ABSTRACT
              This paper analyzes key elements of reform strategies
for two programs--the Federal Experimental Schools (E-S) and
California's Early Childhood Program (ECE). The paper begins with
implications derived from five case studies of rural experimental
schools projects. The references to specific cases provide empirical
support for the assertions. The pessimistic conclusions from the E-S
part are then contrasted with better outcomes from ECE. Outcomes are
described in terms of impact on school programs and processes. The
focus is the E-S or ECE impact on the content of the educational
programs and teaching strategies to which children are exposed; that
is, the purposes, intended outcomes, and methods of instruction. The
paper concludes with general prescriptions for educational reform.
(Author/MLF)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM:
FEDERAL EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS AND
CALIFORNIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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This paper analyzes key elements of reform strategies for two

programs -- the Federal Experimental Schools (E-S) and California's Early

Childhood Program (ECE). It is a companion paper to Robert Herriott's

overview of Federal Experimental Schools, prepared for the AERA Symposium.

The paper begins with implications derived from ABT Associates' five case

studies of rural experimental schools projects. The references to specific

ABT cases provide empirical support for the assertions. The pessimistic

conclusions from the E-S part is then contrasted with better outcomes from

California's Early Childhood Education Program. Outcomes are described in

terms of impact on school programs and processes. : Our focus is the E-S or

ECE impact on the content of the educational programs and teaching strategies

to which children are exposed, e.g., purposes, intended outcomes, and methods

of instruction. We are concerned with the processes and experiences through

which children are put. No attempt is made to assess pupil achievement.

The lack of outcomes for Experimental Schools is documented by the

ABT case studies that were completed for NIE. This writer, however, made

no attempt to verify the descriptive data provided by ABT case writers. My

task was to analyze flaws in the federal reform strategy and tactics based

on the raw data from the cases. The names for the cases in the text are

assumed names for actual locations.

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The greater impact of ECE on school programs and processes is based

on the annual evaluation reports prepared by the California State Department

of Education, an unpublished UCLA study commissioned by the California

Legislature, and a Stanford Evaluation Consortium ECE study.   The paper

starts with an analysis of Experimental Schools and then moves to ECE.   It

concludes with general prescriptions for educational reform.

I.   Experimental Schools: An Introduction

      Herriott describes the origins of E-S in this manner:

> The Experimental Schools (ES) program arose during a period
> of pause and reflection within the federal government in the
> late 1960's which included the re-examination of assumptions
> about federal involvement in education.   Out of such reflection
> came concern that the federal role during the 1960's had been
> too fragmented, leading to a variety of local assistance pro-
> grams that lacked overall coherence at the federal level and
> provided sufficient opportunity for initiative at the local
> level.   The lack of overall coherence was thought to have
> fostered a _piecemeal_ change strategy and an emphasis upon the
> development of new educational products (programs, techniques,
> and hardware) amenable to widespread adoption at the local
> level.   One conclusion emerging from these concerns was that
> a comprehensive change strategy with a focus on _process_ rather
> than _products_ might be preferable.
>
> ... The extension of the Experimental Schools program to rural
> districts was made known through an "Announcement of a Competi-
> tion for Small Rural Schools," sent by the U.S. Office of Educa-
> tion to all school districts in the U.S. having fewer than 2,500
> pupils.
>
> The Announcement specified four unusual features of the program.
> To be eligible for funding the school districts would have to
> agree to:
>
> - design their projects locally, but within some general
>   federal guidelines;
> - seek to bring about changes which affected all schools
>   and subject matter areas in the district and hence were
>   "comprehensive" in scope;

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- assume the entire costs of the project after the federal
  funds had been phased out in five years; and

- be intensively studied over the five years of their
  project.

   This program was not to be another instance of a federal agency
persuading school districts to accept a federally endoresed
innovation to solve local problems. Rather it was committed
to the proposition that local problems must be solved with
local initiative, and that they can be solved by capitalizing
on the unique strengths of each community.

... The Announcement further stipulated that the district must
be committed to a "comprehensive" (rather than a piecemeal)
approach to educational improvement. The purpose of this re-
quirement was to:

   "find out whether new educational programs which address
   all parts of an educational system simultaneously will
   be more effective than past reform efforts which have
   focused on only one or several parts of an educational
   system at a time."

The definition of comprehensive change proposed by the Experi-
mental Schools program included:

- a fresh approach to the nature and substance of the total
  curriculum in light of local needs and goals;

- reorganization and training of staff to meet particular
  project goals;

- innovative use of time, space and facilities;

- active community involvement in developing, operating,
  and evaluating the proposed project; and

- an administrative and organizational structure which
  supports the project and which takes into account
  local strengths and needs (The Announcement, p. 2).

   All of the above had to be considered in a rural ES project al-
though the requirement was not necessarily to totally replace
everything being done with something new, but it did mean that:

   "...what is going on in each of these areas should
   be related to, consistent with and supportive of all
   of the other areas." (The Announcement, p. 2.)

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E-S is different from most (about 90%) federal grants to LEAs, because the SEA does not play a significant role. Consequently, we are looking at interactions in only two levels of a complex three-level federal system. Many federal reformers, however, have claimed that the SEA is an impediment to change and the E-S relationship will provide a more fruitful arrangement for reform. This would be true particularly for comprehensive change. Consequently, E-S is a particularly useful framework for viewing problems and successes because the "state middleman" is not in the picture.

My reading of the five cases is that very little, if any, comprehensive change occurred. We need to understand the impact of federal-local interactions on this discouraging result. The perspective here is from the bottom-up, or the local level looking up to the federal delivery system. We begin with an overview of the local problems attritubable to federal sources, then we analyze why these problems occur, and then turn to the locally generated problems that impeded E-S implementation. Finally, we conclude with short run and long run policies to improve the outcome of future efforts. Hopefully, this chapter will assist both federal and local school reformers to devise future policies and procedures so that innovations are implemented and incorporated into the long term local operations. It is the lack of this incorporation of innovation that calls for a major effort to discover what went wrong.

