

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 596

PS 014 142

**AUTHOR** Dougherty, Van  
**TITLE** State Programs of School Improvement, 1983: A 50-State Survey. Working Paper No. 1.  
**INSTITUTION** Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colo.  
**SPONS. AGENCY** Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.; Spencer Foundation, Chicago, Ill.  
**REPORT NO.** ECS-1-83-1  
**PUB DATE** Oct 83  
**NOTE** 63p. For related documents, see ED 224 135 and ED 234 499.  
**AVAILABLE FROM** Distribution Center, Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80295 (\$5.00).  
**PUB TYPE** Reports - Descriptive (141)  
**EDRS PRICE** MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.  
**DESCRIPTORS** Curriculum Development; Education; \*Educational Development; \*Educational Improvement; Educational Planning; \*Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; National Surveys; \*Public Education; \*School Effectiveness; \*State Programs; State Surveys; Technical Assistance  
**IDENTIFIERS** Accreditation Standards; Mandated Tests; Program Dissemination Assistance; Program Review

**ABSTRACT**

In 1982, the Education Commission of the States conducted an initial survey of school improvement programs to document state efforts to improve the quality of education in the public schools. Based on a new survey conducted in June and July of 1983, this paper updates the earlier survey and describes state-level school improvement activities begun in 1983. Preceding the descriptions of state programs, introductory material indicates general characteristics of the school improvement initiatives. A table illustrates state activities in nine areas of program provision: school improvement programs, effective schools projects, district/school planning requirements, local instruction program review, new curriculum development efforts, new accreditation standards, dissemination or adoption assistance, technical assistance through intermediate units, and statewide mandates for student testing. (RH)

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Working Paper No. 1

STATE PROGRAMS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, 1983:  
A 50-STATE SURVEY

I-83-1

by  
Van Dougherty

Education Commission of the States  
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October 1983

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The research for this report was supported by funds from the Ford Foundation and the Spencer Foundation. The analyses and conclusions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of ECS or the funding foundations.

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## STATE PROGRAMS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Improving the quality of education in a time of fiscal uncertainty is becoming one of the major education challenges of the 1980s. To meet that challenge, state education leaders are developing a wide variety of innovative and successful school improvement activities. In the past few years activities directed toward improving the quality of education have been initiated in many states at both the local and state levels. Tax and budget limitations, cuts in federal aid, public demands for education improvement and, most recently, national commissions and task force reports have all served as the impetus for close examination of education programs and policies in the states.

The roots of these state initiatives in school improvement policies are many, but four factors stand out:

- Accountability pressures deriving from public perceptions of a decline in education quality. One of the widespread objectives across the states in the 1970s was to increase student performance, at least in the basic skills. To implement this objective, 38 states enacted a variety of minimum competency testing requirements. As the accountability issue matured, however, testing concerns often led to a variety of other concerns, including upgrading the education work force, strengthening the instructional program and initiating school improvement efforts.
- The school finance reform movement of the 1970s. School finance policy analyses and debate left many states with an improved capacity for policy analysis and an interest in determining whether increased and/or more equitable funding was providing services that would improve the quality of education.
- Fifteen years of administering categorical grant programs. Experience gained during these years led staff in state education agencies and legislative research councils to look beyond the administrative and fiscal issues that surrounded the initial development of education programs to issues of program quality and impact, as legitimate issues in and of themselves.
- National commissions and task force reports. The rapidity with which education assumed a priority place on the domestic issue agenda was unexpected. Yet the release of the National Commission on Excellence in Education's A Nation at Risk, the

Education Commission of the States' Task Force on Education for Economic Growth report Action for Excellence, and a series of other reports struck a responsive chord for the nation and placed education once again in a priority position. When an issue is discussed at forums around the country by the President, the issue becomes a priority.

In 1982, the Education Commission of the States conducted an initial survey of school improvement programs (State Programs of School Improvement: A 50-State Survey, Odden and Dougherty, 1982) to document state efforts to improve the quality of education in the public schools. In the year following the 1982 survey, many states initiated new activities, intensified their present activities or reallocated resources (both dollars and personnel) to provide a more comprehensive and integrated approach to quality education (see Table page xii). Based on a new survey conducted in June and July of 1983, this paper updates the earlier survey and includes state level school improvement activities begun in the past year. Although state activities vary in content, scope and style, states are using a variety of creative and, in many cases, low cost approaches to increase the quality of education across the nation.

Nearly all of the initiatives described in this document have been developed within the past five-six years, and represent new or invigorated approaches to school improvement. These state activities are characterized primarily by their diversity -- in substance, scope and style. They include:

1. A variety of new state-developed curriculum or curriculum guides, often focusing on the basic skills, but also covering many other academic proficiencies. Often, the guides will be coupled with an instructional delivery system coordinated with the curriculum.
2. A range of new school accreditation standards to address quality, requirements for local district and individual school site planning and expanded state review of local instructional programs.
3. Numerous broad-based and comprehensive school improvement programs, sometimes specifically including an effective schools program in which the characteristics of the most effective schools are identified and attempts made to replicate them in other school settings, but nearly always requiring a process of local planning covering needs assessment, redesign of the instructional program, monitoring individual student performance, and modification of plans based on evaluation data.

4. Many state-initiated dissemination and adoption assistance programs, local capacity building and problem solving initiatives, and a wide array of new technical assistance services, often provided through the development or expansion of regional education units.

5. A variety of strategies related to the testing of students, including state-developed and administered competency tests, state development of test items that can be used by local districts in creating their own tests, and different requirements for the use of test results, ranging from a passing score for high school graduation to use of test results to modify the content of the instructional program.

6. An array of activities focused on improving the capabilities of the education work force, including new types of teacher and administrator certification and recertification, teacher proficiency examinations, and teacher and administrator professional development training programs that, in a number of states, include newly created administrative training academies or institutes. (See "Survey of States' Teacher Policies," an ECS report published in September 1983.)

7. A host of initiatives aimed specifically at improving mathematics, science and technology instruction and programs in the schools, and including efforts to recruit and retain mathematics and science teachers. (See "Results of a 50-State Survey of Initiatives in Science, Mathematics and Computer Education," an ECS report published in September 1983.)

These state activities are wide ranging in the substance of education strategies they address. The combination of strategies used varies dramatically from state to state. Some states have adopted a comprehensive approach, initiating activities in all or nearly all of the above six areas:

- California has mandated new types of teacher certification and requires passing a teacher proficiency test; has a six-year-old, broadly based school improvement program; has implemented a dissemination/adoption assistance program; and mandates the administration of locally developed student competency testing. Additionally, a new education reform bill, passed in 1983, will provide increased high school graduation requirements; incentives to lengthen both the school year and school day; a pilot program to reward high schools for improved student achievement; migrants for

teachers to improve classroom instruction; higher beginning teacher salaries; and a mentor program for teachers.

