggested that this man of self-described "double consciousness"<sup>15</sup> was able to hold a "double educational philosophy" in a positive, creative tension. One was based on the absolutes of philosophical Idealism/Realism, resulting in an "elitist" educational model. The other was based on a philosophical Existentialist Humanism, resulting in a critical pedagogy model much akin to the liberatory education espoused by Paulo Freire.

DuBois did not refer in his writings to a "liberatory" or "critical pedagogy" educational model, but the implications were there. When he wrote of "Two Sorts of Schooling" he distinguished between two educational purposes that may be defined somewhat loosely as "to make a living" and "to make a life." His thinking on this issue has significant meaning for the 1990s:

Consciously or unconsciously every system of education has two aims which can never in this imperfect world be brought into complete agreement. The one, the higher and broader aim, is the full development of the individual soul to its largest capacity; the other is the training of the individual to earn a living... Here lies the real problem of education, a problem as old as the world and as young as the babe born tonight. How shall we educate our children so that they may be cultured men and women and yet able to earn a living... it is a nice question and one on which many a nation has blundered.<sup>16</sup>

It was DuBois' educational focus on "cultured men and women" that has led many to view him as a practicing member of the scholarly intelligentsia, and to believe that he was an educational elitist who based his teaching and educational theory on philosophical Idealism. And this view recognizes a partial truth. Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, referred to the educational "elitist" in DuBois when he noted in 1996: "We had DuBois who saw that we should be educated in the arts and science. We should be scholars."<sup>17</sup> Mr. Farrakhan here relates to a memory of the early DuBois and his conflict with Booker T. Washington. The two men engaged in a continuing debate, with philosophical and political undertones, over "how"— and more importantly, "why"— to educate African Americans, who were effectively excluded from taking full advantage of educational opportunities. DuBois, writing of education in the late nineteenth century, noted that "what was wrong was that people like me and thousands of others who might have my ability and aspirations were refused permission to be part of this world."<sup>18</sup> Both DuBois and Washington sought ways to ameliorate the situation. DuBois was unyielding in his fight for the "best" education for the "best" African American minds, while Washington was willing to make what he saw as necessary compromises with the white power structure. The DuBois/ Washington on-going debate had, perhaps, as much to do with social/political power in the African American community as it did with educational opportunities.<sup>19</sup> It did, however, help to establish DuBois' reputation as an educational elitist and philosophical Idealist.

DuBois' concept of the "talented tenth"— although later significantly modified in recognition of social realities — also helped to establish a confusing image of the "real" DuBois in the minds of many. David G. DuBois has written of how this image remains alive and well today:

... little more is passed on to our youth today of W.E.B DuBois than the elitist concept of black leadership, the Talented Tenth.

Last year (I was) introduced to a young African American... At mention that I was a stepson of W.E.B. DuBois, the young man responded in recognition: "Oh the Talented Tenth!" This incident confirmed for me once again how great the need is today to make the work, the enormous contribution, and the truth of W.E.B. DuBois known...<sup>29</sup>

To better understand "the truth of W.E. B. DuBois" in terms of his contributions to educational thought I found it important to consider his educational "double consciousness." He was able to seek out unchanging, absolute "Truth which (he) spelled with a capital,"<sup>21</sup> and to hold it in a dynamic, creative tension with the small-letter truths of an existentially defined, and changing, social reality. In terms of educational purpose and method he expressed an Aristotelian understanding when he stated, with conviction, that "the truth lies ever between extremes."<sup>22</sup> The Platonist in DuBois believed that education should lead to "a life lit by some large vision of beauty and goodness and truth."<sup>21</sup> As a liberatory educator he also understood the political reality that "education among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have, an element of danger, dissatisfaction, and revolt. You cannot both educate people and hold them down."<sup>24</sup>

DuBois recognized the importance of a Perennialist educational philosophy when he wrote, "I sit with Shakespeare... move arm and arm with Balzac and Dumas... I summon Aristotle and Aurelius... So wed with Truth I dwell above the veil."<sup>25</sup> He did, however, connect this educational view with the social activism of a liberatory Reconstructionist educational philosophy, and declared that "to be silent when injustices call out for redress, to fail to speak out when poverty and ignorance keep some in social bondage, to muffle the sounds of indignation and righteous anger is to fail the teacher's calling."<sup>25</sup> It was the essence of a DuBois eclectic educational philosophy that he should "wish not only to make Truth known, but to present it in such shape as to encourage and help social reform."<sup>27</sup> When he wrote that education should be a "search for answers to fundamental problems"<sup>28</sup> he expressed a "double message:" the recognition that the search should connect the great enduring metaphysical questions of existence to the search for answers to questions regarding current social, economic, and political injustices.

DuBois' educational thinking was influenced by a concept of humanity based on a natural rights philosophy. He believed that there is an inherent learning drive in each individual that seeks correspondence with a social/political right to learn. DuBois understood that the individual- whatever his/her racial, cultural, ethnic group- inherently wants to learn, needs to learn, has a right to learn. One goal of a democratic society should be to help each individual achieve "that exercise and unbinding of the human spirit which (enables) mankind to reach its highest and best manifestations" leading to "the fullest and roundest development of the powers of the human being."<sup>29</sup>

The search for knowledge - and even more for critical understanding- is an emotional, psychological- even spiritual- drive inherent in the self. This search is an expression of a common humanity. DuBois warned that any imposed barrier- racism, economic inequities and exploitation, political or social discrimination, etc.- which thwarts this expression is a negation of what it means to be human and of the right to achieve full humanity. The demand for equal distribution of knowledge, and for equitable access to help in understanding that knowledge, are social responses to a natural right. This right establishes a bond that helps unite diverse individuals into a common

humanity. DuBois understood that educators should be "led by the knowledge that no man should be poor, nor sick, nor ignorant; but that the humblest worker as well as the sons of emperors shall be fed and taught and healed- and that there emerge on earth a single unified people, free, well and educated."<sup>30</sup>

DuBois has been denigrated by some social activists for not being enough of a radical revolutionary, even though he spent most of his life challenging oppression and injustice. It may well be that he believed his most productive role was that of an intellectual agitator, the gadfly who would sting the conscience of a nation. He warned: "Here comes the agitator. He is the herald. He is the prophet. He is the man who says to the world, 'There are evils which you do not know, but which I know and you must listen.'"<sup>31</sup> As an educator DuBois reminded those who were "called" to teach that "teachers cannot be pedants or dilettantes; they cannot be mere technicians and higher artisans; they have got to be social statesmen and statesmen of high order."<sup>32</sup>

Some people have recognized this aspect of DuBois' educational persona. In discussing DuBois as an academic and a champion of the oppressed, Eugene Holmes has written:

Literally and historically there had not been any philosophers of freedom up until DuBois, who made it the basic theme in his belles lettres, in his sociology, and in his history... DuBois always regarded his methodology as embracing the equal rights of human beings to strive to live.<sup>33</sup>

DuBois agreed with the Idealist, Plato, (and the Realist, Aristotle) that the good life for the individual is inextricably bound to that of the just society. His enduring search was for that society which would encourage and permit the "fullest realization of the individual human spirit." He sought for each and all "an education that encourages aspiration... sets the loftiest of ideals and seeks as an end culture and character rather than (just) bread-winning."<sup>34</sup> DuBois recognized that "culture," "character," and "bread-winning" are equally jeopardized when an individual's search for self-realization is restricted by exterior forces. He understood that "to educate" and "to liberate" are branches of the same philosophical root system. He expressed this idea when he wrote metaphorically in one of his novels: "When you're educated you won't want to live in the swamp."<sup>35</sup> He was well aware that "to stimulate... untrained minds is to play with mighty fires."<sup>36</sup> To "know" provides the stimulus to "act."

DuBois believed in the liberatory potential inherent in the educationally supported process of growing and expanding toward individual possibility, because "what (people) are depends on the way they have been educated... the way in which their possibilities have been developed and drawn out."<sup>37</sup> He believed that formal education should help develop one's ability to creatively harness- and make practical use of- the tension developed between the desire for self-realization (an individual dynamic) and the call for sacrificial service to others (a social dynamic).

DuBois stood for the right of every individual "to be," but he stressed the importance that "to do" - to act for the good of the larger society- is a complimentary and necessary obligation. He modeled the liberatory educational theory that education is for both self and society. He issued a challenge in the form of a question: "Are we going to use our education for enjoyment or for service?"<sup>38</sup> The answer(s) has/ have both individual and group implications. Without a social dynamic the educational process is narrowed by an egotistic,

"me-oriented" inwardness that fails to consider the "other." But education, without the individual dynamic, lacks a "centered" purpose and motivational vitality.

Implicit in the educational thought of DuBois is the belief that the potentially oppositional demands of self-affirmation and social responsibility may exist in a creative, productive tension. Positive, productive action occurs when the individual allows him/herself to be creatively involved in larger, "self/other," interdependent actions. DuBois believed in the importance of a positive self-concept ("of decisive importance in the education of our youth is the implanting of pride"), but understood that self-concept as an individual reality is directly related to the communal "quality" of social, economic, political, and educational justice in any given society. He promoted the importance of individual self-fulfillment within the educational search for human possibility, but he placed the concept of individuality (not individualism) within the larger context of social purpose and common humanity.<sup>39</sup> Even as one might seek within the self the "soul-beauty of infinite possibility and endless development"<sup>40</sup> there still exists the possibility of the self-chosen responsibility to "dedicate our lives to lessening other's sorrow, the uprooting of poverty, and to the broadening of life and living for human souls."<sup>41</sup>

DuBois believed that the pedagogical process should stimulate an intellectual search for capital-letter Truth and an empathic awareness of social issues. Education should provide not just the skill but also the motivation for one to engage in constructive social action based on critical evaluation of the issues involved. Writing of one of his fictional protagonists DuBois described this motivational force: "He wanted to get his hands into the tangles of this world. He wanted to understand... it was a longing for action, breath, helpfulness, great constructive deeds."<sup>42</sup> DuBois was a dreamer of great dreams, and he believed education should develop "dreamers toward a better world;" but he was constrained by a philosophically pragmatic understanding that "there is no dream but deed."<sup>43</sup> It was this kind of pedagogical praxis—a reflection/action iteration—which made it possible for DuBois to combine dream and deed into his personal brand of social activism. In a DuBois philosophy, education is the search for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty leading to the practice of liberty, justice, and equality.

The philosophical Idealist in DuBois created an intellectual wanderer dedicated to the search for metaphysical Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. But the philosophical Pragmatist whispered that the search is merely a dream-like exercise in academic speculation until—and unless—it is made real by the axiological implications of work, service, and sacrifice.<sup>44</sup> DuBois understood that education reveals only the shadow-like possibilities of the small-letter truths of liberty, justice, and equality on the cave walls of the world. The discovery of capital-letter Truth—as predicated by an Idealist educational philosophy—requires an intellectual search. But the search is only a sterile mental exercise unless knowledge gained is wedded to a critical understanding of real world realities and transformed into active service to humanity.

DuBois is a significant historical example of the possibility of using divergent educational philosophies to create a "positive" tension resulting in creative, productive results. Educational controversy—when it involves the open expression of, and dialogue about, differing philosophical viewpoints regarding educational purpose and method—can have a positive effect on final decisions, locally and nationally,

regarding the direction of public education in America. A remark made during a 1957 TV interview with DuBois—although not specifically related to educational philosophies—is pertinent to this reality.

Whatever else may be said about William DuBois philosophies, it is only when his views cannot be aired, only when they are denied utterance because they are unpopular views, only when there is silence and solemn agreement, does this country then stand in danger.<sup>45</sup>

"Silence and solemn agreement" in today's educational arena would be an indicator that one ideology is all-powerful, and opposing voices are stilled. In the history of American education, fortunately, there have always been philosophically defined dissenters. Today one philosophical worldview dominates educational decision making, but opposing views continue to offer challenges to the educational power structure. The predominant educational language spoken today is one of technical competency influenced by corporate-world definitional standards of "excellence." The focus is on a lexicon of empiricism—of standardized tests, exit tests, aligned curriculum tests, state and national performance assessments, bottom-line efficiency, and teacher accountability measured by student "scores" based on a "free market" competitive philosophy.

This Realist/Empiricist educational philosophy sees public education as a Goals 2000, technocratic, free-market-inspired processing of raw materials (students) into a pre-planned product ("world class" workers). There are, however, other educational philosophies and methodologies being promoted (Idealist, Humanist/Existentialist) that make possible a continuing educational discourse, and keep the dominant "corporate model" from being an "absolute". One such educational alternative may be stated in DuBoisan counterpoint terms. He saw "education as (preparing) individuals for the broader life; not (for) production of goods," but "to develop to our full potential . . . every capacity God has given us."<sup>46</sup> This means that our public schools must promote "the growth of initiative, the spirit of independent thought... expanding consciousness,"<sup>47</sup> while resisting "the tendency to... regard human beings as among the material resources of the land to be trained with an eye single to future dividends."<sup>48</sup>

DuBois, of course, understood the importance of Realist epistemology and Empiricist methodology. His work as a social scientist necessitated that he develop the skills to utilize the observable, the measurable, the quantifiable. He recognized, however, that cold, hard facts translated to statistical evidence are only part of the educational equation. He vowed that he would not be "the truth seeker... devoid of human sympathy and careless of human ideals,"<sup>49</sup> and he stressed that he had "sympathy for the ideal of cold, impartial (knowledge), but that must not be allowed to degenerate as it has so often into insensitivity to human suffering and injustice... (He) could not be a calm, cool, detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered, and starved."<sup>50</sup>

DuBois would agree—in part—with one of today's educational critics, E.D. Hirsch, Jr., that: "literate culture is the most democratic culture in our land: it excludes nobody; it cuts across generations and social groups and classes; it is not usually one's first culture, but it should be everyone's second, existing as it does beyond the narrow spheres of family, neighborhood, and region."<sup>51</sup> DuBois, however, would strongly challenge the phrase, "it excludes nobody," and declare that "work, culture, liberty - all these we need, not singly, but together."<sup>52</sup>

Cultural knowledge, the fruits of a literate education, is empty of meaning unless interpenetrated with liberty, justice, equality, and equitable opportunities for dignified work.

As a scholar DuBois had much in common with the educational thinking of such men as Robert M. Hutchins, Mortimer Adler, and Allan Bloom. He, too, was a defender of the liberal arts tradition and of the educational importance of the great enduring ideas of the past.