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[1]See John Brademas, "The Case for Categorical Aid" in Michael W. Kirst (editor), The Politics of Education (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1970), pp. 403-407.

II. Local Problems Attributable to Federal Sources

While the outcome of E-S in the local areas results from both
federal and local actions (or inaction), we are separating the issues
by level initially for analytical purposes. Since the federal government
initiated the program, it seems appropriate to sketch the prime problems
stemming from the national level:

- confused and overly ambitious federal goals

- inefficient and inflexible implementation policies

- delays in federal response to local needs

- strategic miscalculation to implement comprehensive change
  at the central rather than school site level

- ineffective use of community participation

Problems with Goals

E-S is a classic case of multiple, vague and somewhat contradictory
federal objectives that leave LEAs confused about federal desires.[2] "Com-
prehensive change" is more a slogan than a concept to guide operations.
Consequently, the LEAs could include everything and anything, but were
never required to be very precise. Arcadia's goals were "humanizing and
individualizing", Cades was "individualized diagnostic instruction", and
Jackson aspired to a "common curriculum." Given the E-S desire for com-
prehensive change there was no federal assistance in scaling down overly

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[2] For a discussion of multiple goals in Title I ESEA see F. Wirt and M. Kirst,
Political and Social Foundations of Education (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975),
Chapter 8.

ambitious local projects to meet local capabilities. In Jackson County,

the E-S project officer stated, "comprehensiveness includes absolutely

everything that has to do with education in Jackson County." Yet the

staff and fiscal resources in Jackson were very limited and it was ob-

viously going to be difficult to keep consultants in that location for

long periods of time.

The more organizations that are involved, or the more complex the

substance of reform, the greater the difficulty of implementation. In

Jackson County there were too many project components to be mounted in

too many different school sites. Moreover, basic and applied research

gaps for meeting Jackson's ambitious goals were critical but NIE failed

to raise these issues.

Multiple and vague federal objectives also make federal evaluation

of local performance potentially capricious and arbitrary. Federal evalua-

tors can single out particular dimensions of "a comprehensive effort" and

say a program is not meeting federal intent. The Butte case is an excellent

example of the impossibility of meeting all the various federal expectations

in simultaneous fashion.

Inefficient and Inflexible Implementation Policies

E-S proceeded from the traditional federal position that a key part

of successful implementation is to have LEA's specify goals, objectives,

milestones and timetables for accomplishment. Indeed, NIE imposed many of

its standard research-management procedures on E-S, which was an action

program not oriented to research procedures. There was an NIE expectation

of sequence of actions and schedules, formal information systems, identi-

fication of key tasks and so on. Many of these are concepts derived from

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business management. According to this approach, NIE implementation relies heavily on paper compliance with these "good management practices" through progress reports and formative-summative evaluations. Sometimes the latter are conducted by technically certified third party evaluators.

In the business world the control of an activity requires that 1) key production variables are subject to manipulation; 2) there is information feedback for manipulating these variables; 3) the information system must be reasonably accurate. None of these conditions is present to any satis-factory extent in public education in general and the E-S sites in particular. Business firms use their financial accounting systems as a principal means of control and obtain vital information through sales and profits. The E-S cases indicate NIE never had good information on what was happening in these rural areas, especially concerning the local problems and perspective. The long distance flow of paper between Washington and these rural areas on objectives and milestones of accomplishment gives an illusion of information, but not the reality. Moreover, the paper flow rarely gives Washington ad-ministrators the information needed to be helpful or to facilitate local adaptation. Instead of sensing that Jackson County could not implement all it proposed, and facilitating changes, the NIE project officer saw his role as one assuring the original contract was followed as closely as possible!

This implementation approach misses the concept of "mutual adaptation" found in a recent study of a large number of federal change oriented projects. Successful implementation requires a mutual adaptation of the innovation and the organization in which both have changed from their initial characteristics.[3] That is, change was recognized as a slow, evolving

[3]P. Berman and M.W. McLaughlin, Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Vol. IV, The Rand Corporation, R-1584/4-HEW, April 1975.

process in which people "learn by doing," and there was no attempt to
rigidly adhere to detailed plans set out in advance. The implementation
strategies which promoted mutual adaptation were continuous, on-line
planning, locally developed materials, regular and frequent staff meetings,
and practical in-service training linked to staff meetings -- all of which
involved teachers, those whose behavior the projects were ultimately aimed
at changing. These findings are consistent with numerous other recent
studies which advocate "bottom-up" rather than "top-down" strategies for
change. In Arcadia, for example, there was a local adaptation of the
original project goals and Washington did not attempt to rigidly "manage"
the program. Unlike River, the district was permitted to make those vital
"mid-course" adaptations. In River, Washington even tried to prescribe who
the project director should be!

Delays in Federal Response

NIE was slow to respond or provide go-ahead assurances at critical
points for local planning and implementation. In Arcadia grant approval
came through too late to make final plans for/the opening of school. River
                                             inservice training before
had six different project directors and Butte, four. This made contact
with Washington haphazard, especially when NIE wanted to approve materials
purchased in Butte. Cades complained they could not reach crucial NIE
officials by phone and were left uncertain as to how to respond to "vague"
Washington criticism.

District-wide vs. School Sites as the Unit of Change

Washington was committed to a district-wide comprehensive approach

despite the unsuitability of this for some local contexts. In River the
attempted unification of several school districts could not overcome local
resistance. NIE resisted this local attempt to decentralize planning and
operations. As the River case writer noted:

> Each of the five former districts had a long history of
> independence and autonomy and strong leaders who embodied
> that independence. ... Each administrative unit had identi-
> fiable needs which reflected a particular local context
> constituency. And each local administrative leader asserted
> his unit's independent spirit in ways which at times proved
> counterproductive to an administrative unity symbolized by
> centralized operations. (p. 4-43)

Arcadia and Cades are also excellent examples of the triumph of
decentralized forces over centralized project designs. As the implementa-
tion time-line becomes longer, it appears counterproductive and fruitless
for Washington to continue to advocate centralized comprehensive change.