- Pennsylvania has also taken a comprehensive approach to their school improvement efforts. Long-range planning in specific areas is required at both the district and building levels, with the state providing guidelines and personnel to assure that plans are closely aligned with the state's 12 quality goals of education.
- Arkansas, too, has now developed a range of school improvement activities including an innovative inservice training program in instructional effectiveness for both principals and teachers; a classroom management inservice training program, an administrators' academy now focusing on instructional management concerns; an education improvement process for small schools; a state dissemination program on practices and programs in effective Arkansas rural schools; and now a pilot study on the use of computers for increasing instructional effectiveness.

Other states have taken more targeted approaches to their school improvement efforts focusing on specific areas for attention. But even for these states, the specific areas addressed differ substantially:

- The school improvement strategy in Arizona, New Mexico and Oregon is focused on student testing.
- In Montana resources are targeted on curriculum development to improve basic skills.
- Iowa's and Illinois' strategy has been to provide a range of technical assistance services, including curriculum development and dissemination and adoption assistance, through regional intermediate education units.
- Efforts in Texas focus on an accreditation approach to assure responsive education improvement.

Still other states have adopted strategies in between these two extremes, focusing their attention on more than one strategy but generally limiting activities to two or three initiatives, and sometimes to just particular areas of concern.

- Oklahoma, for example, has targeted most of its new initiatives on inputs to the education process:

raising teacher salaries, providing professional development training for both teachers and administrators, and developing new state curriculum guides.

- New Jersey focuses its activities on a collaborative effort of district planning, student testing and curriculum development.
- Missouri has implemented a student testing program that provides individual student achievement profiles, an instructional management system, and an accreditation process that addresses education program quality.

A number of different factors seem to account for the surge of state school improvement initiatives, and state interest in improving the quality of local education practice is unlikely to wane. While state school improvement strategies are characterized by their diversity, and while their roots come from different sources, three general characteristics of these diverse, specific strategies should be highlighted.

1. Focus on the school or classroom level where planning and program development can be more responsive to the particular needs of the students and the community. Research, moreover, has indicated quite clearly that the school building is the appropriate place for the development of school improvement plans.

2. Requirements to set clear academic goals and relate the instruction program directly to those goals. Again, research has documented that clarity of mission and purpose helps focus resources and energies and produces better performance on those objectives.

3. Collection of student-level data to evaluate students' progress in achieving academic goals and to modify instructional programs. Here, too, research stresses the need for tracking individual performance over time both to identify successes or failures of instructional strategies so changes can be made if they are needed, and to assess success by gains over time.

Since the initial survey in 1982 several new trends appear to be developing. First, the fiscal pressures in many states seem to be abating, in part by states enacting large tax increases, including increases in both sales and income taxes. In a few states, e.g., Florida and California, major education reform packages with large increases in funding have been passed. Arkansas, South Carolina and Tennessee are examples of

other states seriously considering raising the sales tax to finance major education reform programs. The additional monies have been earmarked for specific education programs and initiatives: increased teacher salaries, including master teacher programs; new programs in mathematics, science and computer education; longer school days and years; increased high school graduation requirements; new testing programs; and curriculum development activities. While it is not likely that all states will be in the fiscal position to raise additional monies (or even want to), states are beginning to use existing funds to create new programs or to reexamine existing activities and redirect resources to those activities that are most successful or productive.

Second, more states are beginning to provide a stronger technical assistance service to schools, often through new or strengthened decentralized structures such as regional centers or intermediate service units. By bringing the department of education's services closer to the local school districts, these service units are able to address the needs of the areas they serve, and local education agencies feel they can rely on them to better understand and respond to their individual needs. Although these structures vary by state -- some offering a wide array of services and some providing only a few -- it is felt that, in most cases, this method of education delivery is an effective and efficient method.

Third, dissemination and adoption assistance is being utilized more and more as a way to integrate a specific program or practice into a school's overall program. State departments of education are developing their own research, based largely on the nationally-recognized research on effective schools. Education policy makers are using this knowledge to develop programs to meet individual needs of schools or to help schools adopt or adapt a successful education practice.

Fourth, there is activity bubbling up everywhere focused on aligning academic goals, curriculum objectives, textbooks and tests, as people have realized that such alignment is not a national event but requires careful planning, management and organization.

Fifth, education policy makers are now beginning to focus more attention on secondary schools. While the target of school improvement initiatives, to date, has been directed mainly at elementary schools and has focused primarily on improving student achievement in the basic skills, there is rapidly increasing attention now being given to: increased knowledge in mathematics,

science and computer technology; the need to improve student performance in the higher order skills; and the need for a more stringent curriculum and high school graduation requirements. Collaborative efforts among secondary schools and postsecondary schools are attempting to align curriculum taught in high schools with entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions. Additionally, the business community is taking an interest in and, in some cases, an active role in working with educators and schools.

Finally, as business/industry and political leaders become increasingly aware of the link between the need to improve education and economic growth, and as the role of many state education agencies moves from a passive, regulatory function to a more active and committed involvement, programs of school improvement are beginning to make an impact on the quality of education across the country. Whether the target is one activity or an all-encompassing statewide school improvement program, it is clear that states are taking positive steps to make their education system effective and responsive. They are combining fiscal and human resources to raise the quality of schools to the level of excellence expected by parents, business and industry, and taxpayers.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS IN THE STATES

State	School Improvement Programs	Effective Schools Projects	District/School Planning Requirement	Local Instruction Program Review	New Curriculum Development Efforts	New Accreditation Standards	Dissemination or Adoption Assistance	Technical Assistance Through Intermediate Units	Statewide Mandate for Student Testing
Alabama	AL			AL			AL	AL	AL
Alaska	AK	AK*	AK*		AK*		AK		
Arizona				AZ	AZ				AZ
Arkansas	AR				AR		AR		AR
California	CA		CA	CA	CA		CA		CA
Colorado	CO		CO	CO		CO	CO	CA*	CA
Connecticut	CT	CT*	CT*	CT*	CT*	CO	CT	CO*	CO
Delaware	DE	DE	DE	DE*	DE	CT*	DE	CT	CT*
Florida	FL		FL	FL	FL				FL
Georgia	GA			GA			GA	GA	GA*
Hawaii	HI*						HI		HI*
Idaho	ID				ID*	ID	ID*		
Illinois	IL*				IL*		IL		
Indiana				IN*					IN*
Iowa			IA*				IA	IA	
Kansas	KS*				KS		KS		KS
Kentucky	KY		KY			KY			KY
Louisiana	LA*	LA*	LA*		LA				LA
Maine	ME*	ME*			ME		ME		
Maryland	MD		MD	MD	MD		MD	MD	MD
Massachusetts	MA		MA				MA	MA	MA
Michigan	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI			MI*	MI
Minnesota	MN		MN	MN	MN		MN	MN	
Mississippi			MS			MS			MS*
Missouri	MO		MO			MO	MO		MO
Montana	MT*	MT*			MT		MT		
Nebraska					NE		NE		NE
Nevada					NV*				NV
New Hampshire			NH*				NH*		NH
New Jersey	NJ*	NJ*	NJ	NJ	NJ*	NJ	NJ*	NJ	NJ
New Mexico				NM	NM*				NM
New York	NY*		NY	NY		NY	NY	NY	NY
North Carolina							NC*	NC	NC
North Dakota	ND				ND*	ND	ND		
Ohio	OH*	OH*	OH*	OH*	OH*	OH*	OH*		OH*
Oklahoma	OK*			OK*	OK				
Oregon	OR*		OR	OR	OR	OR*	OR*		OR
Pennsylvania	PA		PA	PA	PA	PA	PA	PA	PA
Rhode Island	RI		RI		RI		RI		RI
South Carolina	SC*	SC*	SC*		SC*				SC
South Dakota	SD	SD	SD		SD			SD	
Tennessee	TN		TN	TN*	TN		TN	TN	TN
Texas	TX*	TX	TX	TX*	TX*	TX		TN TX	TX
Utah	UT*				UT		UT	UT*	UT
Vermont	VT	VT*			VT	VT	VT		VT
Virginia	VA*	VA*		VA*	VA*	VA			VA
Washington	WA	WA*	WA	WA	WA*	WA*	WA*	WA*	WA
West Virginia			WV	WV	WV	WV	WV		
Wisconsin	WI*		WI*	WI*	WI*			WI*	WI
Wyoming			WY*					WY*	