As a philosophical Idealist DuBois believed that schools should "educate children in the broadest, highest way ... (because) wisdom is the principal thing."<sup>33</sup> But, as a social activist, he also embraced elements of John Dewey's Pragmatism. He believed that "with this general and theoretical (knowledge) must go a definite and detailed object suited to the present age, this present group, the present set of problems."<sup>34</sup> His educational philosophy allowed space for the foundational wisdom of the past and the new educational theories—that were slowly helping to forge a better future for "the children of all." He prayed for a liberatory education that would be a process of ... criticism and searching ... the insistent questioning of old ways and old deeds, ever mindful of the solemnness of world old things (while) welcoming the things that are good and true and the eternal beauty of both old and new.<sup>35</sup>

Today's contentious educational battles have philosophical roots: political right vs. political left, Christian fundamentalists vs. secular humanists, progressives vs. behaviorists, public school defenders vs. "for profit" entrepreneurs, back-to-basics traditionalists vs. the proponents of curricular diversity—Idealist/Realist vs Pragmatist/Existentialist. We need to listen to W.E.B. DuBois: "We find it necessary to guard carefully least undue insistence on one of these methods ... may spoil the balance between the (others)."<sup>36</sup>

An understanding of DuBois' educational thought—as interpreted from his writings—does not encourage us to compromise personal philosophical ideals or strongly held beliefs: he would say, "fight on!!"

But he would remind us that a precarious balance is not only possible but may represent the strength of a democratic society, and provide an antidote to a "silent and solemn agreement." If, as DuBois

believed, education is the foundation stone of our democracy,<sup>37</sup> then it is important that there be intellectual rebels willing and able to challenge any educational philosophy that becomes all-powerful. By "daring to be honest rather than orthodox"<sup>38</sup> these challengers of the educational status-quo provide the motivation and the will to maintain the precarious balance.

And we serve first for the sake of serving—to develop our own powers, gain the mastery of this human machine, come to the broadest, deepest self-realization. And then we serve for the real end of service, to make life no narrow, selfish thing, but let it sweep as sweeps the morning—broad and full and free for all men and all time, that you and I and all may earn a living and earn, too, much more than that—a life worth living.<sup>39</sup>

#### Endnotes and Sources

1. W.E.B. DuBois. *Writings in Periodicals edited by W.E.B. DuBois: Selections from The Crisis*, vol. 1, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1983), 160.

This quote from an August, 1918 article in *The Crisis* was preceded by his controversial article, "Close Ranks," in the July, 1918 issue, in which he wrote: "We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills." *Ibid.*, 159.

2. Herbert Aptheker has described DuBois as "a kind of biblical prophet calling the nation to the path of rectitude, warning of the realities of retribution: (who) writes as one filled with a kind of national consciousness in his own people and simultaneously as one who is profoundly in love with the United States of the Declaration of Independence and who is seeking to make of this land... one fully in accord with that immortal manifesto," *The Literary Legacy of W.E.B. DuBois* (White Plains, New York: Kraus International Publishers, 1989), 51.

In Biblical terms the prophet was a person with extraordinary spiritual and moral insight who called the people's attention to injustices and the realities of existence. DuBois was also a prophet as defined as one who is "an effective or leading spokesman for a cause, doctrine, or group," *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth edition, 1993.

3. W.E.B. DuBois. *Writings in Periodicals Edited by Others*, vol. 1, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1982), 83.

4. DuBois. *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 6.

DuBois' early interest in philosophy was a basic reason for his interest in a Harvard education: "I was in Harvard... to enlarge my grasp of the meaning of the universe... above all I wanted to study philosophy! I wanted to get hold of the basis of knowledge and explore foundations and beginnings." DuBois. *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois*, tenth printing (New York: International Publishers Company, 1988), 132-133.

But it was as a teacher that DuBois hoped to be remembered. At age 89, during a 1957 TV interview with Channel 5, New York City, he answered a question: "Well, the thing that I would want to be remembered for would be my writing and teaching. I have liked teaching... I have tried to teach." *The Seventh Son: The Thought and Writings of W.E.B. DuBois*, ed. Julius Lester (New York: Random House, 1971), 708. (It is interesting to speculate on the fact that DuBois used the singular "thing" in referring to "writing and teaching." He viewed his writing as synonymous with teaching.)

5. DuBois' experiences in a run-down, ill-equipped, one-room schoolhouse in the rural, segregated south did not negate his faith in education. He wrote: "I loved my school, and the fine faith the children had in the wisdom of their teacher was truly marvellous. We read and spelled together, wrote a little, picked flowers, sang, and listened to stories of the world beyond the hill." *Ibid.*, 117-118.

6. Many are not aware that "DuBois embarked on a career as a sociologist prior to the turn of the century... through a careful, scientific, sociological analysis of black Americans. From 1896 to 1910 DuBois was an extremely productive sociologist." Preface to *W.E.B. DuBois: On Sociology and the Black Community*, ed. Dan Green and Edwin Driver (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), vii.

Elijah Anderson has declared that "W.E.B. DuBois is a founding father of American sociology." DuBois. *The Philadelphia Negro*, ed. Elijah Anderson (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), ix.

7. Aptheker, ed., *The Education of Black People*, x.

8. DuBois. *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Donald B. Gibson (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 77.

9. *Ibid.*

10. DuBois wrote in a *Crisis* article (April 1934): "I am not worried about being consistent. What worries me is the Truth," and in his book, *In Battle for Peace*, he noted that "contradictions and paradox poured over paradox and contradictions."

11. Willie Drake found the apparent inconsistencies appearing during DuBois' several decades of writing on controversial issues to be a natural result of an inquiring mind. "A seemingly enduring strain in this man was honesty, and honesty and expanding intelligence would call upon DuBois to alter a number of previous viewpoints." Willie Drake, "From Reform to Communism: The Intellectual Development of W.E.B. DuBois," (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1985), 96.

12. Arnold Rampersad, *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. DuBois* (New York: Schocken Books, 1990; reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), vii.

13. Sydney Harris, *The Authentic Person* (Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1972), 95.

14. Some researchers who have analyzed the tensions generated by DuBois' wrestling with oppositional ideas and ideals have defined his thought in terms of a dialectical process. For example see Keith Byerman, "Two Warring Ideals: The Dialectical Thought of W.E.B. DuBois," (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1978).

15. DuBois wrote of his "double consciousness" on numerous occasions, including in *Souls*, 45. "It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness... One ever feels his twoness— an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals." The "twoness" of his educational philosophy might have been stated in similar terms, though with less personal emotion attached to the words.

16. DuBois, *Writings by W.E.B. DuBois in Periodicals Edited By Others vol. 1*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1982), 83.

17. Louis Farrakhan, quoted in an interview by John Kennedy, Jr., in *George*, October, 1996.

18. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn*, in Nathan Huggins, *W.E.B. DuBois: Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1986), 574.

19. Both DuBois and Washington believed in the importance of educating African Americans for the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society. Their differences were related to an issue that has deep historical and philosophical roots, and which continues to generate heated controversy regarding public school purposes. In simplified terms the issue is one of "tracking," with some students encouraged toward a "liberal," college-bound education, and others "destined" for a world-of-work curriculum. Washington was willing to settle for a vocational/practical education – a terminal process. DuBois demanded the right to a liberal/humanistic education – a continuing process making opportunities for higher education available to African Americans. Washington was willing to compromise educational, political, and civil rights for work-place opportunities. DuBois would not compromise. He believed that "necessary as it is to earn a living, it is more important to earn a life ... living is not for earning, but earning is for living. The education that trains men simply for earning a living is not education." *The Education of Black People*, 14 and 115.

20. David D. DuBois, "Understanding the Legacy of W.E.B. DuBois," *Emerge*, October, 1993, 63.

In a 1910 speech to a "white, rich, and well-born" audience in Brookline, Massachusetts DuBois said that "the first step toward lifting the submerged mass of black people in the South is through the higher training of the talented few." Later he wrote: "My faith hitherto had been in what I once denominated as the talented tenth. I now realize that... out of the mass of the working classes, who know life in its bitter struggle, will continually rise the real, unselfish and clear sighted leadership." This was written after he came to believe the educated "talented tenth" had failed in an obligation to help lift the "mass of the working classes."

For a contemporary interpretation of a "generation X" version of the talented tenth see the 1997 film, *Swingers*. "They cross dramatic racial barriers. They show the universality of the American dream and the American experience once the stereotypes are put away." Bob Curtright, film review, *Wichita Eagle*, March 19, 1997.

21. DuBois, *The Correspondence of W.E.B. DuBois, vol. 3*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), 395.

Even though DuBois entered Harvard "to discover Truth," he later "gave up the search for 'Absolute' Truth; not from doubt of (its) existence... but because I believe that our limited knowledge and clumsy methods of research made it impossible now to completely apprehend Truth... I assumed the existence of Truth (and)... that Truth was only partially known." *Ibid*.

22. DuBois, *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1988. Reprint, New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1921), 204.

23. DuBois, *Worlds of Color, book 3, The Black Flame: A Trilogy* (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1976), 166.

24. DuBois, *The Crisis*, January, 1912, in Huggins, 1139.

25. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, with introductions by Nathan Hare and Alvin Poussaint (New York: New American Library, 1982), 139.

Perennialism, as an educational philosophy, is based on an understanding that human nature is innate, and everywhere the same, despite differing environmental conditions. This belief is coupled with the belief that there are basic, fundamental, enduring ideas and "truths," that have been revealed over time through the great works of literature, history, philosophy, religion and science. Therefore, there is a "basic" education that should be the same for all students.

26. DuBois, *The Crisis*, May, 1914, in Huggins, 1157.

27. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn*.

28. DuBois, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, 394.

29. DuBois, ed. Aptheker, *Education of Black folk*, 10.

30. "We are one world... let us realize our responsibilities," DuBois, *Prayers*, 26.

31. DuBois, found in Rampersad, *Art and Imagination*, 12.

32. DuBois, ed. Aptheker, *Education of Black folk*, 78.

33. Eugene Holmes, *Black Titan: W.E.B. DuBois*, ed. John Clarke, et al. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 78.

34. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Donald B. Gibson (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 34.

35. DuBois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, with an introduction by Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1974. Reprint, Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1911), 50.

36. DuBois, *Souls*, ed. Hare and Poussaint, 132.

37. DuBois, *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887-1961*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 252.
38. DuBois, *Negro Digest*, April, 1947, 235-236.
39. DuBois interpreted the negative aspect of "individualism" as promoted in a Darwinian, capitalist economic philosophy: "Its foundation is the idea of the strong man- Individualism coupled with the rule of might... the advance of one part of the world at the expense of the whole; the overwhelming sense of the I, and the consequent forgetting of the Thou." *Autobiography*, 146.
40. DuBois, *Periodicals Edited By Others*, vol. 1, 219.
41. DuBois, *Prayers for Dark People*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 59.
42. DuBois, *Dark Princess: A Romance* (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1974. Reprint, New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1928), 42.
43. DuBois, *Autobiography*, 281 and 423.
44. DuBois frequently referred to the triple responsibilities of work, service, and sacrifice. In one example he exhorted the 1898 Fisk University graduates to "gladly work, and sacrifice, and serve." found in Huggins, *DuBois Writings*, 839.  
For a scholarly treatment of DuBois as a philosophical Pragmatist see Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).
45. Al Morgan, in an interview of DuBois on Channel 5, New York City, July 4, 1957. Found in *Seventh Son*, ed. Lester, 708.
46. DuBois, *Manual Builds a School*, 319, and *Education of Black Folk*, 13.
47. DuBois, *Outlook*, October 17, 1903.
48. DuBois, *Souls*, ed. Hare and Poussaint, 126.
49. DuBois, *Autobiography*, 202.
50. DuBois, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 174.
51. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1987), 21.
52. DuBois, *Souls*, ed. Gibson, 11.
53. DuBois, *Darkwater*, 210. This quote was preceded by the meaningful statement that "we must seek not to make men carpenters, but to make carpenters men," and followed by the question, "Is not the problem of their (African American) education simply an intensification of the problem of educating all children?"
54. We might use Jeff Zorn's term, "a tough minded pluralism" to help define DuBois' educational philosophy. Zorn speaks of DuBois' educational ideas as "complex... incorporating a high regard for 'uniquely Black' matters, a grounding in traditional studies... and a quite stringent character training." In a letter to the "Afterwords" column in *Educational Theory*, fall, 1993, 483.
55. DuBois, *Prayers*, 65.
56. DuBois, *Periodicals Edited by Others*, vol 1, 85.  
DuBois once admonished teachers to "teach the truth as they see it even if it means they lose their jobs... to give up teaching and go to digging ditches before bowing to slavery of thought." *Education of Black People*, 157-158.
57. DuBois, *Annals of the American Academy of Science*, November, 1928, 9.  
DuBois wrote that "the public school should be a great democracy where all elements of the population come to realize the essential humanity of each." *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 453.
58. DuBois, *DuBois Writings*, ed. Huggins, 831
59. DuBois, *Ibid.*, 832.

*Books should not be chosen simply because they have minority characters and are available.*

## Evaluating Multicultural Literature for Use in the Classroom

Julia Wilkins and Robert J. Gamble

### Introduction

In a country as culturally diverse as the United States, it is important that classroom educators teach children about the multicultural composition of the land they inhabit. One way this can be achieved is through literature, which when used properly, can help children accept and be sensitive to the diversity of others. Reading about racial or ethnic groups helps children realize that other people have feelings, emotions, and needs similar to theirs. Through such exposure, children discover that while not all people may look the same, or share their personal beliefs and values, they all deserve equal respect. At the same time, children who are members of racial or ethnic minorities come to realize that their culture also makes important contributions to the world, thereby improving their own self-concepts, while nurturing pride in their heritage.

There are many enlightening, educational multicultural books available today, targeted toward readers of all ages. The challenge for classroom teachers is knowing how to recognize "good" multicultural books and select them for use in their classrooms. The first thing teachers should do when choosing books is to question how children will respond to reading them: Will children feel that they share commonalities with people in other cultures? Will stories build up self-esteem for children who are members of the racial and ethnic groups being described? In addition to these questions, there are many other important issues to consider in the selection process. This article examines these issues and provides specific criteria that should be used in evaluating multicultural literature so that books chosen truly represent diverse cultures and do not perpetuate stereotypes common in literature of the past.