Ineffective Use of Community Participation

It is striking that despite/insistence, community participation was
Washington's
ineffective in every case! In River, citizen participation quickly
"declined markedly" and was discontinued. In Cades, the superintendent
planned for the community and brushed off NIE attempts to have him include
it. In Arcadia, citizen participation for in-service training was "never
operational; its functions were not clearly defined, and the members never
developed a clear set of objectives. Its creation satisfied a promise in
the original Letter of Interest, but its objectives were smothered. (p. 7-15)

From the local perspective, the federal requirement for citizen par-
ticipation was something to put in the proposal, but it was never clear or
deemed necessary for project operations.

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III.   Why Did These Local Problems Occur?

Several major causes can be identified for the problems outlined
abcve. Many of these stem in part from the overall Washington environment
that slowly emasculated the federal E-S effort.

The Political Context of Federal-Local Relations

The Experimental Schools Program (E-S) was shaped during the initial
years of a new Replication Administration. It was part of this philosophy
expressed in President Nixon's education message:

> An essential element in our effort to provide every
> American an equal and increasing opportunity for educa-
> cation is the development and dissemination of alternative
> education approaches through research. For too long we
> threw money at educational problems, feeling that bigger
> would mean better.[4]

The experimental schools effort was part of a policy era of pause
and reflect on educational reform after several years of large scale funding
initiatives. It was linked to the ideas of Daniel Moynihan. In brief,
overall policy was that education must be reformed before it could spend
more resources effectively. Since we did not know what reforms "worked" we
needed R&D as a prior step before consideration of new or expanded federal
grant programs. In essence, the nation must wait for new education methods
before increasing educational resources.[5] Accordingly, Nixon slashed budget
amounts for all kinds of categorical funds (libraries, guidance, equipment,
etc.), but added for E-S.

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[4] President's Education Message, January 24, 1974.

[5] For an elaboration, see Alice Rivlin, "Education, Politics, and Federal
Aid," The Progressive, October 1970, pp. 31-35.

As Chapter III indicated E-S schools also fit into the Nixon Administration's preference for grant consolidation and comprehensive programs. E-S wanted to look at overall school system needs, not particular segmented issues. But this ran counter to the Congressional reflex that the federal government needs to earmark certain national priorities. Moreover, as one Washington commentator remarked, "Every education category is some Congressman's footnote in history."

Consequently, E-S started with the now familiar top level fanfare of consolidating "piecemeal fragmented" programs. It had high level support in the White House Domestic Policy Council and could be ushered in by a new Commissioner, Sidney P. Marland. Hopes were high and goals were somewhat grandiose. It is in this context that the original call for planning grants went to LEA's. LEA responded, but before the planning grants were funded, the Washington context changed drastically. These changes filtered down to the LEA level and had enormous impact on federal/local relations.

Moynihan and his associates who instigated the idea were shortly in faraway India. The whole program found itself cut afloat from any established Washington bureaucracy and in the hostile, newborn NIE. NIE did not believe the E-S fit their priorities or style. It was not along the lines of a controlled experiment with a tight comparative evaluation design. The program was buried in an organization with other central goals. During the same period the ambitious USOE proposal for "educational renewal" rose and fell.[6] Renewal was to "bring together discretionary programs so that OE can respond better to the needs of schools" and be concerned with "problems, not programs." Renewal was intended to allow school districts across

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[6] See John Merrow, "The Politics of Federal Education Policy: The Case of Educational Renewal," <u>Teachers College Record</u>, September 1974, Vol. 76, No. 1, pp. 19-38.

the country to apply, with one application, for the funds that previously

flowed through a stack of small programs. In short, it had many of the

same themes as E-S. But Congress emphatically vetoed renewal and emascu-

lated its USOE sponsors. Congress renewed its commitment to the categorical

grants and indirectly indicated its displeasure with E-S type approaches.

Changing Federal Policies and Inadequate Monitoring

In a short period the Washington political context for E-S had turned

from high level support and enthusiasm to a small program buried in a new

agency that wanted to reorient or eliminate it. E-S was destined to be

another marginal program that came and went in the shifting sands of Wash-

ington politics. It built no large scale local constituency and did not

concern the state lobbyists, such as the CSSO, or governors. The program

bypassed all the established lobbies, so there was no reservoir of support

to offset the subsequent cuts in local E-S budgets or inappropriate NIE

requests of LEA's. Politically E-S was mortally wounded before it even

became operational -- a short life even for Washington reform efforts.

This political context had enormous implications for federal-local

relations. The changing E-S project personnel to oversee or service the

LEA's is symptomatic of internal HEW power struggles and declining top level

support. NIE's personnel system was in an uproar during its formative years.

The bright, young people in Washington can smell the rapid decay of a dying

program and move on to the next bold new federal venture. This accounts

for the rapid turnover in federal project monitors and lack of continuity

in federal guidance. The philosophical dispute between E-S Director Bin-

Swanger and the research minded NIE in part caused the delays in responding

to LEA inquiries and the unclear federal policies and guidelines. Indeed, NIE finally viewed E-S as a "sunk cost" to be written off -- a commitment that it inherited but could not fit into a systematic R&D mold. The lack of organizational support resulted in inadequate Washington staff or regulations to help the LEA's meet their own needs. The E-S budget could not grow once its top level sponsorship (Moynihan and Marland) departed or were deposed. Consequently, the LEA's E-S budgets were slowly cut back and the momentum began to fade. This encourages an LEA view about so many federal efforts -- "this too shall pass" -- that enhances the natural LEA tendency to substitute their own short term needs for the longer term federal goals of the overall program.[7]

Failure to Relate the Concept of Comprehensiveness to the Major Immediate Problems of Local Districts

While comprehensive change was Washington's top priority it was not congruent with many localities' views of their priority needs. Indeed, in many cases NIE's program orientation was a poor fit with LEA central missions. In River, local people were primarily interested in unifying the formerly separate school districts. In Cades, the superintendent wanted to use E-S to enhance the LEA's reputation for accreditation and his own career as an innovator. In Jackson, the LEA needed more general financial resources and "common curriculum" but NIE wanted a comprehensive approach.