\* new or expanded activities since 1982 survey



## Alabama

Alabama's approach to education improvement emphasizes local control of the education process with the state department of education providing financial and technical support to the 128 local school systems. This technical support comes in the form of a statewide student testing program (utilizing both a standardized achievement test and a basic competency test), a concentrated effort in improving basic skills and assistance in all curriculum areas.

The state's annual statewide student assessment program provides the data for other efforts. The norm-referenced achievement test is administered to all students in grades 2, 4, 5, 8 and 10. A state-developed minimum competency test is given to all students in grades 3, 6 and 9 and measures student progress in the areas of reading, language and mathematics. Beginning in the 1983-84 school year, a high school graduation examination will be given to 11th graders.

Using the results of the achievement tests and the minimum competency tests, state education department personnel work with local school systems and schools to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of their program to help adjust or develop curriculum programs, and to help teachers assess their instructional practices. The technical assistance and professional development activities given to school systems are provided through the staff of the state department of education and/or through personnel at the local level who have expertise in specific areas. Information about exemplary programs both in Alabama and in the nation also is made available to the local school districts.

## Alaska

The Alaska Effective Schooling Program is a developing statewide effort to provide students better opportunities for learning. In 1980, the governor asked the state board of education to design a plan to help local districts improve local education programs. The planning resulted in the creation of the Governor's Task Force on Effective Schooling and, in 1981, the task force presented their recommendations, many of which are now being implemented. The state's approach to effective schooling involves two essential elements. First is the identification of schooling practices that improve student learning and behavior. The second addresses the processes of improvement and change. In both cases, the research-based effective schools

literature is used in developing plans and making changes. From this research base, five major areas were considered to be important in making schools effective: leadership, school environment, classroom instruction and management, curriculum and assessment.

Alaska's improvement process at the school site involves eight steps and is renewed annually: (1) select a leadership team, (2) profile the school, (3) define strengths and weaknesses, (4) identify areas for improvement, (5) develop a research-based prescription for improvement, (6) develop a plan for implementation, (7) implement the plan, and (8) monitor progress and report results. The Effective Schooling Program was pilot-tested in six schools during the 1982-83 school year and evaluation is now underway. More schools are expected to implement an effective schooling program during the 1983-84 school year. Additionally, the Small Schools Rural Design Committee is currently preparing recommendations for tailoring the program to meet the special needs of small rural schools, including cross-cultural communication and multi-grade classrooms. A pilot project will be conducted in several rural schools during the 1983-84 school year.

A committee of educators across the state are now developing an elementary curriculum framework for local districts to use in conjunction with the Effective Schooling Program, including curriculum content, classroom instruction, assessment and evaluation, and a user's guide. The final draft should be completed by the end of 1983.

#### Arizona

Arizona's school improvement efforts focus on essential skills, student testing programs and compliance reviews. Legislation enacted in 1983 has given the state board of education authority to set competency standards in all subjects for promotion and graduation. The board will provide guidelines but local districts will have the flexibility to design their instructional programs to meet the competency standards. By the 1984-85 school year, it is expected these new requirements will be implemented statewide. Student testing in the skill areas is required for graduation from grades 8 and 12. The department will provide training to local administrators and teachers to link their instructional program to the new skill areas.

Arizona also mandates two other student testing programs. The first is a norm-referenced test for each

student that has to be given every year. The second is the Continuous Uniform Evaluation System test that assesses mastery of basic skills.

The department of education has developed a handbook for districts to use for instructional program reviews and to assess compliance with mandated standards. The department will assist districts with their assessments and provide training to school personnel to bring the programs into compliance with the standards.

### Arkansas

The Arkansas school improvement program includes a comprehensive set of research based activities initiated by the chief state school officer. The major programs consist of a series of teacher and administrative inservice training programs focusing on instructional skills and clinical supervision. The overall program assumes six key elements are related to good teaching and administration: 1) content mastery, 2) instructional skills, 3) classroom management skills, 4) planning, 5) use of resources and 6) human relations. The key program is the voluntary Program for Effective Teaching, begun in 1979, in which nearly three-fourths of the teachers and principals now participate. Drawing upon the Madeline Hunter model, Benjamin Bloom's mastery learning concept and the effective teaching research, the program provides training in effective instructional practices for teachers and effective clinical observation skills for principals. In 1982, a classroom management component, based on the work of Carolyn Evertson, was field tested and will be disseminated more widely during the 1983-84 school year. A training of trainers approach was adopted in order to maximize the number of people in the program. Because of the widespread participation and increases in student test scores, many feel the programs have been quite successful.

The state also created the Arkansas Executive Academy for School Administrators in 1981 to help administrators with needs such as communication with the public, development of pupil/personnel policies, scheduling, developing goals and objectives, and program planning.

The state has both norm- and criterion-referenced testing programs. Criterion-referenced tests developed specifically to measure reading and mathematics performance are used to test all students in grades 3, 6 and 8. A statewide curriculum guide has also been developed for reading and mathematics and includes

curriculum objectives, task analyses and a skills continuum. Norm-referenced tests in reading, mathematics and language arts also are given each year to all students in the same three grades.

Finally, the following are additional components of school improvement activities in Arkansas:

- A unit in the department of education works continuously with local school districts in disseminating programs identified by the National Diffusion Network.
- Teacher certification standards have been altered to allow people from other states with liberal arts degrees to obtain a certification without getting an education degree.
- A teacher competency exam is in force which requires a minimum score on the National Teachers Examination, but in content areas only.
- A new Education Standards Committee appointed by the governor is likely to stiffen a variety of standards in the state, both for students and teachers.

