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ABSTRACT

This analysis draws on a variety of experiences with and models of centralized and decentralized school systems now in existence. The decentralized model or profile posed for consideration is intended as a basis for the development of a process by which indigenous models can be established for any locale as unique local variables are identified and understood. The paper draws implications for educational planning and development in the decentralized school plan. The authors debate the relative merits of centralization vs decentralization within the context of local control, educational costs, equality of educational opportunity, integration, community participation, individual rights, and the overall public interest. The authors also consider educational goals and program development under decentralization. (Author/DN)

DECENTRALIZING THE "FUTURE PLANNING" OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

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PROJECT SIMU-SCHOOL

DECENTRALIZING

THE

"FUTURE PLANNING" OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

RESEARCH REPORT NUMBER TWO

OF

PROJECT SIMU SCHOOL: SANTA CLARA COUNTY COMPONENT

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FOREWORD

Project Simu School was initiated to consider ways of improving and simplifying the process of educational facilities planning for the educational planner. The initial intent was to develop a highly sophisticated simulation capability through a national coordinating center for educational planning, but early work suggested that a single large-scale simulation procedure was not feasible and that facilities planning could not be thus separated from overall educational planning. The Simu School project accordingly decided to try to develop educational planning procedures and techniques to aid the local educational planner and/or consultant.

The approach of the present project is to consider educational planning as an integrated process in which the facility becomes an integral part of the evolving education program and the teaching-learning situation. The products or output of the project, therefore, must be aimed at the total process of educational planning and the procedures and methodologies which comprise it. The final products will be applied by the local educational planning body, the educational system, or members of the community to develop a program of educational services.

Educational planning under these constraints is an interactive process between the components of the local community. The potential users of planning products range from the untrained to the highly trained, and the planning products range from very specific tools for specific needs to general planning methodologies and strategies. Project Simu School, therefore, is responding to the broadest possible spectrum of the needs of various levels of educational planning as well as to the actual range of individuals who may be involved in the process.

This paper addresses a basic premise of educational planning--the involvement of people in the planning process. Decentralization of certain aspects of administrative decision-making is essential if an educational program is to respond to the aspirations and needs of the learners in a community. It is anticipated that the concepts presented herein, together with techniques developed by the various component centers of Project Simu School, will help improve comprehensive planning for education.

Lester W. Hunt, Director
Project Simu School: Santa Clara County Component

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE CENTRALIZATION - DECENTRALIZATION PARADOX

The "thesis" of this position paper is that American public education on the whole should move rapidly toward a major decentralization of planning and decision-making.

The writers' thesis is extracted from the following ten basic planning assumptions:

1. Our public school systems have become too distant from their various publics--too rigid, and too unresponsive.

2. The historic evolution towards today's huge, centralized, rigid, and nonresponsive educational bureaucracies is a major factor in explaining their recent loss of public understanding, trust, and support.

3. "Centralized" educational systems preclude needed flexibility and the opportunity for sensitive and creative local operational decisions and needed changes.

4. Existing highly centralized urban school systems, formed and nurtured amid relatively slow socio-economic-political-legal-technological changes, and infused with the value system of middle class America, are simply unequipped to understand and respond to the educational needs of their present widely differing multi-ethnic, culturally pluralistic clientele.

5. Centralized (system-wide) broad policy setting, long-range planning, and evaluation are necessary and will continue--however, the responsibility and authority (hence power) of centralized control bodies needs redefinition and <u>delimitation</u>.

6. New forms of increased centralization by our state and federal government will continue to evolve, and rightly so. For example, certain functions such as purchasing, computerized support services, and highly specialized auxiliary services are better performed at a highly centralized level for reasons of efficiency and economy of scale.

7. Any decentralized plan will fail if it is not preceded by careful work delineating and clarifying the differing roles, responsibilities, and authority of the various participants in the decision-making process.

8. Any successful decentralization plan needs to be consistent with the value $\longrightarrow$ goal $\longrightarrow$ purpose base of the local educational system.

9. There is no single decentralization plan that can be adopted or adapted by all school systems.

10. The issue is not: should we centralize or decentralize; but rather: which functions, roles, decisions can best be centralized and which should be decentralized.

The development of today's huge centralized educational bureaucracies followed the similar evolutionary growth patterns of governmental, business, commercial, and industrial organizations in the United States. As population increased, particularly in emerging urban centers, the demands upon organizations multiplied so that organizational changes had to be accomplished in order that clients might be better served.

The movement from an agrarian society to an industrial, technological society mandated a concommitant move from an informal extended-family structure to a formal, centralized, and much more rigid type of organizational pattern. The evolution of the formal system of contractual organizational structures from the informal, familial organizations was an important outgrowth of the industrialization of the United States. The era of specialization, of division of effort, of mass transit of goods and material, of forced subordination of individual interest to overriding general interest, of mass production of goods, of mechanization, and of greatly increased population contributed to (indeed, forced) increased centralization of decisions into a single central office. Our public schools followed this national pattern of increased centralization.

The development of educational organizations closely paralleled the development of the classical theories of management. The work of Taylor, Fayol, Mooney, and others contributed to the increased centralization of educational organizations. Scientific management theory led to specialization, to hierarchical structure, to increased efficiency, and to increased depersonalization of the educational enterprise. As population centers grew and the need for expanded educational opportunities emerged, the central administrative office became ever more powerful and ever more remote and distant from the operational units of the school system. Today's educational monoliths reflect the scientific management school with extreme specialization ranging from curriculum to finance to personnel decision-making. Many school systems are currently centralizing the newer functions of systematic planning and evaluation. In the interest of efficiency and economy, decisions on program, on staffing, on resource allocation, and on educational facilities became more and more formula-based and constant throughout the school system, and less and less responses to differing individual needs and the unique requirements of a particular community. Educational programs developed by the central office are being imposed upon all schools in the system. Facilities based on plans developed "downtown" are constructed throughout the system. Budget allocations based on "per pupil" amounts are distributed to all schools; textbooks and supplies are allocated and distributed according to a standard formula developed at the central office. Virtually all major decisions are mandated from central headquarters, leaving little flexibility and opportunity for sensitive and creative local operational decisions.

While scientific management theory led to far better use of resources and far more efficient control of large organizations, it also led to remoteness, to rigidity, and to depersonalization. Education, particularly since it is basically a human enterprise, cannot become remote and distant from its clients and still receive their support. Thus, the decade of the 60's gave birth to an increased awakening on the part of various clients to the fact that their school systems had grown so large, so diverse, and so distant that they could no longer make local needs known, understood, or implemented by the hierarchy. This distance became especially acute in the large urban centers of the United States where multi-cultures, minorities and the poor were increasingly located. School systems, created and nurtured in the value system of middle class America, were not able to understand, much less respond to, the educational needs of a multi-ethnic, culturally pluralistic clientele. Educational administrators accustomed to dealing with community groups in polite, orderly gatherings were suddenly faced with divergent, angry constituents who attacked frontally and directly with often brutal results. In the early 1960's the schools responded by becoming increasingly centralized and even more closed, which caused more confrontations.

However, by the mid 1960's, several large urban school systems began to try seriously to respond to their very diverse constituencies. In New York City, for example, the nation's largest school system appointed a blue ribbon advisory panel which recommended, in 1967, major steps toward decentralization. In 1968, the Chicago Public Schools adopted a decentralization plan recommended by the General Superintendent of Schools which divided the city into three areas and 27 districts. Following such leads, most urban school systems are attempting to reorganize so that the educational system can respond more quickly and more effectively to the unique and diverse educational needs of widely varying communities. Perhaps the most extreme example is in Detroit where the school district is divided into eight regions, each with its own board and administrative hierarchy. It should be noted, however, that recent court decisions have been leading towards increasingly larger units of educational governance in attempts to desegregate and integrate our public schools. Legal-fiscal court decisions are also leading towards a more centralized state system of education. As these examples suggest, public education is using both increased centralization and increased decentralization in planning and decision-making.