Federal policymakers need to identify and analyze the central problems and concerns of the local schools that will be involved in carrying out E-S reforms. There could be an incompatibility between E-S objectives and the expected LEA behavior. Such an incompatibility calls for a change in the federal policy, a change in the organizations involved in the implementation

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[7] This is discussed in the February 1976 issue of _Teachers College Record_, "Making Change Happen," Vol. 77, No. 3.

process, or a mutual adaptation as discussed in Section II. In this latter

circumstance, there is a realignment of some combination of federal policies

to better mesh with the likely local operational behavior. If the modified

E-S policy still appears to run counter to the LEA central mission, then

there are three possibilities for bringing about better implementation.

1) give up; 2) try to enforce top-down change; 3) set up a new implementing

organization outside the control of the LEA, e.g., a contract with a com-

munity group.[8] Experience with other federal reform efforts indicates (1)

is the best strategy.[9]

Failure to Understand Barriers of Local Implementation

The federal control procedures of project monitors, very brief visits

to local sites, periodic progress reports and renewal grants were insufficient

to reorient local behavior toward "comprehensive change." For example, the

use of third party evaluators had little or no impact on local project de-

cisions or redesign. Even in River where the evaluation was a more integral

part of the local program, the major revisions did not come from the formal

evaluation.

These federal accountability techniques do not seem sufficient to

overcome the organizational rigidity at the local level.

Willis Hawley analyzes several sources of organizational rigidity

and lists the following impressive barriers: 1) the difficulties in, and

resistance to, measuring school outputs; 2) the restrictions and small

impact of exit by the clients and personnel of a school, e.g., dropouts,

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[8]This categorization is adapted from Henry Rown, "Some Key Factors in Policy
    Implementation," paper presented at 1976 AERA meeting, San Francisco,
    April 1976.

[9]See, for example, A Foundation Goes to School (New York: Ford Foundation,
    1972).

academic failure, and teacher turnover do not lead to incentives for change
in standard operating procedures; 3) distortion, mitigation, and dimuni-
tion of the demands and political inputs school systems must confront
because of limited lay participation (parents and community groups) and
leverage on organizational routines; 4) the nature and inadequacy of the
internal local educational agency (LEA) communication networks; 5) the
diffuseness of educational goals and teacher role expectations; 6) personnel
policies and practices that do not reward performance and that constrain
the input of new ideas; and 7) the absence of research and evaluation on
effective educational programs. These sources of rigidity are interrelated
and reinforce each other. They result in routine work driving out non-
routine work.[10]

For our purposes here, it is important to realize that E-S is com-
prehensive change money that is being filtered through the "rigid" local
educational organization. Indeed, federal leverage should extend to the
focus where the child comes in contact with education services--the classroom.
Therefore, the crucial question becomes, "Has E-S altered the process of
education in a large number of classrooms?" Have the services purchased
with E-S grants resulted in comprehensive change? The cases provides a
negative answer to both questions.

Emphasis on School Districts As the Appropriate Change Unit

E-S assumed that they could spread "comprehensive changes" more or
less through all the schools in a system. This assumption oriented their
posture toward federal-local relations. For instance, NIE discouraged

[10]Willis D. Hawley, "Dealing with Organizational Rigidity in Public Schools:
A Theoretical Perspective," paper presented at the annual meeting of the
American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 7-11, 1972.

separate projects for each school in Jackson County. Butte administrators, with NIE support, deliberately discouraged bottom-up initiatives from school staff. But much recent implementation literature stresses the school site as the optimal unit for change.[11] This is consistent with Rowen's findings that consensus is unlikely throughout an organization, so we must rely on entrepreneurs in the mid-levels of the organization.

> But bottom-up initiatives rarely occur through spontaneous independent convergence of many independent actors on a new course of action. Apparent initiatives of this kind are more likely to result from the activities of "entrepreneurs" who may be located at any of several places in the system -- not excluding the top -- but not likely at the lowest levels of agencies, who inform, persuade, proselytize, coopt and perhaps ultimately succeed in creating a "movement." Clearly doing this takes perception, energy, talent, motivation, and at least a modest amount of money -- ingredients not often in combination.[12]

It is important to examine this school site change thesis in detail because it implies a different relationship between Washington and LEA's than E-S attempted. The orientation of federal/local relations would be to enhance school site planning and differentiation in programs. There would be no one best system for comprehensive change in all schools simultaneously. As we have seen, this is probably impossible to implement, but a case can be made that it is also undesirable! Most activities that are undertaken and advertised as "innovations" -- often supported by special state or federal funds -- are absorbed into the system in such a way as to perpetuate the status quo.

The Cades is an excellent example of this general school system tendency toward maintenance. E-S aspired to change the technology, structure and culture. Significant change of this type can occur in "pockets" of a

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[11]See, for example, John I. Goodlad, The Dynamics of Educational Change (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970) and Semour Sarason, The Culture of the School (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971).

[12]Henry Rowen, "Some Key Factors in Policy Implementation," pp. 6-7; paper presented at 1976 AERA meeting, San Francisco, April 1976.

maintenance school system -- particular schools. As Goodlad concluded, "The school with its principal, teachers, pupils and parents is the largest organic unit of and for educational change."[13]

The Rand Change Agent analysis emphasizes the necessity of involving teachers in all aspects of the innovative process, and also pointed to the importance of the principal, termed the "gatekeeper of change" in a school site.[14] While recognizing the legitimacy of focusing on the school building level as a unit of change (the same project could be implemented very differently in different schools within the same district), the Change Agent findings contain another crucial lesson, namely, that support from the district significantly enhances a project's chances for success. "The attitudes of administrators in effect tell the staff how seriously they should take project objectivities," and there are countless practical ways in which district support, commitment and assistance can sustain the efforts of building-level participants engaged in the difficult and often painful process of innovation.