#### California

California's school improvement efforts began in the early 1970s when legislation was enacted to provide funds to improve the quality of early childhood education for grades K-3. In 1977, AB 65 was signed, making all grades eligible to participate in a school improvement process. Almost one-half of the state's public schools currently participate in the program, a planning process that focuses on individual students and involves every aspect of school operations. The planning begins at the school site level involving parents, teachers, principals, community members and, at the secondary level, students. Representatives from these groups form the School Site Council. The program is funded by the state and the council determines how the money will be spent. The state sets the general framework for the program and the local schools develop a three-year Master Plan that is based on an assessment of the school's capability to meet the education needs of each student. The plan must specify improvement objectives and indicate ways to achieve the objectives, including intended outcomes. Plans are approved by local district governing boards and the district receives approximately \$65-150 per student. An important part of the program is the review process.

Schools participating in the program are expected to conduct regular self assessments, in addition to periodic external reviews conducted by the state department of education or by a consortium of school districts. The department of education has developed a program review instrument and provides annual training for program reviewers.

California students also participate in several locally-developed competency testing programs: (1) mandated proficiency tests for high school graduation, (2) elementary grade testing for grade promotion and remediation and (3) early-exit test.

With the election of a new superintendent in 1982, many changes can be expected to occur over the next year. The department is now focusing on how to customize, decentralize and organize resources, and form networks of education personnel, including creating 10-15 regional centers across the state. School improvements efforts are now beginning to emphasize even greater local initiation and follow-up of their programs, with less external intervention by the state. The new superintendent has announced plans to initiate cooperative efforts with local districts, colleges and the business community to upgrade the quality of teachers and administrators. A top priority is the selection, training and retraining of large numbers of teachers in science, mathematics, history and English. With approximately one-half of the state's principals slated to retire within five years, principal training and recruitment is also a major objective.

Public concern for educational quality has been channeled into focused public support of education reform. In 1983 the state superintendent proposed major reform and financing legislation that was endorsed by a bipartisan coalition of community leaders. Chiefs of the top 100 California corporations wrote letters urging passage and editorial support was nearly unanimous. The bill was signed in late summer of 1983, providing an additional \$800 million to elementary/secondary schools for the 1983-84 school year. Some of the major provisions in the bill include: 1) increase high school graduation standards with curriculum goals established for students in the mandated courses; 2) provide fiscal incentives to districts to extend the school year and lengthen the school day; 3) establish specialized high schools in technology and performing arts; 4) provide state funding for high school textbooks and increase funding for textbooks in K-8; 5) require new teachers to complete 150 hours of continuing education every five years to retain certification; and 6) increase beginning

teachers' salaries over a three-year period. The bill also will establish a mentor program for teachers, giving teachers an opportunity to select outstanding colleagues to work with curriculum development and to serve as mentors for beginning teachers. Those selected as mentors will receive up to \$4000 annually for their additional duties.

## Colorado

The Educational Accountability Act and school accreditation requirements work together in Colorado to form the basis of the state school improvement program. In 1971 the legislature passed the Educational Accountability Act requiring local school districts to set up a process to establish a local accountability committee to focus on priorities for the district and to plan how to achieve them. In 1980, partially due to the positive reactions to this program, new legislation was enacted that confirmed the state board of education's authority to accredit school districts, and also required all districts to comply with the state's 1971 accountability law as one condition of accreditation. This means all school districts are required to develop an accountability committee and a continuing five-year school improvement plan based on local priorities. Further, each individual school within a district is encouraged to develop a multi-year school improvement plan. Individual school plans must be related to the priorities of the district as well as to the individual school priorities identified through a needs and strengths assessment at the school level.

The accountability/accreditation process in Colorado involves six basic steps: asking the people (needs and strengths assessment); setting priorities; action planning; implementing the plan; evaluating the plan; and reporting the results to the public. Through the accountability process, districts identify priority areas for school improvement efforts. Technical assistance is available from the department of education to help districts become more facile in the accountability/accreditation process, assess the quality of their school using self-assessment instruments, and work on particular problems in conjunction with other school districts that are facing similar situations. Two major assessment instruments have been developed. "Indicators of Quality Schools" can be used to assess strengths and weaknesses at the building level, and "Indicators of Quality School Districts" can be used at the district level.

State department technical assistance and monitoring are accomplished through two strategies: regional assistance teams that work on a range of issues in specific geographical areas, and "clusters" of people working on specific school improvement issues. The regional assistance teams, begun in September 1982, are charged with coordinating and overseeing all visits and services delivered to local school districts. The teams have access to all resources within the department of education to help meet the needs of districts. Further, the teams may utilize BOCES, colleges, universities and other education agencies as available resources. In 1983-84, the regional assistance teams' model of service delivery will seek to ensure that all the visits to local school districts will occur at the same time.

The "cluster" concept describes a collection of district and school leaders who are interested in a particular topic or school improvement effort. Clusters have been formed in order to improve basic skills instruction, to improve school climate and to enhance the utilization of technology in the school curriculum. These clusters are continuing to function in the 1983-84 school year but are a much more specialized technical assistance effort than the accreditation/accountability process.

#### Connecticut

Connecticut is promoting a broad array of efforts directed at local education quality, such as school effectiveness projects, curriculum guides and statewide proficiency examinations for 9th grade students. The Connecticut School Effectiveness Project has identified seven characteristics of an effective school: safe and orderly environment, clear school mission and goals, instructional leadership, high staff expectations, opportunity to learn and time on task, frequent monitoring of student progress, and home/school relations. The project is a voluntary school site approach using a facilitator from either the state education agency or regional education service centers. The facilitators help local districts develop action plans for improving student achievement by using student assessment data and current knowledge from effective teaching research. In each school, the entire faculty is involved and they decide whether or not to participate in the project. After a decision is made to participate, a school assessment takes place over a two- to three-day period using two interview instruments to assess the seven effective schools characteristics of the individual school. Following the school assessment, action plans are developed with the aid of the

facilitator. As schools develop their own problem-solving and capacity-building abilities, the role of the facilitator diminishes. The major objective of the project is to improve student achievement in low achieving schools in reading, writing and mathematics. The 1983-84 school year will be the fourth year of the project, with 30 elementary schools, 3 junior high or middle schools and 3 high schools participating.

In 1981, the department of education produced a series of 12 guides for curriculum development now being used by all districts in the state. One guide focuses on the curriculum development process; the remaining 11 guides address each of the mandated curriculum areas: mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, arts, career education, consumer education, health and safety, foreign language, physical education and vocational education. The guides contain information, including curriculum models and sample objectives, to help local educators develop their curriculum programs. An emphasis on planning, including revising and updating the curriculum program, is stressed. There is also an emphasis on involving parents and other community members in the development of a curriculum program.