Emerging as a primary concern of the 1970's is the issue of how decentralization can best be accomplished in the areas of public education where it is needed. In typical fashion, most decentralization efforts have been hastily conceived in response to outside political-legal pressures. In such circumstances, little thought is given to keeping the strengths of a centralized organization while developing a decentralized model to make the school system more effective and responsive. As a result, there is chaos as school districts struggle with certain key questions which include:

1. What is the role of the central office in a decentralized school system?

2. What functions are best decentralized?

3. Are there certain functions that could be or should be centralized?

4. What are the parameters of decentralization?

5. How is the issue of accountability resolved?

6. Will decentralization improve the education of children?

7. What are the mechanisms by which community persons become involved?

8. What specific decisions are best made where?

As answers to these and other related questions are posed and resolved, the process of decentralization will become more rational and effective. Traditional central office functions such as educational facility planning will become much different in scope and in fact. For example, the existing tight school planner-architect partnership will broaden to include school staff, community and students in the development of "educational specifications." The school facilities planner will become a coordinator and translator of ideas generated by a wide variety of people, rather than a space technician. He/she will become an advisor and a process person rather than a fact dispenser and detail technician. Planning is moving from the back room to center stage and decisions once very private and almost automatic become complex and diverse.

This position paper will focus on "decentralization" and its implications for the future planning of public educational systems. It is hoped that the paper will contribute to the development of a series of useful, usable "planning packages" that will provide guidelines to educational planners in determining future educational needs. The basic purpose of this paper (and future papers) is to contribute to the continuous improvement of the educational planning process. The focus of the paper is an analytical examination of the current evolution of the centralization-decentralization paradox. The authors' specific recommendation on this emerging paradox is made explicit in the final section of the report.

II. EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND DECENTRALIZATION

Educational goals should be designed to reflect the current philosophical stance of the local school system or agency. Goals are usually extracted from a value base. Generally they are global and tend to be esoteric statements that may or may not be referred to and utilized until the time comes for their sporadic review and revision. Many school systems include a goals statement at the start of the school policy handbook in hopes that somehow these goals will permeate the minds, hearts, and behavior of the local school staff. Realistically, however, educational goals have had little effect on educational program development. Most school teachers have not read or accepted the district goal statements. Seldom do teachers modify their behavior, their teaching content, or their methodology to conform with centralized and somewhat vague goal statements. It is, however, virtually impossible to accurately evaluate the progress (or lack thereof) of any educational system except in relation to goals and important specific performance objectives.

When educational goals are considered in the context of school system decentralization, several key issues emerge. The first and most complex is the issue of who assumes the responsibility for the development of what educational goals. One way to examine this problem is to reflect upon the context of the educational system. If one accepts the premise that education must, as a very high priority, contribute to the development of an adequate social system and an understanding of that social system by the client, then certain educational goals must be set at the socio-economic-political-legal (national) level. Similarly, if a desirable educational goal is the adequate inter-relationship of various agencies to produce a total coordinated effort in the education of citizens, then other educational goals must be established at the level of multi-agency involvement. Still other goals are most appropriately established at the local school or community level. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider a hierarchy of educational goals and objectives, each establishing parameters for the development of goals at a different level. These parameters serve to define the limits for the development of goals and objectives at the next hierarchical level. A matrix such as that shown in Figure 1 could be the basis for educational goal development in a decentralized school system.

As Figure 1 shows, the need for cooperative effort between and among the various levels of the hierarchy is crucial to success. While different levels have varying roles in the setting of goals and objectives, all must participate in providing data for policy decisions. Note that as data are gathered for the formulation of goals, a context evaluation takes place in order that the appropriateness of the goal statement can be determined. Such evaluation can assist in defining the appropriate level at which the goal is to be developed. As an example, the setting of a social goal, e.g., the right to read, can be appropriately placed at Level IV as a result of context evaluation that clearly shows the over-arching importance of this goal to the total country. Similarly, goals dealing with migrant education should be established in states where there are migrant families; such goals

are not germane to areas where there are no such needs. Again, context evaluation could provide the information on which to base decisions.

The intent of Figure 1 is to illustrate the interdependence between and among hierarchical levels and to provide a profile for use in setting goals and objectives. Other matrices can be constructed to provide guidelines and direction for communities and agencies. Clearly, each level must perform an advisory function if sufficient input is to be realized to adequately provide data for the formulation of specific education goals and objectives. As goals are defined and refined as a result of participation at each level, these goals become the parameter for the development of objectives.

In the area of educational planning, for example, a national goal might be to provide adequate school buildings for all students; a state goal might expand the national goal to include provision for certain climatic and/or geographic conditions found in the state. At the district level, the facilities goal would include statements as to total size, allocation range, space allocation, etc. As we proceed toward the school level, the specific facility objectives formulated are based upon goals and policies but are related to local needs and program implications, with the potential user (the community) providing data for needs assessment and program development. As the project proceeds several levels of objectives and goals will be achieved. Housing for students will be provided (Level IV), state standards for safety will be considered (Level III), District goals on space and expenditure will be observed (Level II), and finally local school program needs will be filled (Level I).

The foregoing illustrates the great difficulty faced in decentralization attempts. To decentralize decision-making, it is necessary first, to determine the most managerially appropriate level of decision-making for each family of functions and the relationship of various decision-making centers. Obviously, the decision levels range from the classroom to the nation, but what decisions are appropriate for the teacher, the principal, the superintendent, the Board of Education, the State Superintendent, the Commissioner of Education? Functionally, operationally, and organizationally, where is the optimum level of decision-making? At what point will decision-making ability encourage participation, initiative, responsibility, and the internalization of organizational goals at the school or classroom level; and at what point does the achievement of organizational goals require more centralized levels for decision? At what point do technology, law, contract requirements, and business ethics affect the level of decision? At what level can decisions be assigned and still carry accountability? Just where is that point of fine balance between centralization and decentralization?

These questions cannot be answered finally for every organization or for every level. Communities vary, the educational needs of children vary, individual personalities and capacities vary; thus, flexibility with accountability is a requisite of decentralization. Therefore, educational decentralization must begin with a philosophy of management based on involvement and participation with appropriate

Figure 1

ONE MATRIX FOR GOALS-OBJECTIVES ESTABLISHMENT

Level Goal-Objective	Local School (Level I)	School District (Level II)	County/Region/ State (Level III)	Federal (Level IV)
Social Goal	SO-IO-AG	IG-SG-AG-SO-IO-AO	IG-SG-AO-AG	SG
Legal Goal	SO-IO-AG	AG-SG-IG-AO-SO-AO	SG-AG-AO	AG-SG
Inter-Agency Articulation Goal	SO-IO-AG	AG-IG-AO-SO-IO	SG-IG-AO	AG
Fiscal Goal	SO-IO-AO-AG	IG-AG-AO-SO-IO	AG-SG-IG-AO	AG-SG
Program Planning Objectives	IG-SO-IO-AG	SG-AG-IG-AO	AG-SG	AG
Staffing Objectives	AG-SO-IO-IG	SG-AO-IG-SO	AG	AG
Facilities Planning Objectives	SO-IO-AG	SG-AO-IG-SO	AG	AG
Priority-Setting	SO-IO-AG	SG-AG-IG-AO-SO	SG-AG	SG-AG
Reserve Allocation	IG-AG-SO-IO-AO	SG-IG-AG-SO-IO-AO	SG-AG	SG-AG