Consequently, federal project oversight and facilitation in E-S should have focused on central office support services for the school sites to implement different bottom-up changes. This could include such things as inservice training and assistance in program planning techniques. Instead, federal-local relations in E-S stressed Washington helping the central office impose uniform change on reluctant school sites. California's Early Childhood program (ECE) has just the oppostie administrative delivery orientation.

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[13]John I. Goodlad, "A Perspective on Accountability," Phi Delta Kappan, October 1975.

[14]P. Berman and M.W. McLaughlin, op. cit.

A recent report by the Stanford Evaluation Consortium describes ECE as

follows:

> The ECE program, passed by the Legislature in 1972 and im-
> plemented in 1973-74 school year, is the clearest manifestation
> of the department's attempts to reform its own management and
> to stimulate school site change. Rather than being intended
> as a specified instructional program, ECE is intended to be a
> process of planning, participation, and evaluation conducted
> at the individual school site. Parents and school staff
> formulate and pursue school level objectives within broad
> educational components required by the department. The in-
> centive structure designed by the department to reward districts,
> with successful ECE programs requires planning and process
> evaluation as well as "product" evaluation on the extent to
> which schools have attained their objectives. Most important,
> the evaluation rating of schools in a district by the depart-
> ment determines whether that district will receive expansion
> funding for all other schools. The department's commitment
> to conduct on-site audits of all first year ECE schools
> represents a substantial change in the relationship between
> local school districts and the department. Thus, the depart-
> ment seeks to simultaneously maintain greater accountability
> over funding programs in local school districts, while
> encouraging school site personnel and parents to take greater
> responsibility and initiative in program planning, implemen-
> tation, and evaluation.[15]

Since the cases were in small rural LEA's, it is especially interesting

that E-S ran into such school site resistance to a uniform central plan

for comprehensive change (see River, Arcadia cases).

The case that uniform school policies are undesirable is based in

part on the growing alternative school movement.[16] Parents have different

preferences for different styles of education as evidenced by the growth

of 3 R's versus open schools. Children also learn best under different

teaching styles. Not all teachers can be enthusiastic or are technically

equipped to implment a particular instructional system. The Cades and Butte

cases are excellent examples of the one best system as undesirable from an

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[15]Stanford Evaluation Consortium, "The Impact of State Mandated Evaluation
Procedures Upon the Educational Programs of Local School Districts in
California," February 1976, pp. 15-16.

[16]Mario Fantini (editor), Alternative Education (New York: Doubleday, 1976).

instructional viewpoint.

Federal Prescription of the Type of Community Participation

Washington E-S administrators insisted on community participation
in all rural E-S programs. Several of the LEA planning grants were sent
back by NIE demanding more specific mechanisms for community advisory
councils. In view of this strong federal pressure, it is striking to
discover that community participation was ineffective in all five LEA's!
None of the community advisory councils exerted any discernible influence
on any significant policy. This clearly points out the inability of
federal education authorities to impose community influence from the top-
down. It suggests a need for reconsideration of the federal-local relations
on this issue. There should be no dogmatic stance or insistence on main-
taining forms of citizen participation that prove to be a waste of time
and resources.

All studies of community based advisory groups reveal a highly un-
even result. In Cades the Superintendent was so opposed the concept never
had a chance. In Jackson the whole notion of citizen participation was alien
to the political culture. There does not seem to be any of these rural areas
where community groups were established prior to E-S. There was no articu-
lation of political demands by lay interest groups. What we know about the
type of participants in such advisory councils suggests NIE was engaged in
a fruitless policy. Indeed, research on school advisory groups demonstrates
that opening the door to participation does not result in a flood of new
participants.[17] Interest in education is a specialized concern, with

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[17]See Nelly P. Stromquist, "Antecedent and Concurrent Conditions of
    Participation: The Case of Participatory Educational Planning," paper
    presented at AERA, April 1976.

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strong appeal among people in education-related fields, of higher SES, who have demonstrated a previous interest in voluntary education activities. These people rarely existed in the E-S sites. In a case study of a high SES California LEA, Stromquist estimates only about 10 percent of the participants in parent advisory councils had never been active in educational affairs previously. Similarly, Florida advisory councils seem to have stimulated participation by an unrepresentative elite rather than the cross-section of school constituents reformers had hoped for. A study by the Florida legislature indicates participants in school advisory councils tend to be high income and highly educated. Median education was a college degree, four years above the state's median of 12.1 years of education. Apparently, the Florida councils are less biased in terms of race than class -- blacks are reportedly serving in proportion to their total state-wide population.

The lack of representativeness of the Florida school councils raises questions about the mechanism for selecting members. Most Florida councils were selected by school principals, which could explain the bias towards educated and presumably influential members of the community. It is possible that election of representatives to the council would provide a better cross-section of the community. The National Committee for Citizens in Education has recently advanced a plan for educational governance that calls for school site councils to be elected in order to increase representativeness and avoid the criticism that members are "dominated by the appointer."[18] In addition, if school advisory councils are to attract other than traditionally

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[18]Public Testimony on Public Schools, National Committee for Citizens in Education, McCutchan, Berkeley, 1975, pp. 221, 222.

active elites, more attention will have to be given to such practical

matters as scheduling, training for participation, transportation, etc.

Beyond the question of representativeness are issues of the proper

role school advisory councils should play in decisionmaking. When councils

serve in an advisory capacity and are attached to the office of the principal,

"they tend to degenerate into the traditional pattern of participation.

