DOCUMENT RESUME

ABSTRACT
        The authors reviewed research on effective schools,
literature on the implementation of educational innovation, and
current theories of school organization. A synthesis of findings from
this research indicates that differences among schools do have an
effect on student achievement. Specifically, it is the school's
culture that is responsible for that effect. Thirteen variables are
identified as contributing to the development of a school culture
conducive to academic achievement. Drawing on recent literature, the
authors suggest federal and state policies that would be likely to
facilitate the development of effective schools. Key recommendations
include policies that promote building-specific, whole-school
improvement efforts and that rely on outcomes as the preferable means
of monitoring and evaluating school improvement efforts. (Author)

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ENDS NOT MEANS: THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH

Stewart C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith

Wisconsin Center for Education Research
School of Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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ENDS NOT MEANS: THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH

Effective Schools--A Cultural Perspective

The major, and heartening, conclusion of the research on effective schools is that differences among schools do have an impact on the achievement of students. This finding is supported by research, done primarily in urban elementary schools, that has described schools whose students' scores on standardized tests in reading and math are better than would be predicted given their family background.

Whereas previous research, from about the mid 1960s on, found that factors such as class size, teacher salaries, the number of books in the library, and the existence of compensatory education programs had little relationship to academic achievement (Averch et al., 1972; Coleman et al., 1966; Hanushek, 1981; Jencks et al., 1972; Mullin & Summers, 1981; Murnane, 1980), this "new" research has identifed characteristics of schools that seem to have influence on scholastic performance (see reviews by Austin, 1981; Clark et al., 1980; Hersh et al., 1981; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980; Purkey & Smith, 1982; Rutter, 1981; Tomlinson, 1980)[1].

In an earlier paper (Purkey and Smith, 1982) we reviewed the school effectiveness literature[2]. While we found the research weak in many respects, most notable in its tendency to present narrow, oft times simplistic recipes for school improvement derived from non-experimental data, theory and common sense do support many of its findings. In particular, the most persuasive research suggests that academic success

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is determined by the school's culture (Brookover et. al., 1979; Rutter et al., 1979). The notion of school culture assumes that schools are complex webs of values, norms, roles, attitudes and the like, existing within distinct organizational structures with differing patterns of communicaton, authority, educational techniques and so on. More simply, schools are seen as having dynamic social systems made up of interrelated factors (Brookover et al., 1979), each school having a distinctive climate or "ethos" (Rutter et al., 1979). An academically effective school is distinguished by its culture: a structure, process, and climate of values and norms that channel staff and students in the direction of successful teaching and learning.

Creating effective schools, therefore, becomes a matter of altering the schools' culture. Changing schools becomes a matter of changing people, their behaviors and attitudes, as well as school organization and norms.

The appropriateness of the school culture notion is supported by ideas derived from organization theory and from research on the implementation of education innovation. While empirical data on school organization are limited (Miles, 1981) there is a growing consensus that schools are not rational, hierarchical institutions responsive to top-down command structures in which fundamental change can be mandated at one level with absolute confidence that it will be carried out at subordinate levels (Derr and Deal, 1979; Dornbush and Scott, 1975; Meyer and Rowan, 1978; Weick, 1976). Instead, some theorists think that schools are "loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976) having weak linkage between administration levels and the relatively autonoumous classroom.

Studies of implementation also reinforce the validity of the school

culture perspective.   In essence, successful implementation means changing the school culture, the wholesale influencing of the total school climate (Hargrove et al., 1981). Though specific tactics may vary, the general strategy is best characterized as one that promotes collaborative planning, collegial work, and a school atmosphere conducive to experimentation and evaluation (Deal et al., 1977; Hargrove et al., 1981; Hawley, 1978; Little, 1981; McLaughlin, 1978). Miller (1980) suggests it is an approach that sees teachers as part of an entire school organization engaged in development activities that take place over time. Successful change efforts are therefore more likely to be realized when the entire school culture is affected. This ongoing activity is best done by involving the people affected, at appropriate levels and fequency, in the decision-making process (Lipham, 1981).