### The History of Multicultural Literature

Historically, much of the literature used by teachers presented minorities stereotypically, or else made them invisible by omitting them entirely. Books that included minorities marginalized them, putting them in roles that were not central to the story and the roles they had were generally stereotyped. While African Americans were often shown as agreeable and compliant, this was depicted in a way which was belittling, showing them to be less sophisticated than their white counterparts. A 1965 survey found that only 47 of the 349 books examined included African Americans in the text, and the majority of these characters were depicted in menial positions, while the main characters were almost always Caucasian (Larrick, 1965).

With few exceptions, Caucasians have dominated children's literature and have invariably been the heroes. They have been portrayed in both the themes and the illustrations as intelligent, attractive, physically strong, and flawless. Native Americans, however, until recently were often depicted as loathsome savages, with illustrations showing them shirtless, spear throwing, and dancing around teepees. Hispanic people have generally been stereotyped as lazy and subservient. When shown in job situations they have typically been relegated to the kitchen or garden. Asians have been stereotyped as compliant, simplistic and meek. As with other minorities, their roles in literature have consistently put them in situations subordinate to Caucasians.

### Why Use Multicultural Literature?

One of the primary reasons for using multicultural literature is to help children develop positive attitudes and respect for individuals in all cultures. Literature is one way of transmitting these values to children. In developing an understanding of different lifestyles, multicultural literature encourages a broad range of social relationships, openness, and interest in others.

Multicultural books should also be used to engender racial pride. Literature affects not only how students view people from other cultures, but also influences how children view themselves and their own culture. It has been found that limited availability of quality books with minority characters can negatively affect children's reading, language development, and self-esteem (Costello, 1991; Meyer-Reimer, 1992).

### Problems in Selecting and Evaluating Appropriate Literature

There has been a proliferation of children's books over the past decade, giving teachers a wide and varied selection of multicultural books to choose from. However, given the skyrocketing costs of books, and the fact that not every multicultural book is a "good" multicultural book, educators must be very discerning and critical when selecting literature for use in the classroom.

Portraying minorities in a positive light is not enough to make a good book—the contents must also be evaluated in terms of the quality of writing. The same standards apply as in all good literature: the literary elements of plot, characterization, setting, theme, and style should be well developed and should coexist with cultural accuracy.

A problem teachers will undoubtedly face in the selection process is whether to eliminate classics of the past because they are racist by today's standards. Indeed, "Injun Joe" and "Sambo" type characters do perpetuate the worst kind of derogatory stereotypes if read without guidance or explanation. However, books such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Twain, 1885) and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Twain, 1876) can be used to teach children about the social climate of the era in which they were written. With sufficient background knowledge, children can be enlightened not only through positive story lines, but also from learning about the narrow-mindedness of others. If such books are used, teachers should preface them by discussing when the books were written and the attitudes of the times. Children can then explore how attitudes and behaviors of the past are different from those of today.

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### How to Evaluate Multicultural Literature

Many classroom teachers have limited experiences using books written from the perspective of, or about racial and ethnic minorities. As there are numerous issues to consider when choosing multicultural literature, teachers must learn how to assess books as appropriate for use in the classroom. Below are outlined specific criteria that should be used when selecting multicultural reading material so that books chosen truly represent a particular culture and present accurate and respectful images of minority races and ethnicities. Suggested books with outstanding illustrations and text are also provided.

#### Illustrations

If books with illustrations are chosen, the pictures should be examined to see if characters are easily recognizable as people of color. Children should be able to identify characters as black, Hispanic, Asians, and natives, without them being shown as caricatures. There should be physical diversity within the groups themselves, so avoid books that show all black or Asian characters with the same exaggerated facial features that make them all look alike. For example, if all Asian characters have round faces, straight black hair, slanted eyes and a yellowish tint to their skin coloring, it is recommended that another book that displays diversity within the racial group is chosen.

There are many books that have excellent true-to-life pictures of people of different races. One example is the African fable, *The Market Lady and the Mango Tree* (Watson and Watson, 1994). This book contains realistic pictures of black children which make them immediately recognizable as Africans. Another well illustrated book which realistically portrays black characters is *WOOD-HOOPOE Willie* (Kroll and Roundtree, 1992). The illustrations show a boy and his parents in everyday situations wearing both African and Western clothing, with hair braided and straightened, as it is worn by many African Americans today. Another outstandingly illustrated book is *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* (Jellifer, 1991). The pictures illuminate the words and wisdom of Native Americans in their belief of a natural and beautiful world. These illustrations help teach children about the exemplary relationship Native Americans have with the earth and shows the world through their eyes. Another noteworthy book, ideal for the Christmas season, is *Christmas Carol* (Teasdale and Gollieb, 1996). This book portrays the three wise men with different skin colors, and also shows the angels and shepherds in varying shades of pink, yellow, and brown.

#### Text

Once it has been established that a book's illustrations transcend any stereotypes, the text should be examined to identify how the characters are portrayed as a racial or ethnic group. Is it suggested that all members of the group live in poverty? If not, are they shown as being from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels and occupations? Minority groups should be culturally diverse, with individuals portrayed as having their own unique thoughts, emotions and philosophies. It is important that the characters of any one cultural group are as disparate as characters would be in stories based on mainstream culture. Diversity among African Americans is illustrated in *Back Home* (Pinkney, 1992) in which a young woman returns to her North Carolina home after living up North. Even though she is now a "city girl", she finds great pleasure in returning to farm life. *Masai ana I* (Kroll, 1992) tells the story of a little girl who learns

about East Africa and the Masai in school and imagines what her life might be like if she were Masai. Such stories show the different lives black people lead in the same country and in different parts of the world.

The text should also be studied carefully to see if minority characters are respected for themselves, or whether they only achieve success by giving up the distinctive values and lifestyles of their culture and adopting those of mainstream white society. Minority characters should be able to find ways to succeed without losing sight of their heritage, and their achievements should be noteworthy for the acts themselves, not because they are valued by white society, or represent some sort of weakening of their own culture and adoption of mainstream culture. *The Fortune Teller* (Alexander, 1992) is a wonderful story of a carpenter in Cameroon, West Africa, who goes to a fortune teller to see if he will become rich and famous, and whether he will marry and be happy. After the fortune teller disappears, the carpenter finds all the predictions come true due to a humorous twist in the story. The carpenter is successful in achieving his dreams of wealth, fame, marriage and happiness, all within the context of his West African life, without any outside intervention. This type of story shows that white intervention is not necessary for success in the lives of characters of color.

In a similar vein, if minority characters in the book have personal problems, they should be shown as being able to solve them themselves, without the intervention of whites. Beware of books which portray the "White Man" as some sort of savior, protecting minorities from hardships and providing the way to a better life. One noteworthy book for showing black solidarity and the ability to solve problems for themselves is *White Socks Only* (Coleman, 1996). This tells the story of a little girl in Mississippi who, because of a sign saying "Whites Only", takes off her shoes to step up to a water fountain in her clean white socks. When a large white man abuses her for drinking at the fountain, the black community rallies around to support the girl, and the "Whites Only" sign is removed from the fountain forever. This book is important in showing the strength and ability of minorities to stick together to fight oppression and prejudice.

Once it has been established that individuals within racial or ethnic groups are represented as diverse characters, capable of achieving success and solving problems for themselves, the text should be checked to see whether minority cultures are treated with respect, or whether they are depicted as inferior to the dominant white culture. At the other end of the spectrum, are minority lifestyles shown in an overly romanticized way, instead of being placed within the context of everyday activities familiar to all people? Often in trying to show the positive elements of other cultures, they are depicted in their traditional form and romanticized in a way which is degrading and distorting of the culture. For example, Native Americans are often seen happily huddled around camp fires, wearing traditional costumes, living close to nature and in harmony with each other. How close is this to the reality that most Native Americans now live in the United States? Although it is important to learn about the traditions of other cultural groups, it is also necessary to learn about the true-to-life, every day situations that members of the group experience. An authentic view of Native Americans is portrayed in *Toughboy and Sister* (Hill, 1990), the story of a young native Alaskan brother and sister who must survive after their father dies in an alcoholic seizure on a fishing trip.

Lastly, while still examining the text, check to make sure that cultures are not lumped into cultural conglomerates with umbrella labels such as "Native American", "Asian American", or "Hispanic American". Hispanic American literature includes the cultural traditions of Spain, Cuba, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. However, in literature they are all treated as if they are the same. The differences among the many cultures within each "cultural conglomerate" must not be overlooked. For example, although both Asian, the life of the South Korean mother fleeing from war with her children in *Peacebound Trains* (Balgassi, 1996) is very different from the life of Pakistani Shabanu living with her husband from an arranged marriage in *Haveli* (Staples, 1993). *Aekyung's Dream* (Paek, 1988) also illustrates the fact that not all people from Asia look alike, talk alike, or have the same culture.

### How to Evaluate Authors

Because racism sometimes manifests itself in subtle ways, it is not always easy to identify in literature. It is therefore important to examine very carefully the text of authors who are not themselves members of the racial or ethnic group of their characters. For example, white middle class people may well be able to write about life in the inner cities, but are unlikely to be able to do so from the point of view of a black person. Although black people may be present in the book and realistically portrayed, theirs is not the voice we are really hearing. Take for example, the award-winning *The Slave Dancer* (Fox, 1973) about life on a slave ship. The story is told from the point of view of a white adolescent, who himself is captured on the ship. The readers experience the story from his point of view. They identify with the sympathy he has for the black slaves and feel badly about the pain he has to endure by watching their suffering. His emotions therefore become more important to us than those of the black slaves who are being mistreated on the ship. Although it is the slaves' story, they are not given a voice with which to tell it. They do not tell us about their suffering, but instead have a white male tell it for them. Such books which portray the lives of minorities from someone else's point of view should be chosen with caution.

There are a wide variety of quality books about different cultures written by members of the cultural groups on which they are based. Only these books can give a truly authentic view of how members of the cultural group see their lives. *Rising Voices: Writings of Young Native Americans* (Hirschfelder and Singer, 1992) is a collection of poems and essays in which young Native Americans speak of their identity, and the harsh realities of their lives. This book offers a true representation of the feelings and experiences of Native Americans as they see their lives. Also, *Pass It On: African American Poetry for Children* (Hudson and Cooper, 1993) is a book of poetry by African American poets. The collection captures the joys and discoveries of childhood within the specific context of the African American experience.

### Developing an Appropriate Selection of Books

A good selection of books should reflect diversity of content. Teachers must be careful of using only certain types of books to expose children to the lifestyles of minorities, such as books about the hardships of assimilation. It is important that children see the world in its many dimensions and they should therefore be exposed to a variety of books depicting minority life in multifarious situations. There are numerous books which show both the pleasures and

hardships of being a minority in America. A good book for illustrating the problems African Americans may experience in being a minority in a white society is *Where Do I Go From Here?* (Wesley, 1993). This tells the story of Nia who, after being suspended from school for fighting, looks at what her old friends are doing at home. Realizing that she wants more out of life, the story exemplifies a young African American's struggle to find a place in the world. On quite a different note are *Grandmother and I* and *Grandfather and I* (Buckley and Omerod, 1994) which are beautifully illustrated books showing the warmth and closeness of African American families, particularly the bond between children and their grandparents. Much Hispanic fiction also focuses on the bonds and importance of family, such as *Family Pictures* (Garza, 1990) which portrays warm family relationships, and *Abuela* (Dorros, 1991) which describes the friendship between a girl and her grandmother. At the other end of the spectrum, are books that describe the feelings of isolation and frustration that many Hispanic Americans experience because they speak a different language from that of mainstream society. *Felita* (Mohr, 1979) shows the lack of understanding experienced by Felita's American neighbors about the heritage which her family brought with them from Puerto Rico. Many different aspects of minority life are presented in multicultural literature and it is important that books chosen for the classroom represent the wide range of lifestyles and experiences of each culture.

### Recommended Books

There is an abundance of quality books about African Americans written by African Americans, many of them based on real-life events. An excellent example of such a book is *Why Do You Call Me Chocolate Boy?* (Parker, 1993). This is based on the real experiences of the author's son who was frustrated by the name he was called by other boys. This story helps children understand the ignorance inherent in racism and the pride people can feel in their ethnic heritage. Another highly recommended biographical book is *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High* (Beals, 1995). This is an autobiographical story about a sixteen year old girl chosen to help integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. Readers get a first-hand account of the prejudice experienced by the author and the story sheds some light on the intensity of racism in the South during the Civil Rights Movement.

There are many books which help children from multicultural backgrounds understand how they are part of different cultures and how to reconcile possible conflicts between them. In *Children of the River* (Crew, 1989) seventeen year old Sundara comes to terms with being an American, while remaining faithful to her own people after fleeing Cambodia. Another acclaimed book which can be used to increase understanding of the problems Asian Americans may face in finding their identities is *Finding My Voice* (Lee, 1992). This tells the story of Ellen Sung, the only Asian American in her school, who is subjected to racist comments and does not know whether to follow in her sister's footsteps to Harvard. Much of the multicultural literature about Asian Americans focuses on their immigration or their experiences once they are in America. In *Angel Child, Dragon Child* (Surat, 1983) Ut lives in the United States while her mother remains in Vietnam. Although she feels isolated in the States, she is unable to express her angry feelings. Many children who have come to the United States from other countries will be able to identify with these stories.

Other books that show how children can be torn between cultures are those that involve living by strong ethnic traditions in a society where these traditions are not the norm. *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind* (Staples, 1989) shows the problems that can be caused by arranged marriages, having grown up in a society which does not practice this custom.

Multicultural books can also be used simply to expose students to other cultures and the ways in which other people live. *Dreamplace* (Lyon, 1993) introduces children to Native American life by describing a young Anasazi girl's vision of early life in Mesa Verde, and *A Woman of Her Tribe* (Robinson, 1990) describes fifteen year old Annette's journey from her rural Nootka community to the city of Victoria, Canada, to discover her cultural heritage. Also, *The Girl Who Loved Caterpillars* (Merrill, 1992) is a wonderful story showing traditional Japanese life. It tells the tale of young Izumi who embarrasses her parents through her love of caterpillars. In refusing to conform to other people's expectations, Izumi proves herself to be an independent woman in a culture where this is not typical.