SG - Set Goal
IG - Implement Goal
AG - Advise on Goal

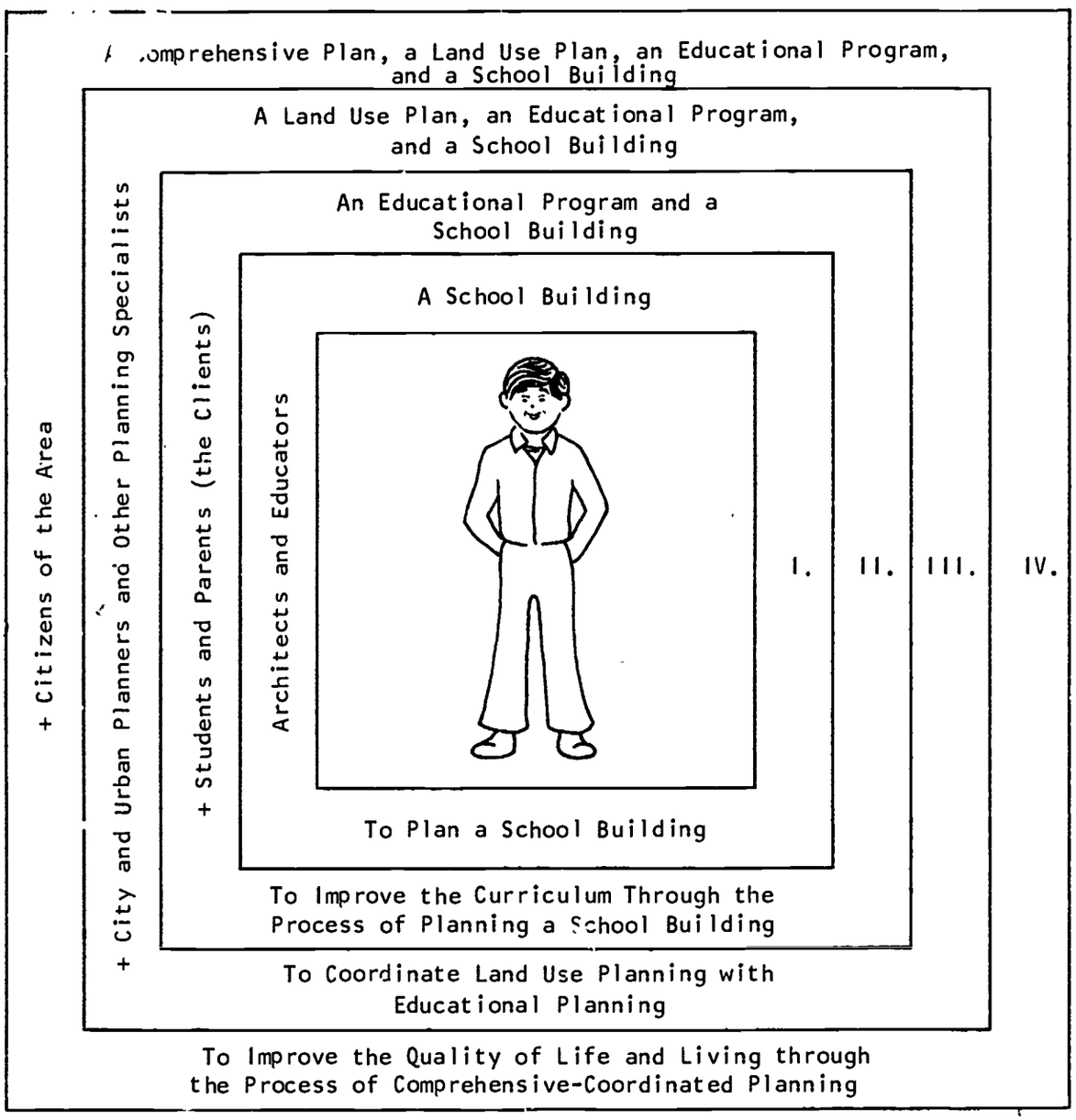
SO - Set objective based upon Goal
IO - Implement Objective
AO - Advise on Objective

evaluation and accountability. There must be centralized intent to find and effect the optimum level of decentralization and to work to find the talent to implement the decentralization. Decentralization must provide the parameters for individual and group decision-making. These parameters must be understood and accepted and should be developed through representatives of all hierarchical levels. The matrix presented as Figure 1 is one example of such an effort. Figure 2 conceptualizes the alternative decisions involved in educational planning at differing levels of decision-making.

Figure 2

ALTERNATIVE LEVELS OF PLANNING

C.
WHAT IS THE PLANNING TASK?



A.
WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF PLANNING?

III. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND DECENTRALIZATION

Historically, educational programs have been developed centrally and have been imposed on the clients. Federal and state laws, guidelines, and requirements all restricted the local development of programs. Further, the "expert" syndrome legitimized the central program decision-making to the point where program guides have become rigid structures for all teachers and schools to follow. While the American system grew and matured under this process, the result gave little recognition to individual differences or needs. All children had to meet pre-determined criteria or not benefit from educational programs. This produced many well trained citizens, but did little to assist those individuals (a significant majority) who needed specialized attention and programs to achieve optimum levels of education. As long as national goals and social values permitted the absorption of individuals into the society whether or not minimal educational standards were met, the problem was not acute for there were many unskilled tasks available to keep the uneducated occupied.

However, as the commitment to universal education began to be more fully implemented and as technology developed to a point where the labor market could not longer absorb the unskilled and under-educated person, then the problem began to surface. It is simply not enough to provide a set pattern of educational experiences on a take it or leave it basis. Rather educational systems must learn to provide experiences suited to particular needs, capacities, and expectations. Therefore, the whole concept of program development has changed and has become much more complex. Program planning is no longer a process from the top down, but rather a cooperative process that involves as its basis a comprehensive assessment of needs of clients.

If we accept the premise that the main task of the educational system is to provide the opportunity and assistance for the individual child to grow into a productive, participating citizen in a democratic society, then it becomes imperative that any program have as a foundation a clear understanding of what client needs are in terms of the particular program. An assessment of educational needs of a particular student or group of students should include an understanding of the level of cognitive and affective development; some recognition of internal and external variables, i.e., family structures, socio-economic factors, neighborhood conditions, other resources, etc.; physical data; expectation level; and staff skills and resources.

As needs are defined, educational goals and objectives are developed in the context of a societal-educational organization. Figure 3 provides such an example for use. The figure assumes a primary role of the school system as an integral part of society serving two societal purposes: to extend the culture and values of society, and to extend the potential of each child as a contributing member of society. This presentation of society's organization for transmitting and extending its culture shows the objectives of society being sought through the educational mediums of the family and school, and the control of the process through law and government. As society meets it objectives, its policy body (government) restates its objectives and societal growth becomes a continuous process.

The school, society's formal organization for extending its culture through its children, is mutually interdependent with society's informal organization for the same purpose-- the family. Both must concern themselves with and utilize all other societal organizations that affect their purpose, their role, their product-- the child. The societal organization, therefore, is depicted as an interacting, open organization. The product of the educational organization, the child, and the process of his individual culturation must be understood. Figure 4 conceptualizes this.

Each child has an unknown potential for growth. This potential has an indeterminate base in the genetic physiology of his brain. But that potential unfolds through interaction with his environment: first his family environment, then his community environment (neighborhood), then his school environment, and finally the interaction of all these factors. Therefore, an educational process that does not begin with the influences latent in the child's experiential set (where he is) and concern itself with the environmental influences that affect his stimuli receptivity (motivation) has limited potential for evoking desired responses (growth). For education to be successful with all children, it must concern itself with and be involved with all factors affecting an individual child's growth process.

The individual school, as one part (or subsystem) of education, is illustrated in Figure 5 (broken lines express the interdependence of the process factors). The individual school provides the setting and the climate for the formal educational process of the individual child. To take into account as fully as possible the variables that affect the child's growth, program development must take place as close to the child as possible, preferably in the classroom or school. Program ideas generated by whatever means must be developed, refined, tested, and adjusted at the operating level if they are to meet student needs.