Since the new councils exist almost exclusively where administrators bear

the final legal and social responsibility for any actions taken, over time

the councils will find that they are viewed as useful only by administrators

who agree with them." [19] It is not surprising that many principals are un-

prepared both psychologically and technically for sharing decisionmaking

with parent councils in a meaningful way. In such situations, support for

the councils from central administration can be a crucial level for en-

hancing the council's influence

Governance plans in federal programs like E-S may hold promise for

making the educational system more accountable to its clients. State and

federal governments can stimulate adoptions of such mechanisms but, as we

have seen, there are serious implementation problems. Even where mandated,

the actual practice of parent advisory groups varies significantly from

district to district and even among schools within a district. Unfortunately,

there is currently little empirical evidence to suggest which models of

parent participation are likely to prove most effective in which types of

institutional settings, nor what types of implementation strategies would

promote their use. The time is ripe for comparative research that seeks to

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[19] Donald B. Reed and Douglas E. Mitchell, "The Structure of Citizen
Participation: Public Decisions for Public Schools," Public Testimony
on Public Schools, National Committee for Citizens in Education, McCutchan,
Berkeley, 1975.

identify what works and what does not. What little we do know suggests that

the E-S rural sites were among the most unlikely of circumstances. For

instance, there was a lack of established lay interest groups and little

prior involvement by individual citizens. The LEA information system was

not attuned to the needs of lay groups. The political culture discouraged

impact on policy by lay groups. Future federal programs should analyze the

LEA context and adjust their expectations and contractual requirements

accordingly. Again we see the need for federal administration to adapt to

particular local circumstances more than E-S did.

IV   Local Conditions That Hindered Implementation

The Rand Change Agent study stresses the importance of local motives

when seeking federal grants for predicting the probability of implementing

federal objectives.

> This interaction in particular settings defined initiation
> processes that we found could be characterized into two ideal
> types: opportunism and problem solving. The contrasting
> motivations that characterized these different initiation
> processes continued to play a pervasive role in the implemen-
> tation and thus in the outcomes of the innovations.
>
> Projects generated essentially by opportunism seemed to be
> a response to available funds and were characterized by a lack
> of interest and commitment on the part of local participants --
> from district administrators to classroom teachers. As a
> result, participants were often indifferent to project activities
> and outcomes, and little in the way of serious change was ever
> attempted -- or occurred.
>
> The problem-solving motive for projects emerged primarily in
> response to locally identified needs and was associated with
> a strong commitment to address these needs. Federal funds were
> viewed as a way to support the local situation -- one which
> often broke new ground in local educational practice.[20]

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[20]P. Berman and M. W. McLaughlin, op. cit., p. 9.

The cases provide us with considerable insight into local motives. Both River and Arcadia displayed much of the problem-solving motive. In River, the LEA saw the E-S as largely in concert with their own local desire to unify the district. While a number of problems arose, some parts of the E-S effort were incorporated into the district's on-going operation. In Arcadia the district was committed to some of the E-S components before the E-S competition was announced. Parts of the project were incorporated through incremental additions to the Arcadia curriculum. Cades stands out for its largely opportunistic motives. The new Superintendent saw E-S as a means to provide more instructional supplies and personnel into a financially starved LEA -- in effect, general aid. He did not particularly care about the Diagnostic Instruction that was featured in Cades' E-S application.

While the preceeding sections have primarily been oriented to federal shortcomings, the LEA's have often been a large part of the overall problems. There is no way that Cades could have successfully implemented its stated intention (individualized diagnostic instruction) because of local conditions. Also, no change in federal personnel or procedures could have made much difference in Arcadia after the locally generated teacher strike. Many (probably most) rural superintendents want to move on quickly to bigger and more urban districts. In Cades and Jackson, for example, key personnel left during the critical implementation stages.

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V.   Short Run Solutions to Federal Local Problems

Given the way in which the federal government operated in E-S, there
are some actions local school personnel could have used to increase the
chances of implementing change. The E-S rural districts appeared to be
more intimidated by federal project administrators than their big city
counterparts.[21] They waited for federal clarifications of instructions
even when the delays were caused by turbulence within the federal admini-
stration. In River these delays were acute. Urban school officials might
have contacted their Congressmen and tried to change or hasten federal
decisions. A key function of Congress is as a middleman between local con-
stituents and the federal bureaucracy. Letters from Congressmen have first
priority in federal agencies. A simple Congressional inquiry as to "why
E-S decisions were taking so long" is more effective than numerous local
phone calls to NIE. Rural districts are also less likely to have specific
contacts with Congressional staff. The staff could have been briefed on
the entire E-S situation in the local area and able to make its own in-
quiries or work through the local representative. An invitation to Con-
gressional staff or the Congressman to visit the local E-S project can also
lead to a good working relationship.

NIE discouraged any collaboration or meetings among the rural E-S
superintendents. The old adage of strength in numbers applies to Con-
gressional relations -- so does divide and conquer. A common list of
complaints by E-S directors could be used with the five Congressmen and
10 Senators from the E-S sites. This would have been a message NIE would
have heeded despite the low internal priority for E-S. The essence of

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[21]See, for example, Joel Berke and M. Kirst, Federal Aid to Education
    (Lexington: Heath, 1972), especially the chapters on New York and
    Michigan.

politics is coalition and the E-S sites had more political power with a
geographic spread than they realized or utilized.

It is also possible that consultants can play an important inter-
mediary role between NIE and E-S sites. Ideally, these consultants would
have the mutual trust of NIE and the rural site and not be viewed as the
agent of one or the other. But rural LEA's may not know many consultants.
In the E-S cases, NIE sent consultants to the sites who played useful, but
ephemeral roles (see the Jackson case). Sometimes a consultant can become
an "honest broker" or mediator who interprets the local situation to NIE.
There is always some distance when two parties are negotiating for grants.
For example, the consultant could have interceded with NIE to stress the
local impact caused by federal funding or other delays. The consultant
might also have more credibility when emphasizing the inappropriateness
or impossibility of NIE expectations for comprehensive change in rural
areas like Jackson.

As the next section on changes in federal procedures discusses, con-
sultants need not be university people or "experts". The rural LEA's should
consider pushing NIE for more practitioners from other rural areas who have
extensive on-site experience with rural schools. The E-S cases indicate
there is a need for a pool of rural consultants who are considered peers
of the local E-S school and lay people.