Translated books can also be a good source of multiculturalism by teaching about children's lives in other parts of the world. An excellent translated book is *The Man from the Other Side* (Orlevi, 1991). This book is based on real life events and tells the story of a fourteen year old boy living on the outskirts of a Warsaw ghetto during World War II. He and his grandparents help shelter a Jewish man. This is an ideal book for exposing children to the persecution of Jews under the Nazi regime. Another highly recommended book for this purpose is *The Devil's Arithmetic* (Yolen, 1988) in which a young woman struggles to understand what her family went through during the Holocaust. However, using only books about Jews that describe their persecution should be avoided. There using only books that illuminate the joys and happiness of Jews. One example is *Starlight and Candles: The joys of the Sabbath* (Manushkin, 1995). This tells the story of a Jewish family getting ready for the Sabbath and shows the closeness of the family during this weekly Jewish holiday. Another entertaining and amusing story is *The Chanukkah Quest* (Kimmel, 1990) in which Bubba Brayna makes potato latkes to celebrate Hanukkah with the Rabbi, but ends up entertaining a bear due to her poor eye sight.

### Conclusion

Although there has been a big increase in multicultural literature in recent years, making it much easier to find books for the classroom, it is important that teachers are able to recognize the qualities that make a good multicultural book. Books should not be chosen simply because they have minority characters and are available. They should be analyzed and chosen using specific criteria such as: Is the text accurate and respectful of different cultures, while portraying them as true-to-life? Are characters diverse and from different backgrounds, with eclectic and varied lifestyles? Are differences among cultures within each "cultural conglomerate" acknowledged? Do illustrations represent true qualities of the race or are they stereotypical caricatures? Does the author write from a personal, enlightening perspective? All teachers are aware of how powerfully images and stories can affect children. When choosing literature, it must be remembered that books send very strong signals, not only to children about people who are different from them, but also to children about themselves.

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Counselors are faced with an onslaught of unceasing demands and negativity from children, parents, community and staff.

## Principals and Counselors: Creating Effective Elementary School Counseling Programs

Barbara L. Brock and Debra L. Ponec

[Schools] are the center of the community now... not the church, they gave that up... Social services... have pretty much broken down... dropped the ball... don't follow through. We have become the missionaries for all that society wants us to fix.

The words of an elementary school principal echo the wide-spread sentiments of teachers and principals struggling to serve the needs of their students. Many of the responsibilities and roles previously held by parents and family, are today assumed by the elementary school. In short, American schools appear to be becoming an alternative family (Petersen, 1997). However, elementary teachers and principals do not have the educational background or the time to effectively address the personal problems of students and their families. Teachers and principals are turning to counselors for assistance.

Schools mirror society. Our elementary school children are confronted with accelerating crime rates, drug abuse, declining family support systems, neglect, divorce, and increasing single parent households with incomes below the poverty level. In addition, some minority students find themselves alienated from the mainstream of society, facing limited opportunities for education and employment (Neukrug, Barr, Hoffman, Kaplan, 1993). These factors, combined with the shift of parental responsibilities from home to school, alert us to the need for a new model of elementary education, one in which elementary guidance and counseling programs are integral components (Peterson, 1997; Neukrug, Barr, Hoffman, Kaplan, 1993).

Elementary school counseling programs evolved from the vocational counseling model that predominated at the high school level. However, at the elementary school level, a developmental model that embraces a total life guidance approach is preferred. Counselors using a developmental model work to promote social and emotional, as well as academic and vocational development; the major responsibilities of the counselor being: counseling, consulting, coordination, and curriculum (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994).

Since counselors and counseling programs are relatively new to elementary schools (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994), they present an unfamiliar experience for many principals. A unique challenge emerges, that of preparing principals for the role of supervising counselor and monitoring the success of counseling programs. Responsibilities of principals regarding counselors and programs vary according to school district. However, it is safe to assume that the principal will be

responsible for some portion of the following: selecting and supervising the counselor, establishing and monitoring the counseling program, and evaluating the performance of the counselor and the counseling program.

Elementary school principals need to understand the elements of a developmental guidance and counseling program and what constitutes an appropriate role for the counselor. The relationship between administrator and counselor is an important factor in determining the counselor's role and subsequent effectiveness of the counseling program. In addition, a teamwork approach to developmental guidance and counseling is strongly advocated in that the network of support enhances preventative practices and the delivery of services to students (Paisley & Peace, (1995).

Given the importance of the relationship between principal and counselor, the researchers initiated a study to explore relationships among principals, school counselors and teachers in order to provide insights regarding effective delivery of guidance and counseling programs to students. Qualitative research methodology and interview techniques allowed participants to express their personal experiences, perceptions, and beliefs. This paper reports the results of the study with a focus on a profile of the components of exemplary principal-counselor relationships. The intent of the authors is to promote increased awareness of the role of the principal and the necessity for teamwork between the principal and counselor in creating effective counseling programs.

### Method

#### Participants

Four elementary schools in a metropolitan school district were selected based on their reputation for having exemplary counseling programs. The administrative and counseling personnel of each school were participants in the study. Four principals, two assistant principals, and five counselors were observed in their natural settings and participated in personal taped interviews.

Field observations in each of the schools revealed that the schools were dissimilar in terms of school populations and school personnel. Although the four schools belonged to the same school district, their school populations were different in terms of number of students, racial composition of students, and socio-economic status of families. The principals and counselors also presented diversity in ages, experience, and race/ethnicity. Although the principals represented both genders, all of the counselors were female. The personalities and leadership styles of the principals were noticeably different in each of the schools. The eagerness of the principals to participate in the survey varied considerably, from one who was enthusiastic about the process to another who was noticeably concerned about the presence of the tape recorder and needed repeated reassurance regarding confidentiality.

The one similarity in demographic factors was the prior experiences that the six administrators had with counselors and counseling programs. Three of the principals reported having courses in counseling, four of them reported having considerable experiences working with counselors in previous settings or being instrumental in the district's efforts to develop counseling programs for elementary schools. Two of the principals reported involvement in committees that looked at identifying the role, purpose and service that counselors could provide for schools and addressing community forums to express the need for elementary counselors.

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### Interviewers/Researchers

The two interviewers/researchers who conducted the study possess experience in the fields of elementary school administration and elementary school counseling. One researcher is a former principal of elementary schools and currently assistant professor of educational administration. The other researcher is a former elementary school counselor and currently assistant professor of counselor education. Both researchers view the principal/counselor relationship as key to the establishment of a successful counseling program.

### Semi-Structured Interviews

The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with the principals, assistant principals and school counselors. The interviews were semi-structured and guided by the following questions:

1. Describe the role of your school counselor.
2. Describe activities where the counselor and teachers work together.
3. Describe activities where the counselor and administrator work together.
4. Describe your communication with the school counselor. What types of information, opinions, or beliefs are exchanged?
5. What makes your guidance and counseling program work?

### Procedures

Each semi-structured interview was tape recorded, transcribed, and offered to the participant for review. Each participant was encouraged to make additions, corrections, or clarifications to the transcribed interview. After verification of accuracy by participants, transcriptions were coded for content and analyzed for themes. Utilization of the qualitative methodology of member checks, multiple sources of information, and coding and reviewing data for verification enhanced the validity and reliability of data (Frankel & Wallen, 1996; Creswell, 1994).

### Results

The following themes emerged from the data: the multiple roles of the school counselor, the role of the principal in the counseling program, the importance of mutual trust and communication between counselor and principal, and problems and factors related to the success of the programs. Each of the themes will be further explored and discussed.

### The Role of the Counselor

Principals and counselors agreed that the most important role of the counselor was working with students and their families. Descriptions of the principals regarding the counselor's role included: "wearing many hats," "[doing] what has to be done to help save kids from situations that might hinder their educational success," and providing the "bridge work between classroom, administration, parent, and community." The principals agreed that the function of the counselor was "more proactive than reactive," that the key role of the counselor was personally interacting with students and families, and all of them agreed that the counselor played a very important role in the school. A counselor said, "to me the school counselor is there for everyone- the school cook, custodian, children, parents, and teachers." A principal summarized, "[the counselor is] the glue that holds us all together."

The daily tasks of counselors were described as: providing classes on social skills, working with students who have been referred by teachers, working with students' families, meeting with small groups

of students with similar issues, referring students to resources for further assistance, addressing child abuse issues, and making home visits. Principals reported that the counselors participated on a number of building and district teams, such as student assistance teams, drug-free teams and building and district management teams. A couple of the principals and counselors reported that the counselors were encouraged to be involved in supervisory activities on the playground, lunch room and breakfast room. One principal commented that "the counselor is encouraged to get involved in some supervisory activities... because [this enables her] to see how the youngsters are in a different setting other than a classroom." One of the counselors reported not liking the lunchroom because of the noise and chaos but enjoyed the playground because it was "fun to interact with kids and watch the work in a cooperative effort."

### Counselors Working with Teachers

The counselors also provided support to teachers. Principals described their counselors as, "there for everyone," providing information for teachers with meetings, speakers, bringing treats, decorating the faculty lounge, and being available to discuss personal concerns. Principals noticed counselors seeking out and offering assistance to staff members with personal problems. One administrator reported that the counselor works "with staff to help them with some of the stresses that apply to working with kids at risk. "A continual stream of people frequent the counselor's office daily...there's a trust level there." Another administrator enumerated the counselor's assistance with several tragic events in teachers' families, saying, "I could go on and on... they're pretty valuable."

### Counselors Working with Administrators

Principals reported four areas in which counselors provided direct assistance to them: alerting them to important student problems, addressing students' family issues, providing the link between outside agencies, the school, and families, and facilitating the principals interactions with faculty.

Principals and counselors reported that they worked closely and communicated frequently because "we eventually see many of the same children." Most of the principals and counselors reported "touching base daily," and keeping each other "up-to-date on situations". "If there's something that I have not been in the loop on... she'll fill me in... and if it's something that might [result in] an irate parent the next day... then she'll let me know." "She works with me, helps me keep abreast of things... we have an open line of communication." "I can't imagine operating without her... I do need her [the counselor] that much."

The counselors assisted the principals by providing information about family situations, assisting with upset parents, and providing information about parenting resources. Principals said it was not uncommon for parents to make the initial call to the counselor who then established the meeting with the principal. One administrator spoke of fielding information through the counselor before returning calls to a parents. "I'll go to the counselor and say, fill me in before I call... what's the story here?"

Principals appreciated the counselor's assistance in dealing with outside agencies. One principal said, "The counselor has the time and skill to make the connections, that as an administrator, I don't have the time to do. She is the liaison between outside agencies, the classroom teachers, and myself."

Some of the principals reported that their counselors helped them

understand the needs and feelings of the faculty, as well as predict faculty response to possible changes. Other principals fielded advice from the counselor regarding how to approach an individual teacher or group of teachers, and how to present issues so they will be positively received. One administrator said, "The counselor is so perceptive. [After meetings] she tells me what she noticed regarding staff responses and offers suggestions on how to proceed, such as going slower, etc. I really do value her opinions... she is a good sounding board." Other principals reported that they did not have discussions with the counselor about administrative or personal issues.

### Communication with the Counselor

Communication was cited by both principals and counselors as key to the success of their counseling programs. Principals and counselors reported frequent and daily communications about students. One principal remarked that the counselor had "an open home and I know staff call her anytime of day or night. I do too."

Two forms of communication were apparent: frequent informal contacts and exchange of information; the other the formal process of student referrals. Although both principals and counselors commented on the importance of face-to-face dialogue, they also emphasized the need for paper documentation to inform both parties of occurrences. A referral system, outlined by the school district, was reportedly followed in all of the schools in the study. One administrator reported, "We use the counselor referral so that we all have records of exactly what the need is and how that need has been addressed. When a parent comes in, I can pull up that file and say that the counselor worked with your child on this particular day and this is what they have been working on."

### What Makes the Program Work

Trust was reported as an essential component of the counseling program. The principals consistently spoke of counselors establishing trusting relationships with students and families, as follows:

Because [the counselor] has worked with many of the families year after year and because they've had siblings that have come through she knows the families, visits the families and the families trust her.

[Our counselor has] established a rapport in the community with many of the families, touched base, helped them so they have a certain confidence in her and feel comfortable when there is a concern to make a contact...

...it's just a good air that [the counselor] creates with all the people that she touches.

People trust our counselor explicitly.

The trust basis created by the counselors provided the principals with leverage to work with families.

The personality and dedication of the counselor was mentioned by the principals as a key factor in the success of the counseling program. The following sentiments were shared by the principals. "What makes [our program] work is having counselors that actually care about the students and care about the staff members." Other attributes used to describe the counselors included:

dedicated to what they are doing.  
an advocate for kids.  
a unique style.

confidence in the skills and capability of the person.  
a relationship with students that's one of "I care. I understand, you can talk to me."

low key, talks very softly, kind of soothing until the student can be spoken with and communicate, comprehend, and understand.

very visible.

pro-active, which is why things operate so smoothly.  
brings a lot of knowledge to the school.

### Problems to Resolve

Principals reported three counseling issues that needed to be resolved: 1) classroom teachers' understanding and accepting the counselor's role; 2) counselors being assigned administrative roles; and 3) a lack of counselors in elementary schools. One principal pointed out that some teachers willingly accept the counselor as a resource, while others are reluctant to have another adult in their classroom. Other principals noted that the process "takes time." "Once teachers find out that the counselor can provide assistance, a nice team develops. We're at a point now where they know we're all [working] together for the betterment of the kids." "Another principal said that initially some teachers became upset when they lost their scheduled life-skills training classes due to a crisis that demanded the immediate attention of the counselor. Once they fully understood the counselor's role, they became more flexible in their response to the interruptions.

Principals were united in their sentiment that assigning counselors to administrative roles negates their effectiveness. One principal commented disparaging about schools in which the counselor was the unofficial assistant for overworked, frustrated principals, citing a building in which a counselor participated in teacher observations. The principals interpreted inappropriate roles for counselors as scheduling, discipline, and handling angry parents.

"The counselor isn't supposed to be in the role of handling volatile parents. She might help out when teachers are having conferences and a parent is angry or upset, but should always be viewed by students and parents as more of a support. If anyone's going to be the police, that's the role the principal will take. Due process and discipline are not the counselor's role".

"I do not wish to have my counselors ever placed in an administrator role. It waters down their effectiveness if they are looked upon by students [as having a role other than] to assist and help them. I know in other buildings counselors do have administrative functions. But not here."