Because educational facilities are one of the tools of educational programs and represent the support system for implementation of the educational process, they too must be planned and developed close to the ultimate user. Therefore, the planning of educational programs and facilities should occur in the locality for which they are to be designed and in cooperation with the persons for whom they are being developed. This is, of course, a major departure from the traditional school planning process, and calls for different skills than those currently needed.

SOCIETAL-EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

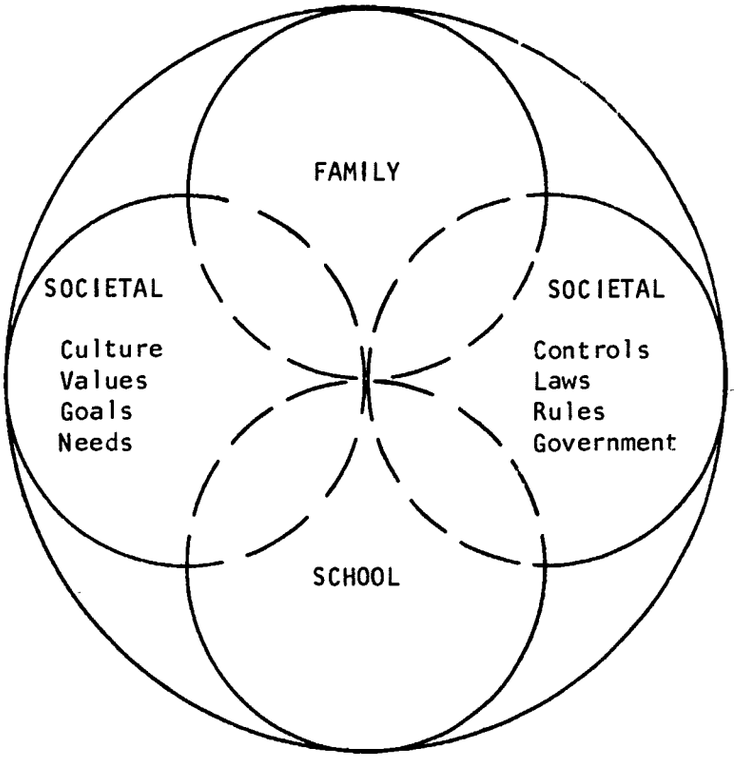


Figure 3

PROCESS FACTORS OF CHILD GROWTH

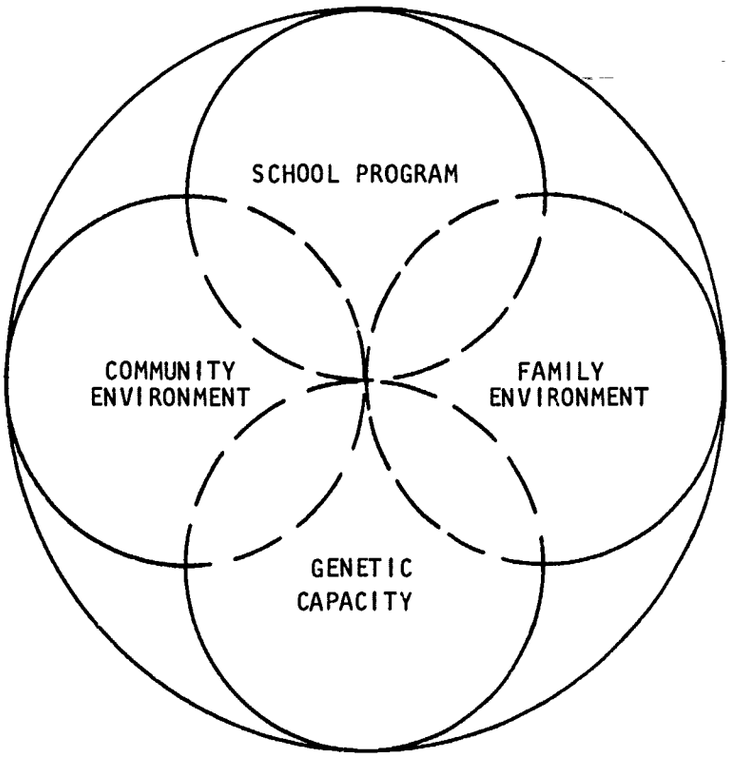
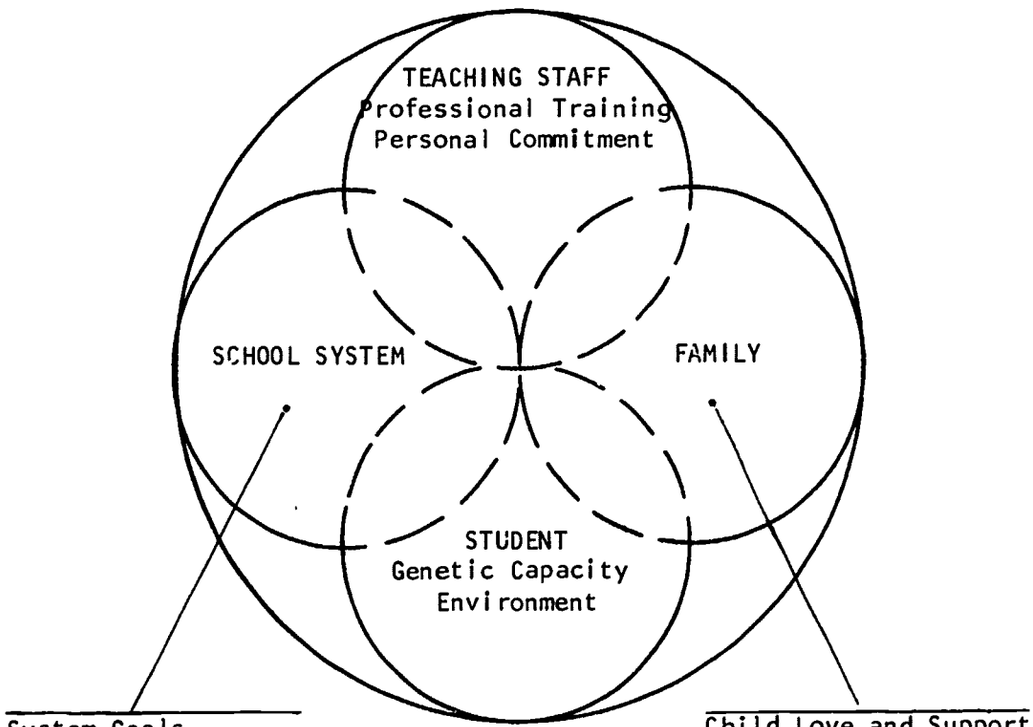


Figure 4

Figure 5

PROCESS FACTORS IN THE SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM



IV. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, DECENTRALIZATION AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

One of the strong reasons supporting decentralization is the argument that school systems have become too distant, too unresponsive, too rigid, and too remote from the public, and that by decentralizing certain functions the school can establish close linkage and dialogue with its clients. It also appears that certain functions--e.g., purchasing, fiscal operations, support services (non-instructional), etc.--are better performed at a highly centralized level for the sake of both efficiency and economies of scale. Such reasoning leads to descriptive efforts on what functions are logically decentralized and how they are carried in a decentralized format.

The authors believe that while the setting of socio-educational goals and policy is a concern to be addressed at levels III and IV on the matrix (Figure 1), objectives and programs developed to meet the broad goals are best addressed at Levels I and II. Thus decisions on program, on teaching methodology, on learner needs, on personnel, on resource allocation, on priority establishment, on educational facilities, and on community involvement procedures are best made at the local school and local district level.