Assuming that it is the school's culture that accounts for schools having differential impact on academic achievement, it is reasonable to suggest a number of characteristics that are likely to be associated with school cultures that encourage academic achievement. Since we have presented a complete discussion elsewhere (Purkey and Smith, 1982) we will here only list those factors. We emphasize, however, that the various characterists offered below are, in addition to being tentative, likely to be interrelated and to have a cumulative effect. Also, it seems likely that the first nine are relatively easier to implement and seem likely to facilitate the development of the final four. With the realization that we may have overlooked a key variable, the literature on school effectiveness suggests, then, that an effective school culture is likely to be composed of the following features:

1. School-site management -- a considerable amount of autonomy for

each building in determining the exact means by which they address the problem of increasing academic performance.

2. Leadership -- though we are suspicious of the "Great Principal" theory, leadership from either the administration or group(s) of teachers is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process.

3. Staff stability -- frequent transfers are likely to retard, if not prevent, the growth of a coherent and ongoing school personality, especially in early phases of the change process.

4. Curriculum articulation and organization -- a planned, coordinated curriculum that increases the amount of time students spend studying basic skills and other academic disciplines.

5. Staff development -- school-wide staff development that is ongoing and linked to the expressed concerns of the staff and the school's specific instructional and organizational needs.

6. Parental involvement and support -- though the evidence is mixed, obtaining parent support is likely to positively influence student achievement (perhaps by increasing motivation).

7. School-wide recognition of academic success -- publicly honoring academic achievement and stressing its importance encourages students to adopt similar norms and values.

8. Maximized learning time -- more of the school day and more of the class period would be devoted to active learning activities in academic areas; class periods would be free from interruptions and disruptions.

9. District support -- fundamental change, building-level management, staff stability, etc. all depend upon support from the district office.

The preceding characteristics, significant in their own right, also set the stage for the four features described below. It is these last four that constitute the dynamic of the school's culture and seem responsible for an atmosphere that leads to increased student achievement.

10. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships -- change attempts are more successful when teachers and administrators work together; collegiality breaks down barriers between departments and among teachers and administrators, it encourages the kind of intellectual sharing that can lead to consensus, and it promotes feelings of unity and commonality among the staff.

11. Sense of community -- schools can build feelings of community that contribute to reduced alienation and increased achievement.

12. Clear goals and high expectations commonly shared -- schools whose staff agree on their goals (e.g. academic achievement) and expectations (e.g. for work and achievement) are more likely to be successful in that they have channeled their energy and efforts toward a mutually agreed upon purpose.

13. Order and discipline -- the seriousness and purposefulness with which the school aproaches its task are communicated by the order and discipline it maintains in its building and classrooms.

Within the framework provided by the first nine characteristics the last four must develop over time as people begin to think and behave in new ways. This process requires that people work together toward common ends. It is a participatory approach based on the notion that how a school moves toward increasing effectiveness is critical to the comprehensiveness, stability and longevity of the new culture it seeks.

While strategies for beginning this process may well vary we lean toward a "political" strategy which builds coalitions of support (Hargrove et al., 1981; Miles, 1981; Pfeffer, 1981). Various interest groups might engage in a bargaining process characterized by political and social exchange (Talbert, 1980) and develop collaborative strategies leading toward a sense of ownership, commitment, and general consensus among the staff of the school.

In summation, we have argued that differences among schools have an impact on students' academic performance. By critically studying academically effective schools we can identify characteristics that together create a school culture conducive to student achievement. These characteristics, and hence the school culture, are "alterable" (Bloom, 1981) via faculty and administration collaboration and shared decision-making. We strongly argue that the process by which schools are made more academically effective is crucial. We have offered a political approach to beginning the improvement process that recognizes people's tendency to operate on the basis of their perceived self-interest as well as on their professional desire to educate children. In the remainder of this paper we will pull out the implications of this research for federal and state policy and suggest policy approaches congruent with those implications.

Federal and State Policy for Bottom-Up Planning

Clearly the effective schools research is most applicable at the district and building level. However, though specific policy proposals at the state and federal level do not flow directly from effective schools research, three points are of particular significance in

.thinking about policy recommendations. First, the literature does suggest the arena in which change must take place -- the school building -- if children's academic achievement ic to be increased. Second, the logic of the effective schools research leads to the conclusion that treating the whole school is likely to have more impact on the achievement of disadvantaged students then are "marginal" programs that separate categories of students and/or fracture the instructional activities of the school[3]. Finally, effective schools are likely to result from a school culture which will differ from school to school.