One principal blamed university graduate preparation programs for principals' lack of counseling knowledge. "I don't see anyone teaching principals to work with counselors. That's why you probably see a wide variance of how a counselor is treated at the elementary level of counselors". This principal also noted that the counselor is directly accountable to the building administrator. Thus the role of the counselor is ultimately determined by the building administrator, sometimes regardless of district guidelines.

Principals were equally adamant about the critical need for a counselor in every elementary school. However, as one principal pointed out, "We fought for years and years to get counselors, and we can lose them as fast as we got them." The following comments echo the need for more counselors coupled with a fear of budget cuts that

threaten current programs. "We have been blessed with an outstanding counselor and hope that financial constraints... will not diminish from this program. The needs our children bring to us are ever increasing. Every school needs a counselor [regardless of what] your reduced lunch rate is."

### Discussion

The building principal is responsible for everything that occurs within the school. Thus, supervision of the counselor and the ultimate success of the counseling program are the principal's responsibility. However, many elementary principals do not have sufficient familiarity with counselors and counseling programs to adequately supervise them.

The fact that all of the principals and assistant principals in this study had experienced counseling classes or had previously worked with a counselor was not surprising. These principals understood the role of the counselor, the value of counseling programs, and were committed to providing quality programs. Not coincidentally, the counseling programs in their schools were known for their excellence.

If elementary school principals are expected to administer counseling programs housed within their buildings, they need to be educated in the issues of elementary school counseling. School districts that plan to develop elementary school counseling programs need to provide adequate training for all levels of district administrators. Universities offering programs in elementary school administration need to include a course that addresses administrative issues in elementary school counseling.

The distinction between the principal's role and the counselor's role lies at the heart of a successful counseling program. The roles of the counselor and the administrator are distinctly unique. By nature of the counseling role, the counselor is in a more advantageous position than the principal to bridge the gap between school administration and community. An effective school counselor becomes the "heart" of the school, providing the human touch that links people together, enabling the administrator to focus on administrative tasks. Allowed to perform an appropriate role the counselor can complement and enhance the administrators' role.

The administrator's support of the counselor's role is a critical component in the success of any counseling program. All of the principals in this study of successful counseling programs were scrupulous in their adherence to and support of the counselor's role. They viewed their role as providing guidance and empowerment to the counselor; they welcomed the assistance of their talents in achieving school goals.

In some schools overworked principals have counselors perform administrative tasks to an extent that the counselor becomes the unofficial assistant principal. This negates the role of the counselor and the purpose of the counseling program. The principals in this study were disappointed with the many instances in which they saw this happening. Their displeasure with counselors who perform non-counseling school activities is consistent with previous research by Vacc, Thyne-Winker, and Poidevant, (1993).

Principals have a responsibility to convey and define the parameters of the counselor's role to parents, students, and teachers. One principal noted that a parents' common perception of needing a counselor is "there's something wrong with me or my child." Students sometimes have the same misconception. Principals can facilitate acceptance and trust of the counseling program by providing accurate information that outlines the program and the role of the

counselor. This trust base is then solidified by the counselor through high visibility and frequent contacts with students and families.

Equally important is communicating the counselor's role and the purpose of the counseling program to teachers. In schools where teachers are wary about counseling, principals need to encourage interaction between teachers and counselors. In other settings, teachers view the counselor's office as a convenient dumping ground for problems. In this study the acceptance and utilization of the counselors was so pronounced that some of the principals reported a need to define some limits. In either case, the solution to the problem lies with the principal's articulation of and adherence to the role of the counselor and the counseling program.

Counselors are faced with an onslaught of unceasing demands and negativity from children, parents, community, and staff. Unless the school district has a support system and staff-development program for counselors, these tasks falls within the parameters of the administrator's responsibilities to provide on-going support and professional development for school personnel. This need is consistent with the findings of Paisley & Benschoff, (1996), who encourage systematic induction programs and professional support and Vacc, Rhyne-Winker, and Poidevant, (1993), who reported that two thirds of the counselors they interviewed stated that they had no direct observation or supervision of their counseling by others.

The possibility of budget cuts thwarting existing or potential counseling programs is a concern. Principals know that regardless of the quality of instructional programs and teaching, "if a student walks in the door with baggage, thinking about everything else, he's not going to learn." However, counseling isn't as visible as test scores, athletics, and the arts. Schools don't publicize the number of children and families who were helped by the counselor. Ironically, the confidentiality that creates the trust necessary for a good counseling program also puts it on the endangered list.

Elementary school counselors need to actively demonstrate how their work contributes to the overall school environment and the development of the students. The public may not yet view counseling as the school's function, which underscores a need for more documentation of the effectiveness of elementary school counseling in the literature (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994). If guidance and counseling programs are to survive, counselors and principals need to engage in effective public relations, informing the public about the valuable contributions made through these programs. (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994; Hughey, Gysbers & Starr, 1993).

The following recommendations are suggested for individuals intending to create new or strengthen existing elementary counseling programs:

#### Principals

- Know the role of the elementary school counselor
- Inform students, teachers, and parents of the purpose of elementary school counseling and the role of the counselor
- Define and maintain the counselor's role within appropriate parameters

#### Principals and Counselors

- Establish frequent communications
- Create mutual trust

#### Counselors

- Maintain high visibility
- Keep publics informed about your work and your successes



Several factors limited the findings of this study. First, a relatively small sample of principals, assistant principals, and counselors was interviewed. Additional participants would be needed to saturate the data and develop additional support for the themes identified. Second, the data gathered were based on the objectivity and reliability of the interviewers. Typical of interview data gathering, informant integrity becomes an issue of rigor. Finally, the interviews were confined to a midwestern metropolitan area, limiting the generalizations of results. Despite these limitations, the results of the study reveal the significance of the role of the principal and the characteristics of counselor/principal relationships found in effective counseling programs. The paucity of research on counselor/principal relationships and the increasingly important role that counselors play in elementary schools suggest a need for additional research on this topic.

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*Unlike private industry which devotes four or more percent of its overall budget to R&D, education budgets allow less than one percent.*

## Research and Development in Education

Martha A. York

Research and development (R&D) is a process in which new products are created that will apply current knowledge about education to practical everyday classroom situations. These products can be tangible and can include curricula, classroom materials, assessment instruments, computer hardware and software. Intangible products may include processes used in improving learning, policy recommendations and laws, ways to improve communication among groups and individuals, and methods for implementing change in the school setting.

This paper will look at many aspects of research and development in education. It will examine its importance, history and settings in which this process occurs. It will review the ten step process proposed for educational development by Borg and Gall (1989), highlight some successful products and show how they were developed, and point out some of the challenges associated with R&D.

### Definition

In education, research and development is defined as a "process used to develop and validate educational products" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 782). Endres (1997) describes the R&D process in this way: It will be helpful to think of research as the process used by an organization to acquire new scientific or technical information and knowledge, and development as the process used to apply technical or scientific information and knowledge for product or process designs required to meet the needs of the organization or its customers. (p. 5)

Hemphill (1969) separates the concepts of research and development, stating that educational research generally produces knowledge and theory. "Educational development is a systematic process of creating new alternatives that contribute to the improvement of educational practice" (p. 1). Development involves the application of pure educational research and can act to translate research into experience.

Bright and Gideonse in Klausmeier (1968) expand the concept of research and development (R&D) to include empirical research, development of new practices, processes and materials, demonstration of the products developed, and dissemination relating to the previous three stages. They closely tie research and development with the change process as it occurs in education. This link could serve to make educational change more grounded in research. Ideally, the adoption process is a joint effort of the developers and the practitioners who will become the customers of the product.

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### Importance

Quality research and development has long been neglected in the field of education. Unlike private industry which devotes four or more per cent of its overall budget to R & D, education budgets allow less than one per cent (Borg & Gall, 1989; Klausmeier, 1968). This fact is offered as one of the explanations of the lag of education behind business in current times (Borg & Gall, 1989). Marsh Fisher, the co-founder of Century 21 Real Estate Corporation states that "the real true source of power in any company today is ideas—the rest is housekeeping...Ideas are the DNA of everything that is worthwhile" (Kao, 1996, p. xvi).

### History

Much of the formalized research and development that has been done in education has been sponsored by the federal government. Funding was established with the passage of the Cooperative Research Act of 1954. Dollars increased slowly during the late 1950's and early 1960's, but were only directed toward specific curriculum areas. In 1965, a coordinated network was established which consisted of ten regional educational laboratories which were charged with developing new educational products and processes, and with disseminating the information that was obtained (Klausmeier, 1968). In addition to the ten regional centers established by the federal government, many universities and private agencies have established programs to conduct research and development.

### Types of Research and Development

Research and development may occur in a number of settings, and contributes to educational improvement at all levels. Some occurs at the level of the individual teacher and classroom as action research. Still other R&D efforts occur at the district level in the form of grants from state, federal and private agencies. These grants usually include requirements for dissemination of information, and some products are created under these conditions. Research conducted at the university level, by nonprofit organizations, and commercial interests are described below:

#### 1. Grants given at the university level/Centers and Institutes

Universities have long been charged with the responsibility for research in education and all other areas. Many universities have established institutes or centers which are devoted solely to research efforts, and which share staff and facilities to make the most of the dollars available. An example of a center which is focused on research is the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center which is part of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The center describes its mission in the following way:

The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center was established in 1966 as a multidisciplinary center for the study of children and families, especially children at risk for developmental problems due to biological or environmental factors. The Center's mission has always been dedicated to enhancing the development of young children and supporting their families through research, public service, and teaching. The Center maintains a strong commitment to proving that early experiences have a powerful influence on children's development, developing curriculum materials and teaching strategies, and demonstrating to others the kinds of experiences most likely to enhance child development.

Research projects have included the Abecedarian Project, a longitudinal study of the effect of early intervention on at-risk children which began in 1972 and continues today, and other research which looks at issues concerning child development including child care, health, disability, and family support. Products which have been developed include training material in early intervention, and numerous books and other publications (FPG, 1997).

The Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning was established in 1964, and is another example of a research and development center. At the time of its creation, it was charged with conducting basic research, translating research findings into materials and procedures that could be used in schools, demonstrating and disseminating the information and products that were created, and providing leadership to the field of education as a whole (Klausmeier, 1968).

Now called the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, the focus remains on improving education and conditions in the schools. Current and past projects have examined writing skills, the teaching of mathematics and science, educational policy, child care for young children, special education and the education of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Dissemination efforts include a number of newsletters and publications, as well as training and partnership with schools as outlined in individual grants and projects (WCER, 1997).

#### 2. Regional research and development centers

In 1966, the federal government chartered ten regional laboratories to bring about educational improvement. These laboratories are still in existence today and address a number of educational concerns including rural education; assessment and accountability; curriculum, learning and instruction; technology; school change processes, language and cultural diversity; urban education; and early childhood education. The laboratories offer publications and consulting services to educational agencies, and information is disseminated on the Internet as well as through more conventional sources (NWREL, 1997)

The Far West Laboratory was chartered as one of the regional research and development centers in the mid-1960's, Borg and Gall (1989) worked there developing minicourses for teacher inservice. In 1995, the Far West Lab became WestEd, and their work continues in a number of educational areas (WestEd, 1997).

#### 3. Nonprofit organizations

Another source of research and development in education is nonprofit organizations who gather private and public funding to create new educational products. An example of this type of organization is Zero to Three which was founded in 1977 by leading experts in the field of child development and which "disseminates key developmental information, trains providers, promotes model approaches... and works to increase public awareness about the significance of the first three years of life" (Zero to Three, 1997). Products available from Zero to Three include a monthly journal, numerous books and other publications, videotapes and training opportunities which are all provided at a very reasonable cost.

Another example of research and development which was done by a consortium of individuals and nonprofit agencies is the Survival Skills Workshops for Urban Women curriculum which is described at length later in this paper. It was designed by teachers, social workers, home visitors, and graduate students who were working directly with low income women. They came together for the specific purpose of creating the materials which were ultimately produced. Funding came

from federal and state grants, private donations, and through the "sweat equity" of the developers themselves (L. Thurston, personal communication, October 30, 1997).

#### 4. Commercial companies

Perhaps the most successful research and development is that which is done for profit. Educational materials produced by commercial entities include much of the educational software, textbooks, assessment tools, and hands on materials that are used in the classroom. These materials are developed using the same steps that are outlined below, and many are meticulously tested in a school environment. The testing for computer software recommended in Apple (1994) closely parallels the Borg ten step process.

### Research and Development Cycle

Borg & Gall outline a ten step research and development cycle which includes:

#### 1. Research and information collecting

Needs assessment is a vital piece of the research and information collecting phase of the cycle. The researcher must determine if the product or process that is being designed will be considered valuable by future users. A need can be defined as "a discrepancy between an existing set of conditions and a desired set of conditions" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 761). McKillip (1987) and Fullan (1991) feel that needs assessment involves value judgments on the part of researchers and subjects alike which determine priorities, and which can have a huge impact on the implementation of the finished product.

The first step in a needs assessment is to determine the identity of stakeholders. Johnson, Meiller, Miller and Summers (1989) divide stakeholders into two groups- consumers, those who will be using the product, and providers, those who supervise or assist consumers in its use.

Stakeholders at all levels can be expected to give subjective information that will come from previous experience and values. This may or may not be reliable and helpful to the researcher. Therefore, in addition to simply asking participants about their perceived needs, it is important to examine statistics and artifacts that may give more objective views of the situation. It may also be helpful to observe the behavior of those involved to determine the actual level of need for the product. If the 3M company had interviewed office workers and asked them if they needed little pieces of paper to make notes that could later be removed, they probably would have received little response. However, they tested the marketability of sticky notes by handing out free samples. Once the office workers were able to use the little yellow note pads, their value became apparent, and they shared them with friends and begged for more- which created a market for the product. (Nayak & Ketteringham, 1986).

Next, a literature review should be conducted to determine if the proposed product is already in existence, or perhaps has been tried in another form previously. If no information can be found regarding the topic being explored, that would indicate that either there is a need for information on that topic or that there is virtually no interest in it. A value judgment would need to be made at that time regarding whether or not to continue.

Another aspect of the needs assessment process involves looking at the level of resources of the researchers to determine if it would be feasible and profitable to develop a given product. Borg and Gall (1989, p. 785) suggest that the following four questions be asked

as part of the needs assessment process:

- Does the proposed product meet an important educational need?
- Is the state of the art sufficiently advanced that there is a reasonable probability that a successful product can be built?
- Are personnel available who have the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to build this product?
- Can the product be developed within a reasonable period of time?