Many models have been posed for the involvement of the community in a decentralized school system. Some have provided for councils of selected community representatives acting in advisory roles to school personnel. At the other end of the spectrum, some local school councils have taken complete control and decision-making power and determine all actions on the part of the staff. There may be a place for each extreme but there is certainly also the need for a moderate, workable model.

Decentralization is, in fact, the sharing of power once held at the central level with a broader variety of shareholders in the educational enterprise. It is an effort to fix the responsibility and accountability for educational decisions at the level where these decisions have greatest impact. It also is an effort to recognize a variety of participants in the educational organization and to assist all participants in assuming an ownership stake in the process.

If schools truly belong to the community they serve, then that community must help make decisions that affect their school. Differing educational decisions are made at the level of the individual child, at the classroom level, the building level, and the district level. (On the matrix, Figure 1, these include Levels I and II.) These levels include teachers, building administrators and central administrators. Historically, educational decisions have not included students and parents as direct participants. At the district level, the Board of Education is representative of the community, but no formal community input has been legitimized at the classroom and local school level.

Source Credit: Portions of Section IV have utilized and adapted a previous report - Donald J. Leu and Richard L. Featherstone (Marjorie W. Macris, Editorial Assistant), Current Forces Tending Towards Major Changes In Centralization and Decentralization of Education in the United States; position paper prepared for the United States Office of Education, May, 1969; 77 pp.

With decentralization, it becomes necessary to expand the participant groups from two (administration and teachers) to three (administration, staff, and community) or even four (administration, staff, community, and students).

To permit exploration of a model for decentralization, the authors develop the notion of building autonomy to signify local decision-making capacity. The purpose of building autonomy is to diffuse decision-making to the building level so that people who best know the issues can respond. To be successful in practice, building autonomy must be supported by a more broadly-based school decision process. This process must relieve the burden of professional educators, not add to it. It must include those groups which have a primary interest in the school's educational program--the student, parents, staff and administration. The process must be able to produce useful decisions in response to a wide range of issues and it must be reasonably efficient. Any model developed must address two primary needs: 1) the need to bridge the gap between the schools and the families they serve; and 2) the need for a more broadly-based school decision model to support building autonomy.

There are also some secondary objectives in developing a decentralized "building autonomy" model. These include the following:

1. To provide individual parents and parent organizations with a formal channel for their own input regarding school decisions;

2. To provide the professional staff of a school with a regular forum in which to work for educational improvements in concert with parents and students;

3. To provide more genuine student participation in educational decision-making than usually occurs in schools;

4. To provide students and other participants with an authentic learning experience in democratic problem-solving and decision-making;

5. To provide a working mechanism for resolving conflict or dealing with issues underlying the disruption of a school's educational program.

This model presented here is primarily intended as a profile of what is appropriate and not intended to become a fixed model for use in every school. Certainly local situations would require adjustment and even re-creation of the model.

One Model For A School/Community Council

A School/Community Council is a communication and decision-making organization made up of caucuses representing those groups which have a primary stake in the school's educational program. In a secondary school, this usually means four caucuses (administrators, faculty, parents, and students). In an elementary school, three caucuses are often sufficient (administration, faculty, parents).

The Council would meet at regularly scheduled intervals with special sessions as the need arises. The work of the Council would be facilitated by a caucus interaction and negotiations procedure with each caucus suggesting Council agenda items. Each caucus would meet periodically with its constituency to share information and decisions, and to identify concerns. Caucus members would be chosen by the respective constituencies for a term.

The School/Community Council would elect its own chairman and appoint ad hoc committees to gather data, investigate expressed concerns, develop recommendations, and so on. The Council would utilize the committee structure to provide data on which to make recommendations and decisions on local school matters.

Subject to the general authority of the Board of Education and central administration, the School/Community Council can be authorized to legislate in a wide variety of areas including: curriculum, student behavior codes, school/community relations, extra-curricular activities, school facilities planning, and priorities in the use of school resources. Control over inappropriate action is built into the model through the requirement for a consensus of all caucuses before a decision stands. In addition, there is a prior clarification of the appropriate roles, responsibilities and decision-making delimitations of the various participants before the initiating of an action (see Part V, Role and Responsibility Charting). Conceptually, the models are shown in Figures 6 and 7.

Figure 6

Secondary School/Community Council

School/Community Council

Student Caucus	Parent Caucus
Staff Caucus	Administration Caucus

Figure 7

Elementary School/Community Council

School/Community Council

Parent Caucus	Staff Caucus	Administration Caucus

The application of the above model to the planning of education would be straightforward and direct. Although application of the model would cause the educational planner to assume different responsibilities than has historically been his purview, the end product would provide programs more adequately suited to the needs of the community. The planner would have to be capable of working with the various caucuses to coordinate their efforts into a comprehensive plan that best expressed the priority needs as defined by the School/Community Council. By utilizing the ad hoc task forces of the Council to research relevant data, the planner would have far greater information on which to develop educational programs and specifications. Program needs and development would be truly a community effort and final specifications would evolve from program devised to meet the educational priorities of the community.

The educational facility planner would have to clearly define certain parameters at the initiation of the planning process. These include financial restrictions, size limitations, state code requirements, etc. Beyond that, however, his talents would be applied to the interpretation and translation of Council-generated information into educational concepts and specifications. In essence, the educational planner serves as the resource person, the technical expert for the Council in the development of educational specification. He also becomes a liaison between the Council and other agencies and groups (architect, contractors, central administration, etc.) concerned with new programs and/or facilities.

Realistically, the emerging role for the educational planner is a much more complex and demanding one, for his skills must now include those of persuasion, of compassion, of hearing and understanding, of translation, of close human relations in addition to the normal technical professional skills already possessed. The planner becomes a diplomat of sorts as he utilizes the talents of a variety of groups to develop educational plans that focus on the educational priorities and needs of a particular community.

V. ALTERNATIVE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE "FUTURE PLANNING" OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

American educational systems have grown at an unprecedented rate during the last twenty years, in population served and in the breadth and complexity of educational services requested, demanded and provided. Consequently, financial and "involvement" requirements of the public schools have increased steadily. During the same period, educational systems have been called upon to play a more direct, active role in the full attainment of human rights.

The public schools are an activity of government about which there are the most deeply held convictions and the most widespread concerns on the part of citizens generally. Thus, in the past two decades of rapid and fundamental change, educational systems have been the targets of criticism by liberals, moderates, and conservatives alike, representing parent groups, teachers' organizations, educational administrators and supervisors, civic organizations, political groups, business and labor, as well as school board associations. In fact, it is difficult to find an organization that has not added its voice to the criticism of the public school system.

The criticism has had results. The educational system has been either voluntarily or involuntarily linked with other formal units of government and with groups of citizens who have created their own power organizations. Lay boards responsible for the policy that guides the educational system, working with the educational executives responsible for carrying out the policy, have added new families of specialists to the educational organization to deal with criticism. The additions have often been made at the central office level, and as a result most educational systems have become highly centralized in both lay control and administrative responsibility and authority.

Other forces are also leading toward greater centralization of school systems at the local level. New planning and financing techniques, such as program budgeting, require central control. Evolving educational technology requires expensive equipment for electronic teaching aids as well as data gathering and processing and a large data base must be used from a centralized position to provide for economies of scale. The widening racial and economic gap between the affluent communities and the poor ghettos of large metropolitan areas has caused pressure to reduce disparities in financial support and racial composition in the schools, through centralized policy, planning and management.

The response of the school systems to these forces and pressures has not diminished the criticism. In fact, it might be said that large centralized educational systems now face centralized criticism. As could be expected, the power groups continue to be most censorious when they do not concur in educational and management decisions related to their own vested interests. Many times such groups conflict not only with the centralized educational authority but with other local and broad-based power groups attempting to enlarge their spheres of influence. In spite of these conflicts, they agree on one criticism: centralized control patterns for large educational institutions have

failed as effective means of guiding and controlling and organizing the system. Students, teachers, parents, and other groups seem to have become anti-establishment, and in so doing have come to resist the centralized authority and responsibility that is the basis for most establishments.