Therefore, federal and state policy should be directed toward encouraging school-level, school-specific change -- change from the bottom-up. This poses a conundrum. How can top-down federal and state policy foster bottom-up planning and initiative? What federal and state policies will permit diversity, stimulate schools to change, and encourage, at the building-level, the kinds of activities that the effective schools research suggest should happen? Though the dilemma is real enough answers can be derived from policy literature that has appeared in the past couple of years.

Building on Elmore's (1979-80) notion of "backward mapping" we might begin by asking at the school building level what are the school and teacher behaviors and conditions in need of reform. (Here, obviously, the characteristics of academically successful schools suggested by the effective schools research offer criteria that are of use.) The question then becomes, what policies will direct resources to schools allowing them to address, in accordance with their unique situations, the problems they have targeted?

Through federal education policy has had mixed results (Kaestle &

Smith, 1982, pp. 23-27) of concern here is the tendency for policies such as Title I to lead to schools focusing on compliance with financial regulations at the expense of concentrating on program quality issues (McLaughlin and McDonnell, 1982). This suggests that, at the very least, existing programs need to be overhauled, and simplified, so that schools are not so mired in fiscal accountability that they can not modify federally sponsored programs to take advantage of education research and educationally effective practices that are adaptable to their specific conditions and environment (see Turnbull, Smith, and Ginsburg, 1981).

We emphasize that this is not an argument for general aid, nor does it imply that categorical programs are inappropriate federal policy (though we note McLaughlin and McDonnell's, 1982, warning that such programs often conflict with strong norms of local control in many states, with detrimental consequences). Education history in the United States demonstrates that disadvantaged students in general, and - particularly in some states, are in need of federal assistance and, at times, protection (Kaestle and Smith, 1982). While it makes sense to leave overall academic achievement to the province of the states, federal policy is rightly concerned with issues relating to basic constitutional rights and social justice (Kaestle and Smith, 1982). This suggests that the federal government might well use funding, and accompanying regulations, to enhance the educational opportunities of disadvantaged students by stimulating schools to address certain issues and integrate specified goals into the overall school program.

A possible model might be the Youth Act of 1980 which would have targeted funds to the schools with the highest percentages of needy

students while encouraging program quality through competition.
Following that model, planning grants could be provided to eligible
schools (determined by the number of disadvantaged students or other
need) in a state or district. Certain goals would be specified --
developing school-wide plans addressing drop outs, raising low
achievement, assisting non-English speaking students, and the like --
and planning procedures required -- school-wide committees, school and
community collaboration, and so on. The effective schools research can
identify those goals and processes that are most likely to lead to
school improvement for all: school-site management, staff stability,
district support, collaborative planning and so on. Schools would
compete for funding; the criteria for selection would be the quality of
the plan, and the competition among schools would enhance that quality.
Successful plans would get funding for a set length of time, and funding
continuation would be based upon meeting the goals as stated in the
school plan.

Indeed, such a model could be implemented at both the federal and
the state level. At the federal level categorical money could be set
aside that would be used by districts or schools with the most need as
determined by criteria developed in consultation with local and state
education people. How the money would be used (the nature of the
program) would not be monitored, only whether improvement is seen in the
areas targeted. This would insure that educationally sound practices are
not lost in regulatory thickets. Allowing schools to tailor their
programs to the demands of their situation follows directly from
effective schools research that finds school-specific strategies to be
more likely to generate changes that will result in a school culture

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conducive to learning. At the state level, block grants provide
discretionary funds that could be used in the same manner.

At the federal level, alternative policies, perhaps less directly
implied by the school effectiveness research, might include
differential treatment of the states or the use of matching funds.
Several authors have advocated differential treatment of the states
(e.g. McLaughlin and McDonnell, 1982; Turnbull, Smith, and Ginsburg,
1981) as a way of maximizing flexibility while retaining accountability
where it is needed most. The flexibility allowed some states might
encourage the idiosyncratic approach to school improvement suggested by
the school effectiveness literature, and encourage states to experiment
with school improvement strategies that focus on whole-school reform.