Short Run Federal Solutions

The E-S cases demonstrate the various LEA actors and subunits have
different objectives, e.g., teachers, central administrators, principals,
and so on. Beyond the minimal objective of obtaining federal money, there

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is not much of an incentive or sanction from top-down to adjust behavior
in order to coordinate efforts. In Cades and Butte the central administra-
tion tried to threaten the teachers with loss of tenure or promotions. The
results were a non-implementation. Teachers have a "pocket veto" on educa-
tional change when the classroom door closes.

In Arcadia the principals redefined the project as incremental addi-
tions to their own preferences. Organizational theorists could have pre-
dicted that members of a large school organization would choose a more
limited suboptimal goal. Even the original common objectives in Arcadia
wore off over time and emasculated the original E-S conception.

This need for consensus suggests the potential of "bottom-up" from
the school site vs. "top-down" change from the central office. Again, the
ECE program is interesting because of its different approach, stressing
school site reviews by Management and Review Teams (MAR) and bottom-up
accountability techniques.

The MAR team (usually 2-4 people) is made up of state, county and
local educators (from outside the area), including administrators and class-
room instructional experts. In E-S these could have been other rural edu-
cators and laymen. The MAR consultants complete two forms during their
site visit: one is used to assess compliance with federal and state laws
and regulations; the other, a program quality review instrument, assesses
the quality of the total program on a 0-5 scale. This program quality
rating form, which is sent to schools in advance, reviews (1) program plan-
ning, implementation and evaluation (emphasizing the process through which
these functions are carried out); (2) the instructions program (emphasizing
individualization, development of student self-concept, multicultural
emphasis); (3) health and auxiliary services; and (4) parent participation
and community involvement.

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A Stanford study found that schools had often done their best to
implement the MAR team's suggestions immediately. The majority of changes
stimulated by the MAR visits were in the areas of curriculum, parent
participation, and individualization of instruction. As a result of the
MAR team's suggestions, one school developed formal curriculum "continuums"
in math and language arts for grades K-3; another school changed to using
fewer paper and pencil exercises and more math manipulatives; others instituted
psychomotor skill development programs; and some strengthened weak multi-
cultural activities. A few districts embarked upon active parent recruit-
ment programs to increase the adult-student ratio in the classroom and
improve individualization of instruction. Some schools reported shifting
emphasis to areas on which they received low ratings. In all, according
to the Stanford report, the recommendations of the MAR reviewers were taken
quite seriously. One district evaluator reported:

> The MAR visit got the parents excited about their school
> because somebody was coming from Sacramento to see it.
> They (the teachers) organized a "MAR" visit by the county
> people the second year when they didn't have a regular MAR.

The esprit de corps generated by preparation for the review reportedly
lasted well beyond the day of the MAR visit, and the Stanford group con-
tends that this was an essential factor in implementation of the MAR con-
sultants' recommendations.

Though the generalizability of these "findings" must be questioned,
insofar as schools do take the Monitor-and-Review process seriously, they
probably do so because it is linked to the program's mechanism for holding
districts accountable for ECE schools' performance--school site funding
rather than district funding. Under ECE, expansion to additional schools

in a district--which would generate an additional $140 per pupil--depends

on demonstrating the ECE plans have been implemented in schools already

in the program. The MAR ratings are by far the heaviest weighted factor

in determining a district's chances for expansion (appropriate fiscal ex-

penditures and test results are the other two; the weighting of these

factors in the first year of the program was 70 percent, 10 percent, 20 per-

cent, respectively).[22] In short, making program expansion contingent on

performance of participating schools may cause districts both to exert

pressure on schools to implement their plans and encourage central district

offices to provide the kind of support the school sites need to do so effec-

tively. MAR, however, has been criticized in a recent unpublished UCLA re-

port because of imprecise standards and alleged problems with the inter-

rater reliability.

It might be possible, retaining the expansion funding incentive, to

also stimulate district support more directly by developing a two-level MAR

type accountability approach focusing on both district and school site

functions.[23] A district's application for federal or state reform funds

would, in addition to school site plans, outline specific commitments the

district would assume to facilitate change in buildings -- e.g., develop

inservice capabilities in the areas of individualized instruction; set up

programs for E-S school personnel to visit each other's schools to exchange

ideas; set up programs to train parents to participate in planning; assist

schools with formative evaluation; waive district regulations (e.g., in

areas of scheduling, personnel utilization) which might interfere with

accomplishment of building plans. The MAR team would then, in addition

to judging individual school level implementation, also assess the extent

to which the district had carried out its responsibilities to the schools.

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[22]There are provisions for weighting outcome measures--test scores-more heavily
in each successive year of a school's involvement in the program. The
writer acknowledges the assistance of Gail Bass, Rand Corp., in this section.

[23]The present MAR does involve an audit at the district level, but this is
primarily for fiscal purposes.

We know of at least one instance where district evaluators helped prepare school personnel for the MAR by reviewing their program with them in advance to point out areas of apparent weakness. If such a procedure is aimed primarily at "putting on a good front" for outside evaluators, it would be counterproductive for program improvement. The MAR people should look for evidence of continuing district involvement in formative evaluation of school programs, which we would regard as a positive step in developing district capacity for change and making parts of the local system accountable to each other.[24]

Despite the apparent influence of the MAR visits in improving school programs, we question whether this device may contain an intrinsic contradiction: can outside evaluation be used for judgmental purposes (to determine future funding) and also be effective as a means for providing constructive feedback? There is a confusion between evaluation and "helping". School personnel may attempt to impress the visitors rather than be open to discussing recognized problems and how best to deal with them, or they may too readily accept criticism and make changes because the MAR team represents a threat to future funding. There is also the possibility of role confusion for the visitors. The viability of the system will depend both on characteristics of the evaluators and the local institutions. According to the Stanford report:

> Some districts which received ratings lower than they had
> anticipated (or were denied expansion funding) expressed
> hostility toward the department. They felt betrayed by
> the MAR consultants, who, they had believed, were coming
> to the school to help them.

On the other hand, the report continues:

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[24]Very few school districts do formative evaluation--which we see as a
critical element in accountability--partly because of lack of resources
and partly because of insufficient trust between level of the system (see
Berman and McLaughlin, Movement With and Without Change, manuscript, The
Rand Corp., 1976.