A somewhat reluctant move toward limited decentralization of authority in the public school systems has resulted from this negative reaction. This decentralization move has dealt with two major issues--the need to achieve more responsive administration of the school, and the need to provide for greater involvement of parents and other community leaders in the schools.

The proposed purposes of decentralization vary according to the interests of the advocating groups. In the racial minority ghettos of large cities, parents' organizations and citizens' groups demand more community participation in determining staff (including emphasis on hiring of local administrators, teachers and para-professional teachers' aides) and curriculum. In predominantly white or transitional communities of large northern and western cities, parents and other neighborhood residents have focused their demands for local control on "retaining the neighborhood school" and preventing measures such as busing to achieve racial balance. (Ironically, in many southern cities where residential areas are less segregated than in the north, Negro organizations have advanced the concept of the neighborhood school to achieve integration.) Students in secondary schools and higher education institutions are "demanding" greater control in regulations, admissions policies, and disciplinary measures.

While many teachers have aligned themselves with the interest in decentralization of the students and parents in their schools, many see local control over staffing as a threat to academic freedom and job security. This is the chief issue in the continuing, bitter and unresolved conflict in the New York City public schools.

To evaluate these trends and arrive at conclusions on whether they should be encouraged, changed, or ameliorated, it is necessary first to relate these changes to assumptions concerning the desirable purposes of education. One set of values-goals-purposes would logically lead to increased centralization and centralized control of public education. Conversely, other sets of values-goals-purposes would result in the deliberate design of increased decentralized decision-making models.

The authors set forth their value-goal-purpose assumptions for public education and suggest that they be used for evaluation of the centralization and decentralization recommendations utilized in this paper:

1. Every individual is unique;

2. Every individual is of infinite value;

3. Every individual is entitled to equal access to opportunities to learn;

4. Every individual is more important than things;

5. People--given knowledge and truth--will make wise choices;

6. Power must be shared--otherwise it corrupts;

7. Existing political processes can be utilized to achieve needed changes;

8. The good society is the open society;

9. People are interdependent;

10. Formal education should increase, not decrease, individual options;

11. Values in America are and should be pluralistic.

Public education must vigorously focus on the basic educational goals of reading, writing, arithmetic, science, and logic. The public school must help the child create and sustain a self-concept which permits and enables him to like himself and, therefore, to like others; one that enables him to move, without constriction and undue inhibitions, in positive ways toward others who may be different in religion or racial background from himself. In the second place, the growing child in American culture today must learn certain human relations skills. In a rapidly changing world, these are as essential as the fundamental skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. In the third place, the child in contemporary America must develop positive attitudes toward democracy--the social system in which he must live and to which he must contribute upon reaching adulthood.

If educational planners and policy makers accept the above social activist role for public education, then alternative solutions concerning centralization and decentralization will be evaluated within the context of the stated educational-social goals. If one assumes that the single role of public education is to pass on existing facts and information, abstaining from participation in resolving the social issues of our time, then differing solutions will be judged as superior.

An analysis of centralization vs. decentralization must begin with the understanding that influence, responsibility, authority and decision-making power are the primary factors that are being considered. Centralization and decentralization have meaning only when related to the "power" factors of organizational control. In public school systems, control of education has been placed under the jurisdiction of elected or appointed lay boards. The members of these lay boards are responsible to the public electing or selecting them. It should be noted that education, in virtually every state, is constitutionally a function of the state. Any powers or duties provided by local school districts have been delegated to the school district--usually by statutory provisions. A few states (Hawaii, for example) operate a state system of education. The state has created subsystems of education called "local

school districts," and the state can and does change these organizational patterns and the degree of local power. Districts have authority that varies in depth in direct relationship to the laws of the state. The professional administrative officials of an educational system also have responsibility and authority as delegated by the board of control and/or as interpreted by law. In reality a centralized school system is one in which final authority and responsibility for all educational and management functions are under one control officer. On the other hand, a decentralized school system is one in which responsibility and authority are distributed among many different local officers. The question of influence, responsibility, authority, and decision-making becomes foremost when decentralization is proposed as a cure for the weaknesses of the centralized structure.

If one translates these statements into models of school systems, the centralized district would maintain responsibility, authority and decision-making as follows:

A. Lay responsibility and authority for all policy decisions would be in the hands of one central representative board of control;

B. Professional responsibility and authority for the execution of policy would be in the office of the chief educational executive.

Influence on the central board would be reflected through the efforts of organized and casually related groups of citizens in the manner chosen by the initiating groups. Often the pressures brought to bear on the central board are negative or vested in the belief patterns of special power groups and have little to do with the quality of education for all children.

Responsibility, authority and decision-making in a highly decentralized educational system would be distributed as follows:

A. Lay responsibility and authority for educational policy and decision-making would be extended to local community boards or councils - the number to be determined by some definition of "community."

B. Professional responsibility and authority for the execution of policy would be in the offices of the local superintendent.

Influence on the local board would be reflected through the efforts of groups and individuals. Ideally, the efforts of these citizens would be directed toward the improvement of education for their children. In effect, the opposite of centralization for the educational system would be the decentralization of responsibility and authority and the division of the system into many autonomous school districts. Complete decentralization of urban school systems would, in most states, require substantial code or legal changes at the state level. It could, theoretically, move as far as making each local school building an independent operating school district.

Proponents of decentralization argue their case by comparing selected concepts within the content of centralization and decentralization. Several of these comparisons follow:

Centralization	Decentralization
Representation	
The board of control does not and cannot represent the desires of the public--sheer size of population makes representation impossible.	Community boards of control can better represent the desires of the different people they serve; in fact, the basic premises of a representative democracy can be effectuated by representing smaller groups of (socially and culturally homogeneous) people.
Handling Crises	
The board of control cannot act as a policy-making planning group. Instead, it will continue to be a decision-making group jumping from crisis to crisis.	Community boards of control can deal immediately with the crises that occur at the local level and can keep these crises from affecting other schools.
Differential Needs	
The board of control and administration must deal with the system on a uniform basis (as evidence of equality).	Community boards and local administrators are able to respond to local capacities and needs of community and pupils.
Responsiveness	
The board of control and the administration retain control of decision-making and create successive insulating levels of review and approval that result in an ineffective bureaucracy and a uniformly poor educational program.	The community board and local administration can make decisions without submitting programs to superordinate levels--thus improving educational operation.

Presented as above, the strengths of the decentralized system become evident. However, it is necessary to realize that the values in question are those selected by proponents of decentralization. In contrast, proponents of centralization might have selected different concepts to compare. For example:

Centralization	Decentralization
Quality Control	
The board of control and the administration can review and evaluate programs of education to be sure that equality of education is maintained throughout a large system.	The local board of control has no systematic way of examining educational programs. In an urban area made up of local districts, programs vary dramatically in content and quality.

Economy	
The board of control and administration can effect the economies of management that are possible through mass purchasing, maintenance, etc.	Local boards are restricted to management procedures that preclude economical purchasing, maintenance, etc.'
Technology	
The board of control and administration can, by combining financial sources, make available educational technology that is very expensive and effective.	Local boards and administration are restricted to less modern technological hardware simply because of the cost.
Articulation & Efficiency	
The board of control and administration can manage and plan a total articulated system of education in terms of programs, organization structure, texts, curriculum, diagnostic testing, and evaluation.	Local boards will be able to plan a total articulated system of education.
Leadership & Planning	
The board of control can attract and afford the best managerial and planning talent.	Local boards cannot attract, afford or retain top-level leadership and technical planning skills.
Social Goals	
The board of control can establish and maintain social goals that will represent the best interests of the broader society. Segregation can be reduced.	Neighborhood segregation (socio-economic-racial-religious) may foster segregation through "local interest."