## 2. Planning

Once an ample amount of information has been collected, the researcher should prepare a plan of the product including the its future use, potential audience, and a description of salient features. It should be taken into account that the concept of the product will substantially change over time, but the planning process is still of vital importance (Borg & Gall, 1989). Project goals should be devised and adhered to throughout the development process (Apple, 1994).

## 3. Develop preliminary form of product

All R&D projects should be designed with specific objectives in mind. Gagne, 1988 urges designers to keep the results of empirical testing at the forefront when creating new products and materials. "Therefore, it is essential that the desired outcomes of the designed instruction be clearly and unambiguously stated. These outcomes are variously referred to as behavioral objectives, learning objectives, or performance objectives" ( p.121).

The creation of the prototype addresses the content piece of the R&D puzzle. A prototype of the proposed project should be prepared drawing on research regarding both subject matter, and learning theory. As the preliminary form is produced, the developer will make decisions about what will be taught, and about the format in which the content will be presented.

A designer of computer software recommends that the design of the prototype embody the project's concept, purpose and messages. This applies to other media as well. Factors to consider when creating a prototype should include "simplicity, consistency, engagement, depth, fun, and affordability" (Apple, 1994, p. 128).

Another part of this step is to develop a method for field testing the product. The developer will decide who the testers will be, and what questions will be asked regarding possible uses for the finished product (Borg & Gall, 1989). This test plan should be closely tied to the original objectives of the project. It is important to identify what will be an end point even at this early stage to insure that the project does not take on a life of its own and completely change shape before it is completed (Apple, 1994).

## 4. Preliminary field testing

Once the first draft of the product is completed, it should be tested on a small sample of potential users in the same type of environment as that in which it will be used. Testers should be closely monitored, and asked for suggestions about improving the product. In addition, the developers should do some type of objective testing to determine if goals are being met. For example, a group of teachers who were a pilot group testing a specific type of inservice training reported that they felt that the training was very valuable, but no improvement in their teaching was noted. Impartial observation is necessary in order to confirm that the true objectives of the R&D project are indeed being met. The Hawthorne Effect can play a big part in the preliminary testing process because testers and subjects need to work so

closely together, so safeguards must be put into place to insure that user evaluation is indeed accurate (Borg & Gall, 1989).

## 5. Main product revision

After the preliminary field test is completed, the product needs to be revised to a nearly completed state. More attention at this point should be given to its form in addition to its substance. Decisions should be made about printing style in the case of a written product. Graphic design, navigation, interface, and debugging should be considered when working with multimedia computer software. Durability issues in the case of a toy or game will need to be taken into account. Content should be edited and proofed for accuracy and grammar. Plans will be finalized for the main field testing during this stage.

## 6. Main field testing

According to Apple (1994), the main testing process should occur in three phases: user testing, functional testing, and content testing. User testing examines the relationship between the product and the audience for which it was intended. Aspects to consider include the way that the product sustains the interest of the user, its ability to meet specific learning objectives, and whether targeted users like the product and feel that it meets the intended objectives. In addition, there should be some procedure to test to see if students are learning the content that is presented, and if the product has met its original vision.

Functional testing looks at the format of the project. In the case of multimedia computer programs, this phase of testing examines the graphic design, durability, compatibility with various computers, and the way that the program responds under the actual conditions in which it will be used. Corresponding tests with print material would look at features such as binding methods, type of paper, print size and style, and overall format and organization.

Content should be tested by someone who is an expert in an appropriate content area, and who has not been a part of the product development. The product should be checked for accuracy, artwork and photos should be labeled appropriately, and spelling and grammar should be immaculate. Apple (1994) states that finding qualified testers is not as difficult as making sure that they cover all of the material and that they go over it all more than once to insure that the information presented is absolutely correct.

As important as the testing process is, it is vital to know when to stop. There will always be additional features that would be nice to add, and wonderful suggestions for improvement of the product are liable to come from the field testers. Apple (1994) urges developers at this point to return to their original plan and objectives, and to retain the concept envisioned at the beginning of the project.

It is important to draw a line in the sand and say that any feature on one side of the line needs to get finished and tested completely before the product ships. Any feature on the other side gets removed or put into another version. Without this line, the project features continue to grow and the initial purposes and goals get subverted or changed without conscious thought. The later in the schedule that this line is drawn, the more chance the project will fail. Again, the product plan or proposal should be used to set these lines (p. 219).

## 7. Operational product revision

Operational product revision takes into account all of the collateral

materials and documentation that will be necessary when the product is shipped and sent off to schools in its final form—without the developers present to oversee its dissemination and use. Handbooks, instructions and other supplementary materials are developed at this stage. The product should be packaged in "final form" sent to a school or other intended audience group.

#### 8. Operational field testing

Operational field testing is done by regular school personnel and materials should be used in as natural a manner as possible. The developers of the product should have little or no input at this point because it is time to see how the product is used by people who are not familiar with it. Questionnaires should be distributed to determine if the almost finished product is in a form that is understandable and usable to the consumer.

#### 9. Final product revision

Final product revision is simply a final editing of content, and minor adjustments that are made based on the feedback received during operational field testing. Following this final revision, materials are produced in quantity and marketed to the intended audience.

#### 10. Dissemination and implementation

Research and development must occur in partnership with developers and consumers working together through all phases of the project to create a product that will truly meet the needs of the consumer. This is being recognized in business as well as education. Airplane design is one example. "The 777 was not just designed with the customer in mind—it was designed with the customer in the room" (Black, as cited in Endres, 1997).

In order for the R&D process to work, there must be substantial responsibility placed on the shoulders of the developers in the area of dissemination and implementation. The ideas contained in the product must be sold to those who could benefit from the product's use. The U.S. Office of Education has established the National Diffusion Network to assist in the dissemination of successful R&D products. Commercial companies may assist in the marketing and dissemination for products that they will be handling. Developers need, however, to stay in touch with consumers at every stage of the R&D cycle. (Borg & Call, 1989).

### **Examples of R&D**

#### **Survival Skills Workshops for Urban Women**

The Survival Skills program designed under the leadership of Dr. Linda Thurston of Kansas State University to teach skills necessary for everyday life to low income women is an excellent example of the ten step process outlined by Borg and Call (1989). The project originally grew out of a need. Home visitors working with parents of young disabled children in Kansas City, Kansas in the late 1970's became concerned because the parents who were participating in the services were often distracted or unable to work with their children because their low income status kept them in a state often of constant crisis. They attempted to find materials to use with these families in teaching them life skills and were unable to locate any programs which fit their needs. Therefore, a team of twelve professionals including teachers, administrators, home visitors and graduate students was put together to create a program that could assist low income women in becoming more independent. After 3 1/2 years of research, the Survival Skills program was developed.

In the next step, members of the team used surveys and focus groups to identify the topics that would need to be covered in a series of workshops that would be presented to the target audience. Professionals in the fields of education, social work, health, nutrition, etc., members of the inner city community, people who had risen out of poverty, and low income mothers themselves were all polled and responses were grouped according to specific categories. In addition, the computer records of a local television station's "Call for Action" hotline were examined to determine community concerns. Once the topics were identified, lists were distributed to experts to prioritize in order to determine which should be covered with the greatest intensity. A task analysis was done to determine the best way to present the information.

The team then broke into committees who were charged with developing modules to address the topics that had been chosen. Prototypes of each session were developed, and the entire team continued to meet to ensure that each segment of the program was true to the original intent and mission of the project. Sample workshops or "mockshops" were created. Field testing was conducted in two phases, the first on each module individually as it was completed, and the second on the series of workshops in a more final form. Initially, facilitators presented individual modules to a variety of groups including Head Start teachers, women on probation, and community organizations. Data was kept from pre and post testing to see if the content presented was learned, observers attended the sessions to observe the behavior of the presenter and the participants, and interviews were conducted both immediately, and six to eighteen months after the training to see if the information had been useful in the long term. Readability levels were checked to make sure that all written materials would be presented at a fifth grade level. Team members developed and identified research tools during this phase that would be used during the full scale testing process.

The second phase tested the modules as a completed curriculum. Ten 3-hour workshop sessions were presented as a series. Details such as the seating arrangements, and the best procedures for breaks and snacks were reviewed in addition to the content of the lessons. Revisions were made to make the content clearer, to remove material offensive to participants, and to insure that the material was presented in a way that was interesting and motivating to low income women who for the most part had not previously been successful in school or other training situations. Once a final form for the modules had been completed, materials were printed, and operational testing was performed. Trainers who had not been a part of the development process were trained and sent to different areas of the country to test the program. Facilitators are given a script to use when presenting, so at this stage the method of training trainers as well as the content and format of the package was evaluated.

At the present time, the program is in use in thirty states, two countries, and has been translated into Spanish. Additional programs for men and youth have been developed as well. Data continue to be collected, and often the results have been very positive and reinforcing. Most people score near 100% on the post tests of the content presented, and personal experiences for trainers and participants alike have been very gratifying.

Dr. Thurston feels strongly that the program has been successful because of the extensive research which was conducted during the development process (L. Thurston, personal communication, October 30, 1997).

### Voices of the 30's

An example of an education product which was created by a commercial enterprise is a multimedia computer program entitled "Voices of the 30's". It was originally conceived by a high school teacher and librarian to teach the *Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. It was expanded and prepared for mass distribution as a cooperative effort by Apple Computer and WINGS for Learning. Information about needs assessment and information gathering was not available, but the project evidently grew out of a need to present information about the depression to high school students. Planning included decision making around organization of the material, and methods of navigating from one section or topic to another. Pat Hanlon and Bob Campbell, the original designers of the program acted as content experts and editors. A prototype was developed, tested and revised. During this revision, the background of one section was changed which meant that more than 300 images required modification, but the creators felt that the finished product was much more attractive. Testing included proofing all quotes and references included in the content, as well as testing for bugs, or problems in the computer programming. The development team consisted of ten people over the period of one year, and development costs were approximately \$80,000 (Apple, 1994).

### Challenges/Problems

People who have been experienced in the R&D process have suggested potential pitfalls, and ways in which they can be avoided.

#### 1. Poorly chosen goals

The needs assessment process can simply not be understated. Ideas which make total sense to researchers may not have any attraction at all, and may not meet the needs of the consumers of the product. Producing a product simply for its own sake can be disastrous.

#### 2. Making the prototype too polished

Borg and Gall (1989) warn that making the prototype too polished can be a waste of resources and time. They urge the developer to put maximum effort into developing a sample of the product which will have integrity and rigor of content, and to focus as well on the learning theory that will be used in getting the message across. The prototype should be attractive enough to not distract those who will be using it, but numerous changes are likely to be made during the preliminary revision process, so it makes little sense to put much polish into a product at this stage.

#### 3. Expense

Some R&D projects fail because the developers underestimate the cost of creating a new product. Borg & Gall (1989) discuss what they call the ratio of 1:10:10 which is used in industry to estimate the expense of research and development. If \$1 million is spent to do the basic research required for a project, \$10 million will be needed to carry it through the operational field test stage, and \$100 million will be spent in manufacturing and dissemination. It is vital, therefore, to accurately estimate the cost of bringing the product to market, and to have funding in place before the project begins.

#### 4. Size of project

Having a good project plan in place at the beginning of the project is necessary in order to focus the scope of what is attempted. Particularly in the area of education where it is easy to look around and identify needs everywhere, it is tempting to broaden the range of the enterprise to include more than can actually be addressed with

the resources available. The original goals should be kept in mind throughout, which may require tremendous discipline on the part of the developer (Apple, 1994).

#### 5. Lack of reality check

Knowledge of the change process in education is another vital component of educational research and development. One of the aspects of this process is that change occurs best when stakeholders have an investment in the development of the project as it goes along. The best research and development occurs when the developer and the stakeholders work together to identify actual need, and to build support for its use from the practitioner level up instead of from the administrator level down.

It takes a fortunate combination of the right factors—a critical mass—to support and guide the process of re-learning which respects the maintenance needs of individuals and groups and at the same time facilitates, stimulates, and prods people to change through a process of incremental and decremental fits and starts on the way to institutionalizing (or, if appropriate, rejecting) the change in question. (Fullan, 1991, p. 92)

#### 6. Lack of dissemination

The relationship between R&D and dissemination has not always been clear, but is vital to the process. "Development" of an innovation appears to have been interpreted to mean almost everything from eloquent theoretical justifications to careful field testing of standardized procedures; and "dissemination" has encompassed such varied activities as program visitations, newsletters, journal articles, and systematic replication of total programs" (Paine & Bellamy, 1982, p. 29). These authors advocate the creation of demonstration and model programs that can be replicated in a number of settings. Other research suggests that dissemination is more likely to be successful when the product has been thoroughly tested and found to be effective, when it meets the need of the adopting agency, and when funding has been made available for dissemination (Stoltz, 1981).

The key to the dissemination process is actually in following all of Borg and Gall's (1989) ten step development program. The Survival Skills for Urban Women curriculum was adopted on a wide scale for the following reasons: it met a pressing need, it was thoroughly researched and documented, a model program was developed, it utilized standardized procedures, and it had ongoing support (Thurston, 1990).

### Conclusion

Research and development in the field of education has been neglected, and needs to occur on a larger scale today than ever before. However, the benefits of the process are lost without a systematic approach to R&D. All of the steps in the process as outlined by Borg & Gall (1989) are equally important, and if followed, will give a product a far better chance for success. Special attention should be paid to the needs assessment process in order that potential users feel ownership and interest, and to the dissemination process which is often overlooked by developers. With a rigorous research base, a market interested in the final product, and aggressive dissemination, research and development can produce global change in the field of education.

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*When given support and the opportunity to work in building-based planning teams, teachers can implement remarkable school reforms.*

## **Building-based Decision-making: A Shared Planning Model for Inclusive Schools**

**Michael P. Brady, Charles R. Campbell  
and Patti C. Campbell**

Since the early 1980s American educators have been involved in a continuous series of school reform and restructuring movements. These efforts have been partly in response to (a) public criticism of educational expectations, curriculum and productivity (Doyle, 1993; Ravitch, 1993); (b) perceived decreases in student outcomes in science, math, and other academics (Blank & Engler, 1992); (c) increases in the numbers of students at-risk and who drop out of school (Hodgekinson, 1993; Waxman & Padron, 1995); and (d) comparison of student outcomes in American schools to other nations (Barton, 1993; English, 1993).