A state law, passed in 1978, mandates that all 9th grade students be tested in the basic skill areas of reading, mathematics and language arts. The purpose of the state-developed test is to provide information to schools and districts to identify students who may need remedial assistance; provide information to improve school programs, including the planning aspect of school effectiveness projects; and to provide better accountability to the public. The law also requires districts to administer additional, locally selected tests in three nonconsecutive grades between 2 and 8. Standardized national tests in the basic skills may be chosen. Provisions must be made for using the test results to provide remedial assistance and to improve instructional programs.

#### Delaware

Delaware has a set of comprehensive school improvement strategies. In 1972, the state board of education established statewide student goals for education and a standardized testing program for measuring student progress toward those goals called the Delaware Educational Accountability System. In 1977, the department of public instruction published case studies on high- and low-achieving schools, focusing on factors

that affected student outcomes. The department adopted a set of standards for K-12 schools and, in 1979, the state board of education adopted the Goal-Directed and Performance-Based Instruction plan that brought minimum performance requirements and school standards together into an integrated school improvement program. The Delaware Educational Accountability System is focused on student achievement, needs assessment and program improvement. The Goal-Directed and Performance-Based Instruction plan is "a design for the management of learning in which agreed upon expectancies become the framework for the educational program." The accountability system provides annual data on student achievement -- districts must submit plans for improvement each year. Five-year plans for improvement are required through the instruction plan. Both programs have been fully implemented and now include more planning and technical assistance by the department of public instruction in terms of analyzing data to help districts with their school improvement efforts. The monitoring process provides a method of checking each school's compliance with the standards. Department of public instruction personnel make on-site visits to assess programs and to assist in program development. The department also has developed a set of materials related to school climate and classroom management.

As of June 1981, Delaware high school students had to demonstrate mastery in 17 specific basic skills in reading, composition and mathematics, in addition to the satisfactory completion of required courses necessary to earn a high school diploma. Promotion policies are based on achievement in the basic skills and are implemented on a K-12 basis.

In July 1983, graduation requirements for 1983-84 freshmen were increased to include one additional credit of mathematics, one additional credit of science and one instructional unit in computer literacy.

#### Florida

In Florida, gubernatorial and legislative interest in education has launched a variety of statewide school improvement efforts. In the mid-1970s, accountability legislation, in part a natural outgrowth of the 1973 school finance reform, mandated student competency testing in the basic skills and a functional literacy test required for graduation. The basic skills test is administered in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 and is coordinated with state and local planning, curriculum development and technical assistance, with the state department of

education taking an active role in providing needed support for these activities. New mandated curriculum requirements will begin to be phased in over a three-year period beginning in 1983-84. New legislation has also created and funded a curriculum framework project requiring the department of education to develop curriculum parameters for local district use. The guidelines will establish curriculum consistency throughout the state, while allowing local districts to modify them to meet their individual needs.

Further, to respond to the accountability legislation, the state has supported and funded school-based management projects in districts across the state. The purpose of these projects is to enable interested schools and districts to plan, develop and implement a school based management plan. The Division of Public Schools, within the department of education, reviews proposals and awards grants from general revenue funds to support this activity. Additionally, the legislation awards grants from \$500-\$5000 to districts to support programs which establish a closer working relationship between schools and the communities they serve. These programs increase communication, provide input and feedback between the schools and the community.

A K-3 program has completed the final three-year phase-in period with the 1982-83 school year. This program has addressed staff development, reduced class size and prescriptive teaching. All children are assessed during the time period for potential learning problems and instructional strategies are developed to address those problems.

In a special session of the legislature in 1983, Florida passed a major education bill that will provide over \$3 billion in state and local funds to public schools. The increase in state and local funding will come largely from an alcoholic beverage tax increase, a new tax on corporation profits and a property tax increase. Some of the provisions of the bill will: increase high school graduation requirements; extend the school day for high school juniors and seniors; fund reading resource specialists for high schools; establish a training program for mathematics and science teachers; and establish programs for students focusing on mathematics and computer education. Additionally, the bill will provide for the initiation of a merit pay plan beginning with the establishment of a council to make recommendations on the criteria by which the additional pay would be awarded.

## Georgia

The Educational Improvement Program developed in Georgia is based on systematic planning at the local level where locally assessed needs are prioritized, alternatives to address priority needs are analyzed, and logically made decisions are implemented. Critical examination of existing programs often reveal marginal, ineffective or counter-productive activities that can be terminated and those resources redirected to support more productive programs. When the redirection of state and local resources is inadequate to initiate some new and more strongly validated practice, the system has had the option of utilizing other resources; e.g., ECIA, 1981 Chapter 2 funds. The program has become a local responsibility, although technical assistance from the department of education's educational improvement unit is available on request.

The network of Georgia Training Centers for Educational Improvement has been continued with three centers funded with residual Title IV-C funds, 50% Vocational Education funds and 25% Adult Education funds. These centers help local school systems adopt/adapt school improvement programs that meet the specific needs of local schools in Language Arts (ILA), Mathematics (STAMM), and consumer education. The centers are funded to provide development, follow-up and evaluation services. The state department of education supports the centers in the organization, management and delivery of training.

Georgia also has a testing and accountability program. The Essential Skills Program and Accountability Plan requires mandatory student competency testing in grades 1, 4, 8 and 10 in reading and mathematics; in FY 83, students were required to pass the 10th grade test in order to receive a high school graduation diploma. By 1987, all school districts must develop local indicators for their curriculum design and testing program. The state provides technical assistance and grants to local districts to help develop the local indicators.

## Hawaii

Basic skills instruction in the elementary grades continues to be stressed with three key activities:

- A statewide campaign, Parents as Partners in Reading, to draw parents into school reading programs;

- New approaches to early childhood education; and
- Findings from effective schools and teaching research to identify instructional practices for use in grades 1 through 6.

In addition to those activities, all children entering kindergarten are formally assessed for their overall language development, motor coordination, oral language and other characteristics that may have a bearing on their learning. Teachers use the results of this assessment, Early Provisions for School Success, to tailor-make each kindergarten child's instructional program.

Another activity is testing all graduating seniors with a competency test, the Hawaii State Test of Essential Competencies, and granting diplomas only to those who pass the test and meet, in addition, the 20-credit course and credit graduation requirement. Still another activity is the School Priority Fund, a legislative program that allocates \$25 per student directly to each school above its regular allocation and a total of 527 supplementary teacher positions to the elementary schools, to enhance classroom instruction. Each school is free to use its supplementary funds and positions in ways that best meet the unique needs of its students after consulting with parents and teachers.

Finally each school is required to establish a school-community council that has representatives from the school staff, parents, students and community. The council meets each quarter to advise the principal on matters of school policy and program, and it also provides a forum to deal with school issues and to publicize accomplishments. Along with the quarterly meetings, every secondary school is required to hold an annual community-wide meeting to receive community input and to disseminate information about the school's programs, priorities and progress to the entire community.