Differential treatment recommendations are basically similar: they
stem from common recognition that the states differ, often dramatically,
in their capacity and will to serve disadvantaged students; they
maintain tight fiscal and programmatic requirements for states who have
demonstated either incapacity or lack of will; and, they allow
considerably more discretion by those states that have a legislative
history of responding to the needs of disadvantaged students. One
proposal (Turnbull, Smith, and Ginsburg, 1981) suggests keying
exemptions on the existance of state laws fulfilling preset criteria.
For example, states with legislation that provides for drop out
prevention programs would be subject to outcome evaluation only, while
in states that had yet to address that issue federal dollars would
continue to be tracked to the school and student level. (As a side
benefit such a policy might encourage states to pass education
legislation, if for no other reason, to gain relief from the burden of

close monitoring.)

The second alternative, the use of matching funds, has the same
sort of incentive intent. Matching funds would reward states that had
begun, on their own, programs aimed at disadvantaged students. Again,
the funding would continue as long as stated goals were being met.
Federal influence could be increased under this program by channeling
matching funds only to states whose programs stimulate school-based
management, collaborative planning, shared decision-making and the like
aimed at whole-school improvement to increase the academic performance
of special needs students.

State policies, in addition to being tied in to the programs
outlined above, could also be directed at promoting building level
change and whole-school treatments. While state education agency roles
vary from being highly directive to simply providing assistance one
possibility would be using state regulatory power to direct local
attention to state-identified priorities and strategies for school
improvement (McLaughlin and McDonnell, 1982). As indicated above the
states could also use financial aid to motivate local districts or
schools to begin an effective schools program or to more adequately
serve the needs of certain groups of students. Supplementary funding
has the advantage of being goal specific while not encroaching upon
local control, initiative, or variation. In any event, regardless of
the exact mechanisms used state policy would, like federal policy, be
constructed so as to maximize local planning and adaptation while
insuring that needy students were not educationally deprived. Other
types of assistance that SEAs might provide include conducting, and
funding, inservice training for teachers on a school-by-school basis,

conducting workshops to trai.. principals or key staff members to be
instructional leaders and so on.

In conclusion, the effective schools research and past experience
with federal (and state) education programs suggest 1) that school
differences do have an effect upon student achievement, 2) that it is
the culture of the whole school that creates that effect, 3) that
federal and state policy would best concern itself with instigating
building-specific, whole-school improvement efforts, 4) that outcomes
are the preferable means of monitoring and evaluating such efforts, and
5) that carrots work better than sticks in guaranteeing that the needs
of disadvantaged students are met. The question, of course, remains
whether in an era of financial retrenchment, fiscal conservatism, and
general unwillingness to invest in educational programs the political
will exists to act on the basis of what we now know about making schools
effective and the policies will that take us there.

FOOTNOTES

[1]It is easy to conclude that the findings of the new research

contradict the findings of Coleman et al. (1966), Jencks et al. (1972)

and others. In fact the results are consistent though the implications

may differ. First, the new studies do not refute the general finding

that easily measurable differences among schools (class size variation

from twenty to thiry pupils, existing differences in teacher preservice

training, teacher experience and salaries, number of books in the

library, etc.) have little consistent relationship to student

achievement. The new studies look at other variables. Second, the new

studies do not find that there are overall large differences in

achievement among existing schools. The new studies generally do not

gather data of the sort required for such analyses. Instead they

identify especially "good" schools and examine their characteristics or

they compare the characteristics of "high" scoring and "low" scoring

schools. They then imagine the improvement that would result, for

example, if the least "effective" schools (the bottom 20 percent)

improved to an achievement level equal to the most "effective" schools

(the top 20 percent). For the average sixth grader the "old literature"

estimates that this improvement would be on the order of two-thirds of a

standard deviation or about one full grade level of achievement (see

Jencks et al., pp. 123-124). This estimate is consistent with the few

"new" studies that report sufficient data to allow us to make a

quantitative estimate of the achievement difference between "effective"

and "ineffective" schools. Third, the new studies imagine changes in

schools that go beyond existing differences among schools. If our very best schools improve they will set a new standard for other schools to achieve.