Thus, it appears that community pressures and forces for change are bringing about shifts toward both greater centralization and greater decentralization in different functions and for differing reasons in large educational systems. To assure quality and equality of education and to take advantage of technology and economies of scale, it is evident that planning, evaluation, and financing functions are becoming more centralized--within municipal jurisdictions and at state and federal levels as well. To provide for greater community participation and variation to meet different social and educational needs, it may be noted that selected functions in regard to staff selection and curriculum formulation are becoming more decentralized.

Suggested Models for Decentralization

It is the position of the authors that further decentralization of the responsibility and authority to control and administer education within most large educational systems is a necessity. Moreover, it is the position of the authors that neither a centralized nor decentralized control pattern can be totally effective. Further, the authors believe it will be a waste of time and talent for a public school staff to spend time debating the merits of each system. Instead, the planning staff of the system should develop alternative patterns of control, test these new models and report the results of the tests along with its recommendations to the control board. The issue is not: should we centralize or decentralize public education? The issue is: what powers and functions can best be centralized and what powers and functions can best be decentralized?

The planning staff should attempt to combine the best elements of the decentralized and the best elements of the centralized patterns to evolve a balanced control structure. The balanced control pattern would be based on the thesis that:

A. Certain educational and management support functions should be centralized;

B. Certain educational management functions should be decentralized.

Further, it is possible to identify these functions, and an organization can be designed to accommodate the advantages of both centralized and decentralized operations.

In the remaining part of this section, the authors will attempt to outline a suggested Centralized-Decentralized "Role and Responsibility Model" which could be utilized (after expansion and adaption) to stimulate discussion and serve as an "organizational straw man."

However, before outlining the model, it is necessary to explain the position of the authors with regard to several issues. These issues are important in that they are reflected in one of alternative models, and if they are not accepted--at least in part--by the reader, the models will have little value. The authors believe:

A. Bureaucracy* as the predominate control pattern for large educational institutions will be drastically modified;

B. Central control boards are necessary and will continue to hold major roles in education. However, their responsibility and authority (hence, power) will be re-defined;

C. In urban areas there will be an educational manager for the total school enterprise. He will be responsible to and work with the central board of control in the management of the educational enterprise.

*Bureaucracy: the administration of government through departments and sub-divisions managed by sets of officials following an inflexible routine.

D. A form of decentralization is not only possible, it is necessary if education as a tool of democracy is to be effective;

E. Increased competition as known in the capitalistic society--a competition with social consciousness--will become part of the educational scene.

F. The complexity of the operation of large educational institutions will demand teams of specialists to provide information for decision-making;

G. Technology will provide opportunities for the continual assessment of the educational health of the system;

H. Business and industry will make major inputs into education through "software, hardware and total systems of education" available for purchase;

I. New forms of additional centralization by state governments and the federal government will evolve.

The following Role and Responsibility Models, Figures 8 and 9 are presented to illustrate several major points:

1. Any centralization-decentralization plan should be consistent with the value-goal-purpose base of the educational system;

2. Any decentralization plan will probably fail if it is not preceded by work which carefully delineates and clarifies the differing roles and responsibilities of the various participants in the decision-making process;

3. There is no single centralization-decentralization plan that can be adapted or adopted by all school systems.

Code:
1. (MD) Makes Decision
2. MR Makes Recommendation
3. PTD Provides Technical Data
4. Advises
5. Plans

Figure 8

CENTRALIZED MODEL

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY CLARIFICATION

Sample Task: To Plan, Construct, and Make Operational A New School Building

	Decisions: Need for a new school	Size and Scope	Cost	Location	Program	"Educ. Specs"	Design	Construction Materials	Staffing	Methods of Financing	Operational Decisions
1. Central Board of Education	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)
2. Superintendent of Schools	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR
3. Educational Planner	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD
4. Architect	–	PTD	PTD	PTD	–	–	MR PTD	MR PTD	–	–	–
5. Local Principal	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
6. Local Staff	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
7. Students	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
8. Local Community Council	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
9. Local Citizens	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
10. Significant Others	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

ode:
1. (MD) Makes Decisions
2. MR Makes Recommendation
3. PTD Provides Technical Data
4. Advises
5. Plans

Figure 9

ONE CENTRALIZED-DECENTRALIZED MODEL

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY CLARIFICATION

Sample Task: To Plan, Construct, and Make Operational A New School Building

Decisions:

	Need for a New School	Size and Scope	Cost	Location	Program	"Educ. Specs"	Design	Construction Materials	Methods of Financing	Staffing	Operational Decisions
1. Central Board of Education	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	–	–	–	–	(MD)	–	–
2. Superintendent of Schools	MR	MR	MR	MR	PTD	PTD	–	–	MR	–	–
3. Educational Planner	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD	MR	PTD	PTD	PTD	PTD
4. Architect	–	–	–	–	PTD MR	PTD	MR PTD	MR PTD	–	–	PTD
5. Local Principal	–	–	–	–	–	PTD	MR	MR	–	MR	MR
6. Local Staff	–	–	–	–	PTD MR	PTD	MR	MR	–	MR	MR
7. Students	–	–	–	–	MR	MR	MR	MR	–	MR	MR
8. Local Community	MR	MR	MR	MR	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	(MD)	MR	(MD)	(MD)
9. Local Citizens	–	–	–	–	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR
10. Significant Others	–	–	–	–	PTD	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR	MR

VI. SUMMARY

This paper has described some of the forces toward centralization and decentralization in educational systems that are having an impact at several different levels in the political hierarchy.

At the local level, forces of technological change, teacher specialization, and action necessary to guarantee individual rights are leading toward expanded activities in centralized boards of control and administrative offices. Conversely, demands for more parental and community participation and the need for dispersal of certain functions for administrative effectiveness are leading toward more decentralization. Thus, in local educational jurisdictions, planning the provision of technical services, and information processing are becoming more centralized, while control and influence over staffing and curriculum are becoming more decentralized.

The values of centralization and decentralization will be continuously argued. Arguments for and against either point of view are derived from the belief or value systems of the proponent or opponent. Thus the points in favor or against decentralization are value-laden. There are few, if any, available scientific facts to aid those persons faced with the decision of selecting or rejecting a new control pattern for a large urban school system. In fact, the board members and administrators considering the qualities of both decentralized and centralized control patterns should recognize that the opponents of each view make use of the very strengths purported to be related to the other view and, in effect, challenge the validity of the proponent's position.

For example, proponents of the decentralization concept tend to rely heavily on the belief that local control (community level) is of prime importance in the effort to provide equal and effective education to the child. They tend to believe that the parents' voices must be heard in order to elicit from these same parents the necessary financial and personal commitments that are necessary to support and improve education. Thus, decentralization calls for the community school concept in control and administration of all educational and management functions. This community school concept has legions of supporters--and justly so. There are some community schools that are excellent. However, the dependence on local educational control as a positive factor may also be a weakness.

Opponents of decentralization call attention to possible fallacies in the belief in local or community control. The community school concept is not new. In fact, until recently the community school (neighborhood in some instances) in the American culture held a fairly respectable image. It is fair to assume that respectability came about because the community had a social consciousness, and there was a certain degree of population stability, a fairly well-identified and rather homogeneous social and economic structure, and an attitude of tolerance or acceptance of the community population. However, the evolving urban community may be a myth. In large cities there is practically no stability of population, and the social and economic structure may be vastly different (i.e., luxury apartments three blocks

from slum dwellings) and there is little, if any, agreement on a value system upon which to build the community ethics or to judge behavior patterns. Thus, the "community board of education" reflecting responsibility and authority in decision-making which is so important to the proponent of decentralization may be more fancy than fact.