#### Idaho

Idaho's school improvement strategy hinges on school accreditation requirements and administrator-teacher inservice training, both designed to help in the development of school/district improvement plans. Elementary schools are required to implement a self study every five years as part of the accreditation procedure. Secondary schools are required to conduct

such a study every 10 years and submit to an on-site review team evaluation. The accreditation process also addresses curriculum development and instructional delivery. The department of education has developed curriculum guides for local district use.

Idaho also has developed a statewide administrator renewal program. School administrators form groups, called collegial teams, that are committed to provide support to each other in the development and implementation of school improvement programs. These team members develop personal and professional goals and plans that are shared with members of the team. When problems are shared and feedback provided, administrators participating in this process have reported success in taking their ideas back to their schools and providing stronger leadership to the school, staff and district.

Proficiency testing in grades 9-12 in reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling can be used at the option of local districts.

#### Illinois

Illinois school improvement efforts concentrate on local planning and curriculum through a variety of technical assistance activities utilizing central office staff, field-based staff and consultants. Department consultants are responsible for curriculum and program leadership and respond to local needs through direct communication, materials dissemination, on-site consultations, workshops, conferences and seminars. Local needs and problem areas are identified locally with the assistance of field-based staff, then coordinated with central office staff to determine appropriate action. Materials dissemination and on-site consultations, delivered by approximately 1300 consultants, are most frequently used. These consultants, available to local education agencies at little or no cost, are teachers, administrators or postsecondary faculty who have been trained in two methods of providing technical assistance: (1) providing help in program assessment and planning; and (2) curriculum for inservice activities. The objectives of these activities are to improve local problem solving skills, encourage systematic planning and goal setting, and curriculum alignment. Inservice assistance focuses mainly on teacher effectiveness, school climate and the development of high expectations and standards for both instruction and student performance.

The majority of school improvement activity takes place at the school site level; however, the department also initiates programs, workshops and seminars which address issues raised by education leaders, both state and national. This strategy enables local districts to send a team (teacher, community member, school board member, student) to a seminar and, with the help of consultants and facilitators, work through a planning model which focuses on their needs. After the conclusion of a two-three day workshop, the team has begun to develop a plan for improvement of an existing program or the implementation of a new activity. Follow-up resources in the form of workshops and technical assistance services are provided to the teams as they reach various stages of program development.

Several activities are underway and scheduled for completion during FY 84. These areas have been identified by the department through reviews of research and the literature on effective schooling practices. The Illinois Problems Index, an assessment and planning instrument, is designed to help local districts develop an assessment plan and education program responses to it. Other areas include: (1) research synthesis -- analysis and application of effective schools research findings; (2) collaborative school improvement -- designed to improve school programs and student performance through collaborative relationships among districts. The department of education is currently providing leadership in basic skills, oral communication and science literacy. Task forces are currently studying problems and issues in these areas and will be making recommendations to staff for activities in each area. Additionally, task forces appointed by the state board of education were assigned to investigate program mandates in instructional programs, bilingual education, driver education and physical education. Specific recommendations for each area were made to the full board for their action in FY 84. The state also funded approximately \$500,000 in the 1982-83 school year and an additional \$500,000 for the 1983-84 school year to establish a computer consortia to provide inservice training to teachers and administrators, to develop centralized software libraries and for acquisition of equipment for loan and demonstration purposes.

#### Indiana

Indiana has implemented a number of initiatives related to school improvement. The Educational Improvement Program, begun in 1978, is an organized attempt to constantly study, revise and refine curriculum in the

local schools. Schools are required, annually, to undertake a review of their curriculum program and to provide a report to the department of public instruction. The program also calls for the existence of a local advisory committee (parents, teachers and administrators) for each of the seven curriculum areas to establish goals and objectives that best meet the needs of the school. Additionally, schools must have some method of assessment, either a locally-developed or commercially-prepared test, and report results of the tests to the department of public instruction. In 1983, the state board of education mandated more stringent graduation requirements by increasing the number of units required in mathematics, science and English. This will be effective for the class of 1988.

Gubernatorial interest in education issues has created the governor-initiated, pilot program, Operation Prime Time. Funded with money from the general assembly, 16 schools have been identified to participate in the program which reduces the pupil-teacher ratio in the primary grades to address the issue of time on task. In 1982 the governor appointed a select commission on elementary and secondary education to keep him apprised of education issues and concerns in the state. Additionally, an ongoing Congress on Education comprised of education and business leaders are holding a series of conferences across the state in an attempt to address education needs and concerns in Indiana. Their aim is to present to the legislature a consensus on public education policy issues.

#### Iowa

In 1975, the Iowa Legislature created the 15 Area Education Agencies (AEAs) to act as a comprehensive service unit for the local districts. The agencies do not serve in a supervisory or administrative position but function as a liaison between local districts and the department of public instruction. The AEAs are funded directly from the state by transferring state aid dollars from the school districts in the agency's area. By law, each district is required to develop and determine educational needs, develop long-range plans and priorities, update these plans annually and maintain a record of progress. The agencies provide assistance to the districts in developing these plans, determining curriculum, testing and advice on using test results. Although testing is a local prerogative, 95% of the districts have developed their own testing program.

The agencies also provide inservice education programs, consulting, special programs to encourage specific instruction, and help in identifying, analyzing and sharing improved education methods. Using the Madeline Hunter model of effective instructional practice, a program that teaches writing as a process has been implemented statewide. Additionally, an effort to increase computer skills of both teachers and students has been initiated through a cooperative effort among the AEAs.

### Kansas

Kansas' activities have centered on a testing program in the basic skills and an information dissemination/technical assistance program. Students are tested in grades 2, 4, 6, 8 and 11 in reading and mathematics and results are used to provide local districts with a profile of student achievement in these skills. The legislature funded the testing program for two years and the funding will expire the end of FY 83. At this time there has been no legislation to support continuation of the program; however, data from the program are still being analyzed.

Since 1976, the Kansas Educational Dissemination/Diffusion System has made staff and money available to local districts that wish to bring about change in their school system. Technical assistance to develop local skills, clarify education needs, choose already-developed programs, implement change and organization development has been funded in the past through the National Institute of Education, Titles III and IV-C, the Women's Education Equity Act and the National Diffusion Network. Because of the loss of federal funds these activities will, more than likely, become lost to the local districts in the next year or so.

A new effort initiated by the state board of education is the Program of Educational Excellence. The department of education has developed criteria to be used in identifying Kansas education programs that are regarded as excellent. At this time the focus is on reading, mathematics, science and library/media. Districts will apply to the department for program recognition if they wish.

Other new initiatives are in the process of being developed. Several school districts are working with McRel on comprehensive school improvement programs. New

accreditation standards are in the developmental stage, with an attempt being made to link the effective schools research with the standards. The new standards would address some aspects of quality, rather than quantity only.

### Kentucky

Kentucky's school improvement activities include revised accreditation standards, student assessment, local school improvement plans and a school climate improvement program. The state education agency is piloting a new accreditation system in an effort to ensure that local districts' education programs are in compliance with state board standards. Compliance indicators that show whether a district is meeting what is required have been developed for each standard. Standards addressed include: statement of philosophy and objectives, program of school/community relations, staff development and student assessment. The department of education offers technical assistance to aid local districts in complying with these standards.