> Even though the MAR entailed ranking and generated anxiety,
> most school level respondents reported that they enjoyed
> the opportunity for face-to-face contact with department
> representatives. Teachers and parents were pleased that
> the department "cared" about their school, and knew first
> hand, via the visiting consultants, what was happening to
> the program. In nearly every case, members of the MAR
> teams were remembered by name and praised highly. Only a
> few local respondents complained of uncommunicative or rigid
> MAR evaluators.[25]

The question of whether judging and formative evaluation functions
of external agencies can be usefully merged or might be better handled
separately deserves further investigation.

In summary, a number of accountability elements in the ECE program
merit consideration for use in federal discretionary programs. These pro-
cedures would only be appropriate for federal→ local grants (bilingual,
ESSA, etc.) where the federal involvement is similar to the state → local
relationship in ECE. In the large scale federal → state → local programs,
SEA's would not tolerate such direct federal involvement with individual
schools.

1. Focus of planning and evaluation at the school site level,
   rather than with district central staffs.

2. Accountability criteria generated in part from the bottom-up,
   involving principals, teachers and parents in the process
   (e.g., in an ECE school people may choose among several stan-
   dardized tests for evaluation purposes).

3. Accountability criteria emphasizing program implementation with
   limited weight attached to test results. Evaluation should
   look for evidence of the types of processes which support
   mutual adaptation.

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[25]Stanford Evaluation Consortium, op. cit., p. 34.

4. On-site visits by monitor-and-review teams with feedback to
    school staffs and communities.

5. Expansion funding tied to high-level performance of schools
    already in the program. The phase-in is through adding more
    schools in the same LEA.

VI.   School Reform: Lessons for the Future

In conclusion, it is useful to summarize some lessons from the E-S
and ECE experience that may guide future reform efforts.[26]

Schools have five main functions, and any reform will affect each
differently, which is one reason all major reforms are controversial.
The five are:

- Socialization, bringing children from the family into a
  "minisociety" that foreshadows the world of work in the
  larger society.

- Sorting people out for different future roles, by grading,
  test scores, teacher evaluation. Some will drop out of
  high school, some will go to work right after graduation,
  others will go to college or professional school.

- Knowledge and skills training.

- Encouragement of personal attributes such as creativity,
  self reliance, ability to communicate.

- Custody, the child-sitting and care function.

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[26]The writer acknowledges the assistance of John Pincus of the Rand
    Corporation in this section.

It is not easy to perform all of these five functions to everyone's satisfaction, and progress is particularly difficult because of the diversity of cultures and values; variations in district size from a few hundred to more than 1,000,000 students; isolation of teachers in their classrooms (with teacher training conducted by schools of education whose faculties are not necessarily committed or qualified to prepare people for reform in varied school districts); the requirements of accrediting and testing agencies, federal aid restrictions and complex state laws; competing political pressures; and the inertia of a large bureaucracy.

Despite these obstacles, there has been no shortage of reform efforts. A recent survey found 52 major reforms given funds in California from 1958 to 1975, with projects ranging from instructional television to class-size reduction and school district mergers. This parade of reforms has led many educators to be skeptical; they come to believe of any reform, "This too shall pass -- quickly."

What has been learned from all this activity, much of it frustrating? Educators, legislators and officials have discovered that added money alone is not sufficient; that one-shot isolated devices like team teaching or flexible scheduling are ineffective, and that reforms cannot be put in standard packages and imposed from above.

The ECE experience and other similar efforts suggest specific guidelines that promise greater success:

-- There is no one best approach to schooling. Different students have different needs, and the road to basic skills (or to any other goal) may run in indirect ways; for example, through drama, geography

or physical education. The real key is that there is no one best reform, such as the E-S comprehensive approach; instead, a variety of approaches is needed to meet the variety of public preferences and pupil needs that arise for each of the five major functions of schooling.

-- Variation in school size and student characteristics can best be accommodated by reforms that encourage flexibility at the individual school site for budget, curriculum, personnel and evaluation. Uniform "solutions" cannot be implemented by regulations from Washington or central school district offices. Parents and students should be able to choose among curriculum approaches at the same school or at different schools, and in the higher grades students should be able to work in educational settings that may be on or off the campus.

-- Teacher isolation can be offset by techniques used in California's Early Childhood Education Program (ECE). Teachers and parents plan instructional approaches together and are held accountable as a group.

-- Local schools need to be released from many needless outside restrictions such as mandated pupil/teacher ratios, loss of state aid for off-campus programs, and child labor laws that inhibit cooperative programs with businesses. Another such restraint is created by provisions and customs that make it difficult for older children to take on responsibility and gain self-esteem by teaching younger children, and make it nearly impossible for laymen with specialized skills to act as teachers.

- School administrators now spend much of their time juggling the

needs of different interest groups without much progress toward
        (see the Cades and Arcadia cases).
reform / They should focus through training and staff development

much more than they do now on working with these groups to build

coalitions that will promote steady progress toward specific educa-

tional changes.

-- Teachers and administrators now receive salary increases on the

basis of seniority and university course credits. Instead, they

should be rewarded for extra efforts like E-S and for training that

is specifically keyed to the needs of individual schools and dis-

tricts. State funds for teacher training (which now go exclusively

to universities) should be funneled in part through local school

districts so that they can use the funds to encourage universities

and district staff to focus on specific school site needs.

-- Educational reform must be based on the support of educators.

Planning and implementing changes will never be successful unless

teachers and principals are involved all the way. School site

governance -- flexibility at the local level -- is just one step

in a larger process of enlisting staff energies in changes they

understand and believe in.

As long as society is in flux, working out its values by conflict

and reconciliation, then school reform must remain a trial and error process,

proceeding with little proven theory or conclusive data. Public schools

are largely reflections of society. Therefore, there can be no single best

solution now; both the quest for reform and the frustrations that accompany

it are the mirror of our nation's search for a new consensus.