A second weakness of the local control model may be found in the reliance upon local responsibility and authority as demonstrated in effective small and moderate-sized locally controlled school districts in the United States. One should also consider the fact that there are good, indifferent and poor programs in small locally controlled school districts. That is, having a locally controlled district does not necessarily mean that the educational program will be better than in a centralized system. Conversely, there is no proof that the education will be worse in the decentralized structure. There are other concerns raised by the opponents to decentralization.

Another very serious concern to those professional and lay citizens who believe the school system has a responsibility in our social order is that the extreme model of decentralization plays directly into the hands of certain power groups. Without question, the small, autonomous, neighborhood or community board that has complete responsibility for establishing educational policy, hiring the chief school official, etc., can become a self-centered force that uses the school to propagandize on behalf of its belief systems.

The lack of linkage with the political world in which we live causes still another concern associated with existing models of decentralization. Urban educational enterprises provide a public service and exist side-by-side with other members of the municipal federation for limited finances. A multitude of small districts might find it difficult to compete for financial support with a large political machine.

Further, those considering decentralization of decision-making must acknowledge the forces in our society that literally pressure an organization to consider further centralization of certain functions. Two forces with such continuing influence are technology (i.e., computer technology) and the judiciary (i.e., legal interpretations that control education).

An example of advanced technology, computer-assisted education has as an inherent part of its design a required centralization factor. In the future, individualized educational opportunity will likely be available through large, more complex, centralized storage and retrieval hardware. Present procedures for managing pupil accounting, teaching payrolls, etc., through computer methods are administered most efficiently and economically on a centralized basis.

The second force, the role of the judiciary in our society, may have as great an effect as technology. As the courts examine and interpret questions of equal educational opportunity, it may become necessary to provide metropolitan or state school districts with centralized control of certain aspects of education.

The final factor, which to some will be a fatal weakness, is the undeniable fact that a decentralized school system will cost much more to operate than the present centralized operation. Preliminary investigations indicate that no one has accurately estimated the significant and large increases in unit costs resulting from decentralization. In other words, new sources of revenue must be found before any significant degree of decentralization is initiated or it is doomed to fail.

Strengths and weaknesses for centralization and decentralization can and will be isolated and argued. In some cases the controversy will be largely academic. However, running parallel with the arguments will be the strong criticism of the various power groups focused on the present system. These power groups will continue to clamor for a change from centralized responsibility and authority to another form of organizational control.

In conclusion, four basic principles can be set forth to guide planning and evaluation of centralization-decentralization issues, in the light of current trends and in relation to the defined purposes of education.

1. Individual rights and the overall public interest are not negotiable, either by decentralized local control over the schools or by the assertion of more broadly based power interests. Admittedly, these terms are difficult to define, but to the extent that they become specifically drawn through legislation and judicial decisions, they are not subject to modification for the sake of political expediency. For example, it has been legally established that racially segregated schools are inherently unequal, and thus contradictory to the purposes of a public school system. Therefore, it is not a tenable policy to submit the question of school desegregation, which involves the public interest and individual rights, to the will of the majority, either through city-wide referendum or through a poll of parents of an individual school to determine whether they wish to participate in a school desegregation plan.

The public school system uses broadly-based community resources to achieve a common goal: the education of individual children. Decisions affecting educational quality and equality must be made according to the common good and the individual needs of students, not according to who pays taxes and who happens to live in a given community. School boards and administrations cannot abdicate this responsibility in the name of citizen participation or community control.

2. There is, notwithstanding, an undeniable need for greater parental and community involvement in the public schools, and in large cities for administrative decentralization in the interests of effectiveness and responsiveness. Community involvement is essential in order to assure the relevance of curriculum and teaching methods, meaningful contact with the real world that the students live in, and parental understanding and support of the schools.

3. While the goal must be social, economic, and racial integration of the schools, it is recognized that this is not achievable within the lifetime of many present-day students. Although it is no longer legally or morally possible to plan to keep children apart, the fact remains that even with the greatest effort toward desegregation, the majority of children in many large metropolitan areas, both inside and outside the racial ghettos, will in fact remain apart during their school years. It will therefore be necessary to take additional short-range steps to ameliorate the problems caused by separation, for white suburban children as well as black ghetto children.

In making decisions on centralized-decentralization issues, as well as on other educational matters, it would be valid and useful to apply the test of "productivity or counter-productivity" proposed by Thomas Pettigrew. He suggests stressing dispersal of the ghetto, even while recognizing that dispersal alone cannot meet all the needs. This does not mean abolishing ghettos, even if they could be dispersed completely. The object is to change the nature of ghettos, not to eliminate them. . . We know how to disperse the ghettos. It is not lack of know-how that holds us back--it is a lack of political determination, plus hostility toward open housing on the part of many white citizens. Nevertheless, we could make real strides by combining the dispersal techniques already at our command with the enrichment of the ghetto.

4. Financial support for the public schools must be based upon the real and differing needs of individual students in order to attain equality of education and life opportunity; it must not be based upon accidents of geography, tax base, or community composition. To assure this, it will be necessary to arrive at a practical definition of equality of educational opportunity.

Many such definitions have been set forth, and each has its shortcomings. For example, the "full opportunity definition" holds that every person is to be given full opportunity to develop his abilities to their limit. However, this definition is unworkable because it assumes that economic resources and the capabilities of educational systems are unlimited. The "foundation definition," in widespread use today, guarantees to every pupil a satisfactory minimum offering, expressed in dollars to be spent. This definition is not working because the foundation is low and individual districts continue to have wide variations in expenditures. The "leveling definition" would allocate resources in inverse proportion to students' abilities, so that they would leave school with an equal chance of success. This approach would be unworkable and discriminatory if adhered to absolutely, and it would produce a low economic yield on investments. Conversely, the "deserving definition" would allocate educational resources in direct proportion to students' ability, which would be discriminatory and undemocratic and would lead to an elite group of privileged intellectuals and an ignorant lower class. Other definitions have been set forth, no one of which is satisfactory.

A "classification definition" of equal educational opportunity could be made workable; however, it would require first the specification of "suitable" educational programs for students with particular characteristics. Then, each program would be made available to every student with the corresponding set of characteristics, wherever he lives in the state. This approach would assure equality for all, within a classification. To make this definition workable, it would be necessary to overcome the problems of developing, defining, and costing classifications. The classifications would refine existing definitions of need (now expressed simply in "number of pupils") to include allowable variations in cost based on differences in sparsity, local price structures, special education requirements, programs for the culturally and economically deprived, experimental or pilot programs to be undertaken, and transportation requirements. Values and educational goals would be of crucial importance in defining the "equality" or legality of the final plan.

In the past, action at the national level has been necessary to advance toward reality the concept of equality of educational opportunity. This has occurred in judicial decisions against racial discrimination and in the provision of financial assistance to local school districts. It now appears that leadership at the national and state level will be required to assure equalization of financial support of school districts between and within states. Concurrently with this move toward greater centralization of leadership and support of educational systems at the national level, there is a justified demand by parents and communities for greater involvement in a decentralized school system. Thus, both centralization and decentralization are occurring simultaneously.

This paper has presented an analysis of the centralized and the decentralized school system, drawing upon a variety of experiences and models now in existence. The decentralization model or profile posed for consideration is intended as a basis for the development of a process by which indigenous models can be established for any locale as unique variables are identified and understood. The focal point has been to draw implications for educational planning and development in the decentralized schema of necessity. The authors provided brief background in centralization-decentralization development, in educational goals and objectives, program development, and in community involvement. It is our hope that this effort together with future research papers will lead to the development of planning processes that will help provide creative and functional education for all children and communities.