HB 579, the Education Improvement Act, requires local districts to develop a five-year school improvement plan. In the 1982-83 school year, ten districts began participating in the new school improvement program. The plan is divided into two phases: (1) analysis of the program and (2) technical assistance from the department of education to implement the plan. Each area will focus on areas where additional money is not necessary. The plan should tie into the statewide testing program of basic skills where each student in grades 3, 5, 7 and 10 are tested annually in the skill areas of reading, mathematics and language arts. Kentucky also is piloting a school climate improvement process, patterned after the Colorado program, in several schools. This pilot project is being funded with Chapter 2 funds.

### Louisiana

Louisiana's school improvement initiatives have come largely out of legislative action. Act 750, the Competency-Based Education Program enacted in 1979, established statewide minimum competency standards for reading, writing and mathematics. Curriculum guides were developed to address those standards and have been in use since the 1981-82 school year. In addition, the Act mandates a student assessment of those subjects in grades 2-12. The testing program began in grade 2 in

the 1981-82 school year and will add a grade each year until grade 12 is reached. Further, the Act requires each school district to develop a pupil progression plan based upon student performance on the assessment program. Emphasis is placed upon the student's mastery of the basic skills and is used as the principal criteria for promotion and placement.

A major school effectiveness study, funded by the legislature, is now being conducted by the department of education and is being piloted in 12 of the 66 parish/city systems in the state. Using nationally known research on effective schools, the study is focusing on the school climate variable of the research.

### Maine

Efforts to improve schools in Maine center on a technical assistance project designed to serve as a resource to school systems implementing a performance-based approach to instruction. The Maine Assessment and Planning for Schools (MAPS) is a set of guides that enable school districts to undertake activities to integrate instructional goals and objectives, student assessment and performance expectations. The state-developed guides illustrate six phases of program improvement: preplanning and organizing, designing a performance-based program, program management, goals and objectives, curriculum and instruction, and assessment.

The department of education has developed a compilation of education objectives and objective-referenced test questions that local agencies may use in their program. The item bank contains objectives and test items for grades K-12 in mathematics, reading, social studies, science, language arts and nutrition and serves as a resource in the development of tests for local school or classroom assessment. The instructional objectives have been developed to provide a sequential progression of instructional content from primary through secondary education. Efforts to link the education objectives, the performance-based approach to instruction and assessment methods are being undertaken statewide. Using the effective schools and teaching research as a base, several schools are now implementing effective schools projects.

## Maryland

In Maryland, school improvements efforts are coordinated under the program Project Basic. Begun originally as a project to emphasize high school graduation prerequisites, the program now focuses on instruction, assessment and delivery throughout the education system. The 1980-81 school year was the first year of statewide implementation. Project Basic focuses on six areas: student competencies, instructional improvement, student assessment, local planning, local involvement, and technical assistance support. The department of education provides this technical assistance support by assigning and funding full-time, locally-based facilitators to work with the districts in the implementation of the Project and to serve as an important liaison between local concerns and the department of education. Maryland requires local school systems to develop and implement a plan that follows the Project Basic model. Requirements include: (1) a match between statewide required competencies and the local instruction program, (2) administration of a testing program and maintenance of student achievement test results and (3) a remediation program for failing students. To graduate from high school, students are required to pass criterion-referenced reading, mathematics, writing and citizenship tests. Students must also participate in an instructional program for work, survival and the arts/physical education. A norm-referenced test is administered in grades 3, 6 and 8 for purposes of program evaluation and planning.

In order to provide appropriate instruction to ensure student achievement in competencies required by the state, the School Improvement Through Instructional Process program began in 1980. By focusing on student needs identified by Project Basic assessment results, local districts may implement one (or more) of four National Diffusion Network models to improve instructional delivery: mastery learning, active teaching, student team teaching or teaching variables. The department of education provides indepth training, technical assistance and block grant funds through grants to districts wishing to adopt and develop these plans.

A statewide high school study commission made up of citizens, superintendents, school board members, and high school and university educators is in the process of examining high school education. Issues being addressed are: more stringent high school graduation requirements, new curriculum guidelines, educational technology and other initiatives affecting secondary education.

The state has initiated and largely funded 58 prekindergarten programs that constitute almost one-half of the elementary schools in the state in which the reading level at the 3rd grade level has been a continuing problem.

#### Massachusetts

A basic skills program that began in 1981 serves as the anchor of the Massachusetts school improvement activities. The focus of the program is on local curriculum adjustment and centers on modifying or changing existing instructional program activities, not creating new programs. The mandate permits flexibility and allows local determination of standards. The department of education defines skills generally, but school districts are required to set minimum standards of student achievement; to assess student performance in reading, writing, mathematics and listening; and to provide remediation. The department helps districts develop and administer tests, and to modify curriculum in response to test score results. In the fall of 1983, the department of education will have available to local school districts resource banks that contain information on education programs and practices, consultants and other printed materials to aid the districts in their planning process.

In addition, the Commonwealth Inservice Institute for teachers, begun in 1978, is funded with state, private and federal funds to support requests for inservice education projects. These grants may be given to teachers to develop a school improvement program, hire consultants and specialists, or to develop a response to a particular need. The focus is on problem solving. The initial assistance, whether in the form of dollars or technical assistance, provides a starting point for participants to develop their own problem-solving capabilities and responses to meet their specific needs.

#### Michigan

School improvement in Michigan began in 1969 when the state board wanted information on student achievement in the basic skills. The Michigan Educational Assessment Program, subsequently developed, is a statewide testing program in reading and mathematics, with objective-referenced tests administered every fall to all 4th, 7th and 10th grade students. Tests in curriculum areas beyond reading and mathematics

(science, social studies, health, physical education, writing, career education, art and music) are assessed periodically. The test results provided by the program allow local educators to identify which students have acquired these basic skills and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the district's basic skills program. Further, the test results are made public for all districts and schools. Information from nearly a decade of use of these assessments has been used by education specialists in the state to review and revise the instruction objectives and the tests. In 1980-81, revised tests were implemented statewide and will be used as a continuing method for local district assessment of their basic skills program. State-designed curriculum objectives also have been developed for grades 9-12 and can be used as a model by local districts in developing high school programs. These standards have been constructed to allow for the wide variation in local practices.

In 1970, after reviewing the test results, the board and legislature sought to help schools that had concentrations of low achievers. This led to the Michigan Compensatory Education Program, which allocated more dollars to the low achieving schools. It was then asked why some schools were more effective than others. That led to four years of effective schools research, beginning in 1973, with the department of education's "Cost-Effectiveness Study" and cooperation in studies conducted by the late Ron Edmonds, Wilbur Brookover, Larry Lezotte and others. In cooperation with the regional Title I Technical Assistance Center, profiles of effective schools were developed. In 1980, the issue had moved to strategies for changing all schools to be effective schools. A consortium for improving student achievement, consisting of principals, teachers, superintendents, state department staff and researchers from Michigan institutions of higher education, was proposed to implement the knowledge from the effective teaching and effective schools research.