Each cause for concern has generated a set of recommendations for restructuring a school such that it becomes more able to perform to an explicit standard of operation. Cumulatively, the various calls for restructuring have suggested at least one of the following reforms:

### *1. Increased Accountability.*

Calls for increased accountability have involved the development and comparison of teacher evaluation systems (Shulman, 1988; Swank, Taylor, Brady & Freiberg, 1989), development of alternate supervision models (Zimpher & Howey, 1987), and various types of experimental programs (e.g., vouchers, smaller schools, charter schools) in some districts (Fossey, 1994; Gregory & Smith, 1987; NEA, 1993).

### *2. Increased Attention from State Governments.*

A host of initiatives have come from governors and legislators that affect the legal and fiscal standing, as well as the organizational structures of schools in many states. These initiatives have included increasing the days allocated for student instruction, establishing curriculum mandates, changing the standards for certification and personnel preparation, and a host of changes in the ways in which local schools operate (O'Neil, 1993; Sage & Burrello, 1994).

### *3. Improved Instructional Practices.*

Attention to instructional practice has been a hallmark of many school reform efforts. This has included efforts to identify effective teaching behavior (Reith, Polsgrove, & Semmel, 1981; Stallings, 1985), compare teacher-student interactions across different types of students (Brady, Swank, Taylor & Freiberg, 1988), develop various models of cooperative and peer-assisted teaching (Joyce, Weil, & Showers, 1992), and refine student-centered, reflective teaching

practices (Colton, & Sparks-Langer, 1993).

### *4. Development of Specialized Programs.*

Numerous reform efforts have advocated for the development of specialized programs for students with language, learning, and cultural differences (Harry & Kalyanpur, 1994; Reynolds & Wang, 1983). This has resulted in tremendous growth in special education, Chapter 1, English as a Second Language, migrant education, and other programs. These specialized programs typically have developed as stand-alone or pull-out models, placed within a typical school, but with separate staffing and operations.

### *5. Development of Private - Public Coalitions.*

Many of the reform efforts have called for changing the governance and operation of schools by building coalitions within schools and between community groups and educators (Barth, 1990; Sizer, 1992). These coalition-based schools attend to both internal and external educational influences as a means of empowering communities to build schools responsive to local community needs.

The diversity of the reforms has been matched by the diversity of actions designed to implement these reforms. Many of these implementation efforts (e.g., legislative mandates, standardized teacher evaluation instruments) are top-down implementation models. Other efforts (e.g., Sizer's coalition building) are bottom-up in nature.

### ***Inclusive Education and School Reform***

A factor common to many of the restructuring efforts has involved rethinking the way instruction and support services are delivered to students with, or at-risk of developing learning problems, particularly those with learning, language and social disabilities. While much of the educational establishment has been involved in extensive debate over the likelihood of typical schools becoming more inclusive (Brady, Hunter, & Campbell, 1997), others have been deeply engaged in developing, implementing and evaluating a pedagogy of inclusive education (Campbell & Campbell, 1995; Giangreco, Cloniger & Iverson, 1993; Salisbury et al., 1993). The emphasis of these efforts has been to create and maintain a general education environment supportive of students who traditionally have been educated outside of (or are at-risk of removal from) regular classes. This includes up to 40% of a school-aged population (Skrtic, 1991) and includes students with disabilities (Reynolds & Wang, 1983), children of migrant workers (Migrant Health Program, 1990), at-risk learners (USED, 1993; Waxman & Padron, 1995) and students from families who do not speak English as their first language (USED, 1991).

A pedagogy of inclusive education rests, in part, on a school community's willingness to participate in restructuring and change (Fullan, 1993; Smith, Hunter, Schrag, 1991), and an expectation that students with learning, language and social differences belong in and benefit from schools where disability is not a criterion for classroom assignment (Goodlad & Lovitt, 1993). In assessing how schools become more inclusive, Catlett (1998) and Salisbury et al. (1993) defined inclusive schools as a logical outcome of school reform. Common to these schools are practices where students (a) attend their home schools (where they would attend if they had no disability); (b) participate in typical school routines, activities, curriculum, and schedules; and (c) are classified only for the purpose becoming eligible for services (not for deciding classroom or program placement). Further, students with disabilities in these schools were regular members of general education classes. They attended classes

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with nondisabled students of similar ages (plus or minus two years), and these students represented the natural proportion of similar students in the district. In summary, inclusive educational experiences were on-going, not sporadic or episodic.

To date only a limited history exists that describes how these schools became more inclusive. For example the Catlett (1998) and Salisbury et al. (1993) studies show a picture of local commitment to school restructuring. In both cases, a bottom-up picture of change has emerged, with parents and teachers as initiators of change in school philosophy and practice. This contrasts with the reports in other states where restructuring initiatives for inclusive education have come from state or local administrators (Sage & Burrelio, 1994; Villa & Thousand, 1992). Common to either route to change is the need for local planning. Indeed, Deal and Peterson (1990) and Fullan (1993) note that ultimately the success of a reform initiative depends on active involvement of the leadership and staff at an individual school. Given the magnitude of change required to establish and maintain an inclusive school, establishing a building-based planning model is a critical initial step (Campbell, Campbell, Forbes, & Brady, 1998).

In the rest of this paper we describe a local planning model used in conjunction with an inclusive education initiative in one state. A description of the planning model is delineated, and is followed by a case example of how the model was implemented.

### **The Building-based Inservice Model: A Case Example**

The Building-based Inservice Model (see Campbell et al., 1998) was developed in response to state-wide requests for assistance to build a planning and support system for local schools. The goal of the request-for-assistance was to serve diverse populations of students better within general education environments. To accomplish this, the project was to establish school-based planning teams who would, in turn, develop school improvement plans. In addition, the planning teams were to assist teachers within each participating school to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to support diverse populations of students, thereby making the school a more inclusive educational setting.

The assumption of the Building-based Inservice Model is that a local school can provide an inclusive education if five criteria are met:

1. Constituents within the school (administrators, teachers, related service personnel, parents, students, paraprofessionals) become committed to providing quality inclusive education;
2. Members of the local school gain obtain community and neighborhood involvement and support;
3. Capacity to identify needs and propose solutions to problems is generated from within the school;
4. School constituents acquire knowledge and skills that promote exemplary educational practices; and
5. Technical assistance needed to support implementation and evaluate student outcomes is provided systematically.

Since the project was to restructure schools around the logic of inclusive education, we adopted the assumption that educators can learn to extend and expand their capacity to collaborate with other professional educators (Thousand & Villa, 1992). Because the competencies needed to teach diverse populations of students cross many lines, we adopted operational guidelines that required shared expertise rather than assigned expertise. That is, we operated under the logic that students would benefit from inclusive educational

experiences if they could obtain the shared expertise of a school staff, rather than the expertise of only a single teacher or program to which they were assigned.

### **The School**

Horace Mann Elementary School, a building housing grades K-6 in a mid-sized midwestern town of approximately 75,000 people, served as a training site and as an inclusive education demonstration setting. Horace Mann was located in a racially and ethnically diverse, lower to middle SES neighborhood on the edge of the city. Although the school was over 35 years old, it was well maintained and matched the ordered, manicured appearance of the community.

Approximately 400 students attended the school, and 72% percent of them received free breakfast and lunch. The school housed one of the district's English as a Second Language programs, and contained several separate full time classes for students with mild academic disabilities. There were 23 teachers and 15 support staff including a librarian and paraprofessionals for Chapter I, music and special education. The teachers were generally young with an average teaching experience of 5-6 years; for many, Horace Mann was their first teaching assignment.

There were four special education teachers assigned to the school; three of the teachers had full-time assignments and one rotated to another school. While most of the students who received special education had mild disabilities, the district had initiated a plan to return all students with disabilities to their home schools. In anticipation of this, school personnel had begun to prepare for several students with more complex disabilities (including those with mental retardation, emotional and behavior disorders, and students who are deaf and have no speech).

Horace Mann was selected for participation after a first year, fifth grade teacher read a brochure describing the school-based change project and the technical assistance that was available for participating schools. We then contacted the principal who was eager to arrange for the project to be located in his school and to participate actively in it.

### **Developing Building-based Planning Teams**

Three problem solving teams were developed as the initial activity in establishing a building-based school change process. The problem solving was centered around grade level teams; the early primary team consisted of grades K-1. The primary team included grades 2-3, and intermediate team targeted grades 4-6. Membership on the teams included representatives from each of the grades and any other teacher or support person who would likely provide services to any of the students returning to the home school. A different special education teacher was assigned to each team. This reflected a decision by the teachers to assign students with disabilities to grade levels rather than by special education categories.

Project staff provided the training and technical assistance to prepare the teams to function as instructional problem solvers. The project objective was for the teams to meet whenever there was a student experiencing substantial difficulty with academic performance, personal or social behavior, or school attendance. The team thus was to serve as a problem solving mechanism for students at-risk for school failure or referral to special education. In addition, the teams were to begin planning for the students in other special education programs who were to return to Horace Mann Elementary as their home school. Any teacher who requested assistance could call for a planning team

meeting, and thus became a part of that team for discussions about the student in question. Each team was made up of a meeting facilitator, a recorder and the teacher(s) with specific student concerns.

### Inservice and technical assistance

All planning team members received inservice and technical assistance during a year-long project. This included 6 inservice training sessions, on-site supervision and follow-up, telephone consultation, and materials development and dissemination.

The inservice content was the centerpiece of the technical assistance. Six information modules were developed by project staff (Campbell & Campbell, 1995) and delivered in approximately two-month intervals. Topics for the inservice included (a) collaborative teaming, (b) curriculum matrixing, (c) two modules on instructional delivery, (d) peer involvement, and (e) planning school change.

Each module was delivered in a separate inservice session; each session was approximately 6 hours long. A common format was used for all sessions. The format included:

1. Evaluation of knowledge of the topic to be covered;
2. Identification of objectives of the inservice;
3. Delivery and integration of the new skill and practice activities;
5. Summary of the activities;
6. Evaluation of the session; and
7. Assignment of specific implementation activities for the following session.

In addition to the inservices, on-site assistance included coaching, simulated problem solving, and team cohesion activities. These team activities were delivered after school and never exceeded 30 minutes in duration.

The teams were taught to use a 7-Step problem solving strategy (adapted from Graden & Bauer, 1992). This strategy used a focal, student centered problem specified prior to the meeting. Thus all team members arrived at the meeting with specific knowledge of the student concern. The 7-Step problem solving strategy included:

1. Define the student's instructional, personal, social, or attendance problem;
2. Clarify the problem. Turn the problem into a question in anticipation of finding instructional alternatives;
3. Use brainstorming to explore and identify alternatives. Use consensus to rank order the top alternatives;
4. Select a strategy you will use to implement the top alternative;
5. Clarify the strategy. Identify the steps needed to implement the strategy. Identify who will do what, when and where;
6. Implement the plan. Collect the type and amount of data to allow for evaluation of the activity.
7. Evaluate the outcomes.

### Changes in school practices

Throughout the project year, a number of observable changes occurred in the school. The most obvious change to project staff was that more "structure" was added- by the participating teachers- to the way in which they solved problems related to students. Prior to participating in the project each special education teacher had her own "caseload" of students. They acted as "managers" of cases and assumed nearly all responsibility for students' instructional progress (including development of separate objectives, lesson plans, lesson adaptations, etc.). These teachers typically pulled students out of

general education classes for instruction, even when the instruction was similar to that provided by the regular teachers. While this was the typical method of operation, it was not entirely satisfactory to the teachers. Special education teachers were expected to act as solution providers whenever a grade level teacher had a concern with a student with a disability. Special education teachers reported that they often felt inadequate unless they "knew all the answers." Grade level teachers reported similar frustrations if a "solution" provided by the special educators did not work. These teachers typically reported that their next action should be to refer the student for separate special education class placement.

As the project year progressed, several events occurred that resulted in better integrating the general and special education teachers. First, the decision to base the planning teams around grade levels resulted in distributing special education teachers among the teams. Second, the technical assistance package stressed that problem solving should be student-based, and should occur within a collaborative team-mediated context. As the year progressed, the teams gained experience with collaborative, student-driven problem solving. Team members reported that they shifted their expectations regarding students with (or at risk of developing) learning problems. Rather than referring students for assistance, team members reported that they developed the expectation that they should request team assistance to help solve instructional problems. That is, the team problem solving helped teachers to "pull together all of their expertise" and develop active student-based solutions. As one teacher reported they "got more for their buck" by having team-oriented solutions.

Changes in the way students at-risk for failure and those with disabilities were taught were not limited to the single project year. For two years after the project moved out of Horace Mann, the planning model continued to operate, albeit with participant generated metamorphoses. For example, one year after the project the planning teams began to rotate personnel on and off the teams. Planning teams started to meet during the summers to review the previous year and to make recommendations for the coming school year. The principal arranged for planning team members to receive stipends for their summer work, and release time during the academic year. Since its inception, this process has been evaluated and modified each year by the planning teams. While the teachers were the central players in creating this school's process, the principal used his position to arrange for teachers to have the opportunity and to develop the process.

As teachers' expectations regarding "ownership" of students' problems changed, several operational changes also occurred. First, the principal reported that the number of referrals to special education decreased during the project and two subsequent years, although the frequency of staffing meetings increased. The reason for the increase was that the staffings are called to solve and prevent instructional problems. Second, for those students who were referred and became eligible for special education, fewer students received their instruction in pull out or separate settings. While there has been no change in the nature of the student body at Horace Mann, there has been a substantial change in the students' places of learning. Special education teachers continue to provide direct instruction but to fewer numbers of students; increasingly these teachers work as co-teachers in general education classes. Finally, as the students with more complex disabilities have begun to return to Horace Mann Elementary as their home school, the standard operational procedure is now to

plan the transition well in advance of placement. For example, students now make several visits to the school to learn about its layout prior to permanent placement; teachers become familiar with the students and their idiosyncrasies during these visits.