[2]We examined the studies, clustered by research design and methodology or subject, that have received the most attention in the school effectiveness literature. We looked at the following outlier studies: G.R. Austin, Process Evaluation: A Comprehensive Study of Outliers (Baltimore, Md.: Maryland State Department of Education, 1978); W.B. Brookover & J.M. Schneider, "Academic Environments and Elementary School Achievement," Journal of Research and Development in Education, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1975; L.W. Lezotte, R. Edmonds, & G. Ratner, A Final Report: Remedy for School Failure to Equitably Deliver Basic School Skills (East Lansing, Mich.: Department of Urban and Metropolitan Studies, Michigan State University, September 1974); New York State Department of Education, Reading Achievement Related to Educational and Environmental Conditions in 12 New York City Elementary Schools (Albany, N.Y.: Division of Education Evaluation, March 1974); New York State Department of Education, School Factors Influencing Reading Achievement: A Case Study of Two Inner City Schools (Albany, N.Y.: Office of Education Performance Review, 1974); New York State Department of Education, Three Strategies for Studying the Effects of School Processes (Albany, N.Y.: Bureau of School Programs Evaluation, March 1976); and J.L. Spartz, A.L. Valdes, W.J. McCormick, J. Myers & W.J. Geppert, Delaware Educational Accountability System Case Studies: Elementary Schools Grades 1-4 (Dover, Delaware: Delaware Department of Public Instruction, 1977).

We examined eight case studies: W.B. Brookover, C. Beady, P.

Flood, J. Schweitzer, & J. Wisenbaker, <u>School Social Systems and Student</u>
<u>Achievement: Schools Can Make a Difference</u> (New York, N.Y.: Praeger
Publishers, 1979); W.B. Brookover & L.W. Lezotte, <u>Changes in School</u>
<u>Characteristics Coincident with Changes in Student Achievement</u> (East
Lansing, Mich.: Institute for Research on Teaching, College of
Education, Michigan State University, 1979); California State
Department of Education, <u>Report on the Special Studies of Selected ECE</u>
<u>Schools with Increasing and Decreasing Reading Scores</u> (Sacramento, Cal.:
Office of Program Evaluation and Research, 1980); B.C. Glenn, <u>What</u>
<u>Works? An Examination of Effective Schools for Poor Black Children</u>
(Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Law and Education, Harvard University,
1981); D.U. Levine & J. Stark, <u>Extended Summary and Conclusions:</u>
<u>Institutional and Organizational Arrangements and Processes for</u>
<u>Improving Academic Achievement at Inner City Elementary Schools</u> (Kansas
City, Mo.: Universtiy of Missouri-Kansas City, School of Education,
Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems in Education, August
1981); M. Rutter, B. Maughan, P. Mortimore, J. Ouston, with A. Smith,
<u>Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children</u>
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); R.L. Venezky & L.F.
Winfield, <u>Schools That Succeed Beyond Expectations in Reading</u> (Newark,
Delaware: University of Delaware, 1979); and G. Weber, <u>Inner-City</u>
<u>Children Can be Taught to Read: Four Successful Schools</u> (Washington,
D.C.: Council for Basic Education, 1971).

We reviewed selected program evaluation studies: D. Armor et al.,
<u>Analysis of the School Preferred Reading Program in Selected Los Angeles</u>
<u>Minority Schools</u> (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1976); D. Doss
& F. Holley, "A Cause for National Pause: Title I Schoolwide Projects,"

Austin, Texas, Office of Research and Evaluation, Austin Independent

School District, ORE Publication No. 81.55, 1982; M.G. Hunter, "Final

Report of the Michigan Cost-Effectiveness Study," East Lansing, Mich.,

Michigan Department of Education, 1979; and D.A. Trisman, M.I. Waller, &

G. Wilder, A Descriptive and Analytic Study of Compensatory Reading

Programs. Final Report, Volume I (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing

Service, 1976).

Finally, we examined two "other" studies: J.S. Coleman, T. Hoffer,

& S. Kilgore, Public and Private Schools (draft)(Chicago, Ill.: National

Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, 1981); and, U.S.

Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Violent Schools -- Safe

Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the U.S. Congress, Vol. I

(Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1978).

[3]Doss & Holley (1982) summarized the results of a Title I

evaluation comparing the effectiveness of "school-wide" programs with

"pull-out" programs. They concluded that school-wide Title I programs

have a greater positive effect on achievement than projects that isolate

Title I pupils by "pulling them out" of the regular classroom. D. Doss

& F. Holley, "A Cause for National Pause: Title I Schoolwide Projects,"

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