### Conclusion

The case of Horace Mann Elementary School demonstrates that when given support and the opportunity to work in building-based planning teams, teachers can implement remarkable school reforms that include many students who traditionally have remained at the edge of the educational mainstream. Much of Horace Mann's success in becoming a more inclusive school rests, we believe, with the willingness of the staff to participate in serious efforts to restructure the way they did business. Fullan (1993) noted that educational restructuring will remain elusive unless the goals and methods are embraced by the community of professionals within a school. The specific team strategies developed in this project are consistent with Fullan's logic. Teachers were engaged in local planning of activities and processes that would occur within their own schools. The emphasis of all activities was student-based, and the primary skill supported by project activities was problem solving over problem referral.

Much of the professional literature surrounding inclusive education pits logic against reason and philosophy against preference, often with a level of invective uncommon among professional educators. While many debate inclusive education as a concept, Brady et al. (1997) noted that many educators are actively engaged in developing a pedagogy of inclusive education, linked with a restructuring of the ways schools do business. Like most examples of restructuring, change at Horace Mann was progressive. Even while the staff altered the typical expectations and practices for teaching students with learning problems, some teachers remained skeptical. Although the planning teams were still operational three years after the project activities, three teachers had not participated in any of these activities; these teachers reported that they still believed that students with disabilities should receive their instruction away from the typical classroom settings. As one of these teachers reported, "I've decided that I cannot work with this student - she needs special ed."

We expect that the process of planning for school change will evolve during the upcoming years. What the Horace Mann experience shows, however, is that building-based planning teams can operate with a principal's support- within the context of problem solving rather than problem referral. In schools where this occurs, we expect that observers of inclusive education will continue to learn about changing school practices by practicing school change.

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<http://www.valdosta.peachnet.edu/coe/coed/sped/camp/proj/main.html>

*The reality is that certain students seem to need some kind of extrinsic motivator for learning.*

## Energizing, Directing, and Sustaining Motivation in a Social Studies Program

David L. Griffin, Sr.

How many of us have postponed beginning a diet or exercise program because we were too busy, too stressed, or because it was, well... Wednesday? Or, we begin a diet or exercise program with complete dedication, but after a period of time, we become less and less diligent about following through on our regimen. In each case, motivation, or a lack thereof, is a significant factor in the unsuccessful realization of our goals.

It shouldn't be surprising, then, that students often lack the motivation to reach certain educational goals. This fact is perhaps most apparent in students of the social studies. In reviewing several empirical studies, Shaughnessy and Haladyna (1985) found that, at all grade levels, students reported social studies to be one of the least interesting, most irrelevant subjects in the school curriculum. Several hypotheses were offered to explain students' lack of interest in the social studies. Some claimed that the content seemed unrelated to students' lives and held much less importance for their career purposes than mathematics or English. Others asserted that students' attitudes were affected negatively by their perceptions of the learning environment (student-teacher relationships, teacher enthusiasm). Finally, poor, repetitive instructional techniques were blamed for the negative attitudes held by students (Massialas & Allen, 1996).

What, then, can be done to build a more motivating social studies program for students? Perhaps a first step is to examine the term "motivation" to obtain a better understanding of the concept. While there are innumerable definitions of the word "motivation", three components seem to emerge. Motivation is that which energizes, directs, and sustains behavior (Steers & Porter, 1983).

The primary component of motivation is the energizing function. That is what causes people to act, to initiate a particular behavior so that, for example, learning can take place. Without being energized, students would never engage in a task, much less complete it.

The directing function of motivation acknowledges the existence of a specific goal and implies that by engaging in a particular behavior, that goal is likely to be realized. In other words, the behavior has a purpose. Students who are directed know what they want to accomplish, believe they have the ability to be successful, and understand that they must behave in a certain way to achieve their goal. Less motivated students either do not know what their goal is, do not feel they have the ability, or do not believe their behaviors will direct them toward accomplishing their goal.

Finally, the sustaining role of motivation is that which helps people persist in the behavior necessary to achieve a goal. Successful

students sustain their goal-directed behavior, always trying innovative, potentially more successful approaches to accomplishing their task at hand. During the "sustaining" part of motivation, feedback is critical for helping students know whether their goal is closer to being achieved.

These three components, energizing, directing, and sustaining are vital if a social studies program is to be motivating. Recall the hypotheses that were given to explain the negative perceptions held by students toward social studies. One hypothesis suggested the content was not perceived as being very relevant or valuable. Thus, it would seem there was little to energize students to set goals and initiate behaviors necessary to be successful. Other hypotheses suggested that the interactions between teacher and students negatively affected the learning environment. Without positive student/teacher relationships, students would lack the motivating direction provided by teachers. Not only might students lack an understanding of the teacher's objective or goal of the lesson, but they also, no doubt, would fail to comprehend the implication that their behaviors have a purpose in achieving that goal. Remember, too, that poor, repetitive instructional strategies influenced students' perceptions of social studies. It is difficult to sustain goal-directed behaviors when students are bored and are not involved in the learning process.

Clearly, then, a motivating social studies program must address not only what is taught, but also how it is taught. NO program can be successful without considering content, interactions, and strategies. And, in improving each of those aspects, we cannot lose sight of the three components of motivation described earlier. Content in a social studies program, then must be energizing, directing, and sustaining. The interactions that occur between teachers and students must be energizing, directing, and sustaining. And, of course, the same is true for strategies utilized by teachers to deliver the content. The following gives some ideas of how to merge the three important aspects of a social studies program with the three components of motivation.

### Content

A key element in energizing students about the content of a social studies program is for the teacher to be enthusiastic and energetic both in delivery and demeanor. Before students can be energized, they must be set on fire by what the teacher says and does. Social Studies teachers must convey that the content covered in their course is relevant to the students' lives. For example, history provides the backdrop for understanding how events and issues have influenced the students' lives. Governmental decisions affecting national and global societies have created a world both of opportunity and peril for students. The cultural groups that are studied can give new meaning to the students' sense of self as similarities and differences in ideologies and customs are explored. While these examples serve to provide a framework for making the content of social studies relevant to students' lives, not all students will see the connection to their particular situation. In those cases, teachers must allow students to ask the question, "How is this relevant to me?" And, equally important, teachers must give a deserving answer. Resorting to, "you need it to graduate" or "it's on your schedule" or "don't ask foolish questions," or any similar response is clearly inappropriate. If a teacher cannot give a deserving answer to that question, he or she needs to rethink the content and purpose of the course.

For content to be directing and sustaining, it must reflect diverse

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perspectives. Students from a variety of backgrounds must have the sense that their perspective is valued and that by engaging themselves in the topic, the study will be purposeful. Think how motivating it would be to students if they feel the course of study is a partnership with the teacher and that, by the end of that course of study, the instructor will have learned as much from them as they have learned from the instructor.

### **Interactions**

Research has shown that not all students receive the same quality or quantity of interactions in the classroom. For example, high achievers tend to be given more opportunities to respond to questions than low achievers (Good & Brophy, 1971). Over time, the consequences of interacting more with one group of students than with another can be devastating. Thus, if a teacher expects to have a social studies program where everyone is energized, interactions between teacher and students must be equitable. Students must know that everyone will be expected to participate in and contribute to class discussions. Some kind of technique, such as pulling popsicle sticks with the names of each student can help a teacher keep track of who has had an opportunity to respond.

Engaging the learner is again the first step, but students must be continuously directed toward the goal of the lesson. Interaction strategies presented in the Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement or TESA program (Kerman, Kimball & Martin, 1980), such as Wait Time and Delving, are important toward this end. Wait time allows students to think about their answers. This demonstrates the importance a teacher places on the students' involvement in the lesson and in the kind of thinking behavior required to achieve understanding of the material. Delving allows students to rethink answers or clarify information. Helping students feel they have successfully contributed to the class lesson is so important in directing them toward achievement.

For students to sustain their motivation in a social studies program, additional interaction strategies are vital. Again, TESA provides two examples of ways to ensure that students stay involved in a lesson. In classrooms where the seating arrangement can be changed, it is important to do so. Teachers typically interact more frequently with the students seated in the first row across and those seated in the row down the middle of the classroom. By changing the seating periodically, all students will have the opportunity to sit in the "T" that is sometimes naturally, though unintentionally, preferred. In classrooms arranged so that the teacher can move around during the lesson, proximity to all students should be practiced.

Another means for sustaining involvement in a lesson is to utilize the interaction technique of feedback. Students cannot know how they are progressing toward the goal of the lesson without that important information. Returning assignments that have been corrected before requiring students to complete another certainly makes common sense. Unfortunately, with the demands on us as teachers, this is not always possible. Yet, more effective ways of giving students immediate feedback must be sought if we are to keep students persisting toward the desired end.

### **Strategies**

The three components of motivation can also be applied to strategies utilized by teachers in the classroom. To energize students from the first day of class, teachers can let them know that their

opinions about course content are valued. Asking students, "What do you want to learn from this course?" can involve students in the learning process from the beginning. This activity can also help teachers understand that their students may differ in terms of the goals they pursue.

On a daily basis, the ways to energize students about a lesson are limitless. Writing a "Thought for the Day" on the board that relates to the objective for the lesson is an effective way to set the stage for learning. Using a variety of "thoughts" from experts of varied backgrounds, to teacher-written ones, to student-elicited examples can reinforce the philosophy that a diversity of opinions is valued in the classroom. Seemingly small things, such as using colored chalk to write information on the board, playing music while students are coming into the classroom, or having candy mints in a bowl near the attendance sheet can make a big difference in energizing students.

Instructional strategies must also be considered with regard to the directing function of motivation. Remember, this aspect of motivation pertains to acknowledging the existence of a specific goal, believing one has the ability to reach that goal, and understanding that certain behaviors will lead to achievement. When selecting instructional strategies to use in a social studies program, teachers first need to refer back to the differing goals that their students identified. It is only then that teachers can begin exploring the possibilities of what works and what does not in meeting the unique needs of their learners. Finding a teaching strategy that best suits a students' learning style is vital because of the key relationship between motivation and ability. To perform successfully, students must be both motivated and have the necessary skills and knowledge.

A variety of teaching strategies can do much to sustain students' interest in the content. Psychologists have long studied the effects of change on motivation. The classic Hawthorne studies in the 1920s which examined the relationship between levels of lighting and working efficiency suggested that change was the most important variable (discussed in Saal & Knight, 1988). What is now known as the Hawthorne effect is an important reminder to teachers that change can make a tremendous difference in the students' behaviors necessary for reaching a goal. Thus, bringing in guest speakers can be a welcome change in routine as well as providing a different perspective so important in the social studies. Taking field trips, whenever possible, gives students a chance to learn in a new and different setting. Some teachers, recognizing the value of novelty, change something in their classroom every day. They encourage their students to find the "something different" that serves to hone keen observational skills as well as keep interest high. Certainly when the changes enhance the delivery of content or creates opportunities for better interaction, the benefits are greater.

A discussion of motivational strategies would not be complete without some attention given to intrinsic vs extrinsic rewards. Some experts, such as Alfie Kohn (1996), believe the use of extrinsic rewards can actually hurt the motivation to learn. They feel that eventually students look for the rewards because of learning and when the rewards stop, the motivation to learn drops. Rewards foster an "I'll do this, but what am I going to get for it" attitude. Others, such as Madeline Hunter (1990), do not believe intrinsic motivation is necessarily "saintly" and extrinsic motivation "sinful". Rather, she believes both are effective because of the direct relationship between behavior and goals; an intrinsically-motivated behavior will naturally be rewarded by successful realization of the goal.

The reality is that certain students seem to need some kind of extrinsic motivator for learning. If a teacher senses this is true, indeed "something extra" is required to electrify them into learning, then why not use every reasonable means possible? The critical element, however, is that the purpose of the extrinsic rewards must be clearly defined to the learner. Then, too, extrinsic rewards must be used carefully and in conjunction with intrinsic reinforcement.

### **Conclusion**

A motivating social studies program for students is not unlike a motivating diet or exercise program. In each case, the participants must get energized. This will initiate the behaviors needed to begin the task. Then it is important that the behaviors are directed toward a specific goal and that participants understand the purpose of the behaviors in achieving that goal. Finally, strategies must be in place to help participants sustain interest and persist with the necessary behaviors. Without all three components, success is unlikely. In a social studies program, these motivational components must be considered not only in the content, but also in the interactions that occur between teachers and students and in the strategies employed to deliver content. Merging these concepts will provide a framework for creating a desirable and motivational program.

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## BOOK REVIEW:

### *Learning Upon the Shoulders of Giants*

Review of Kirk, Russell. *The Sword of Imagination: A Half-Century of Literary Conflict*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.

**Russell D. James**

*The Sword of Imagination* is an autobiography of the highest caliber, written by Russell A. Kirk, a prolific educational writer and probably the last true American man of letters. Kirk paints for the reader a picturesque portrait of himself through the use of the third person narrative.

Reading this volume for the second time in as many years, I remembered a quote from one of Kirk's other works, *The Roots of American Order*: "Mankind can endure anything but boredom." Kirk relates in *The Sword of Imagination* anything but boredom. He shows the reader through poignant imagery the life of a son and grandson, student, soldier, professor, man of letters, and husband and father. No part of Kirk's life, I believe, was boring.

Kirk knew that gaining knowledge through formal education is commendable, but incomplete. Such an education can lead to boredom and confusion. Kirk reminds us that "the best-remembered learning, and often the most salutary, lies beyond the classroom." The astute reader learns from reading this book that boredom only comes from educational idleness and the neglect of imagination.

One such account related by Kirk in *The Sword of Imagination* is the story of his travels to "Castle Borstal." Kirk, when a doctoral student at St. Andrew's University in Scotland, visited an old castle that had been turned into a reformatory for delinquent boys of the Scottish slums. This Borstal, like many others in Britain named after the first such delinquent academy near Kent, had sprung up after World War II. It was thought by those social reformers of the post-war years that if the state provided for everything, then a person would be contented and not need to become a criminal.

But, alas, the winds of truth blow reality in the faces of social reformers, as evidenced by the Borstal reformatories. Such developments in social welfare do not work, as the education of the masses was shown to result in boredom from experimental change. The reformers at Castle Borstal had not eliminated boredom, they had only changed its place of residence, from slums to reformatories.

For Russell Kirk true education was the strengthening of mind and soul, forever intertwined but often the innocent victim of an attempted unraveling by social reformers. To educate the mind and soul of a person, one must stand on the shoulders of the giants of the past, peering into history to live prudently in the present. Kirk used *The Sword of the Imagination* to not only tell of his life as a man of learning, but to educate others on the true means of education: finding excitement around every corner traversed in anticipation and in every book read with diligence, extinguishing boredom altogether.

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