Currently, the state is involved in implementing the consortium concept in the Michigan School Improvement Program. This is a structured process for school staff, with the assistance of consortium members, to assess strengths and weaknesses of the school, and to design and implement a school improvement plan. The program rests on five assumptions: 1) the school is the unit for education improvement; 2) school climate influences the success of a school improvement plan; 3) effective teaching and schools research results are a good beginning point; 4) school staff must be involved in developing improvement plans; and 5) staff ownership is a consequence of shared planning.

## Minnesota

Minnesota's school improvement approach includes an integrated and comprehensive set of programs and requirements, all of which were expanded by the Technology and School Improvement Act (TSIA) of 1983. The overall state approach is one of state general requirements and locally developed standards and specifics. The Planning, Evaluation and Reporting (PER) legislation of 1976 requires districts to develop an instruction plan that includes measurable learner outcomes and to report to the public, annually, local board policy regarding planning and evaluation, curriculum goals, student test results, opinions of students, parents and other residents; and a school improvement plan for the next year. As an aid in this process, Some Essential Learner Outcomes (SELOs) were developed in the 1970s. SELOs are curriculum guides that organize a subject matter's basic goals and key competencies throughout the K-12 spectrum. They are available for use by local districts as a way of identifying curriculum goals. They are available for 18 subject matter areas; the 1983 TSIA requires updates for math, science and social studies. In addition, the Minnesota Student Assessment Program provides a series of criterion-referenced tests, patterned after those of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, for use by local districts in documenting student achievement. Local districts are required by state law to administer three content area tests in grades 4, 8 and 11 each year and to cover 12 content areas over a four-year period.

A council on quality education awards state-funded grants to a limited number of schools each year for special improvement programs and the state has funded a Minnesota Diffusion Network which attempts to disseminate effective Minnesota education programs within the state.

Finally, the 1983 Technology and School Improvement Act provided funds for four new activities:

- Inservice training for teachers and administrators in the use of technology.
- Inservice training for teachers and administrators on instructional effectiveness.
- Inservice training for administrators and teachers in mathematics, science and social studies.

- Two million dollars for computer software development, duplication rights and creation of a statewide software approval list.

### Mississippi

In 1975, the Mississippi Legislature passed legislation that required the state department of education to design an accountability program based on local school district planning. The Accountability and Instructional Management program requires that each school district have a management plan by 1984. In 1985, special monitoring units from the department will be evaluating school districts and district accreditation is contingent upon compliance with this mandate. The management plan must define the content of the instructional program, attach objectives that include learner outputs, identify teaching practices to be used, outline a method of evaluation or measurement and an inservice training program. State education department staff conduct workshops and offer inservice activities for local school district personnel to help them comply with the mandate.

Additionally, the Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982 directs the department of education to implement a statewide assessment program that will establish minimum performance standards and test students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11. The department will monitor the test results and give assistance to districts where deficiencies occur. The act will also provide other measures to strengthen the school system in the state: a statewide mandatory kindergarten program, a compulsory school attendance law, a reading aid program for grades 1-3, new teacher certification standards, a principal training academy and a new teacher/administrator evaluation system to be implemented.

### Missouri

Missouri's school improvement initiatives include a state testing program that provides individual student achievement profiles, a new instructional management program designed to imbed effective teaching knowledge into all Missouri schools, and rigorous school accreditation standards. The testing program is two-fold. First, criterion-referenced tests in reading and mathematics are made available for grades 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and can be used as an instructional guide and aid in identifying students who may be having difficulties in mastering skills. In addition, teachers are

encouraged to keep individual student achievement profiles throughout the student's academic year. Second, the state board mandates the Basic Essential Skills Test, a competency test for all 8th-grade students in mathematics, reading, language arts and government/economics. The state education agency provides the test, grades and records the results, and develops a complete test profile for all students. The competency testing program began in 1979, two years after Missouri's 1977 school finance reform.

The Instructional Management System (IMS), a way of organizing instruction and managing learning experiences, began in 1979 as a major research-based effort to bring effective teaching research and methods to all schools in the state. The purpose of the program is to guarantee that: (1) learning objectives for each subject and grade level are defined; (2) students are given time to master the objectives and (3) students, teachers and parents can know what has been achieved and what remains to be done. Although establishing an IMS is a district level responsibility, the department of education provides curriculum specialists to work with districts that are implementing a system. Training workshops are also provided for principals, superintendents and teachers. The major focus to date has been on reading and arithmetic in grades K-8. Out of the 445 K-12 districts in the state, 300 are now in various stages of the process and Missouri education officials are hoping to make it a 100% effort, including secondary schools, in the near future.

Finally, each school in the state is evaluated annually as part of the accreditation process. Schools are rated on three levels, according to the overall quality of the education program, and the ratings are published by the state department of education. A guideline of approved standards is provided by the state for each level and technical assistance is available to help schools meet those standards.

#### Montana

The department of public instruction conducted a statewide needs assessment to establish which districts need assistance and in what areas. This assessment is the beginning of a long-range effort to develop a curriculum plan designed to improve basic skills instruction in the state. A curriculum guide has been developed and instituted statewide by the department for local district use and a calendar of school-related activities is currently in place that contains information on all education activities across the

state. A resource bank also provides teachers with a list of people who can provide workshops, curriculum assistance or other inservice needs. Additionally, the department is working with the state university system to provide curriculum linkage between K-12 and postsecondary requirements.

The state, in cooperation with the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, is piloting an effective schools project focusing on principal effectiveness.

### Nebraska

In the mid-1970s the department of education developed a student assessment program, Nebraska Assessment Battery of Essential Learning Skills (N-ABELS), which school districts may use or they may devise their own. The N-ABELS program identifies, defines and provides performance standards in the skill areas of reading, mathematics, writing and reference usage. About 80% of the districts use the N-ABELS and the department will provide assistance, upon request, to districts wishing to implement these tests. The department of education does not collect any student information from these assessment programs; the results are used mainly for local district use and as an accountability measure to the community.

The department of education, in an attempt to address quality education, has identified 35 schools which, as a whole, have a fully comprehensive educational delivery system. They are classified, through a peer review model, as AA model schools. Although this may be a subjective method of evaluation, the attempt is to identify process and product of the instructional delivery system. Although the school as a whole is the focus, exemplary programs and practices are also identified.

### Nevada

Nevada school improvement efforts include inservice training programs for teachers and administrators, and student minimum competency testing. An inservice program focuses on basic skills instruction and workshops are provided by the state education agency in curriculum areas and in classroom management. A Principalship Improvement Project, funded with state, Far West Laboratory and local district money, conducts workshop focused on instructional management skills for principals.

The state-developed student competency testing began by legislative mandate in 1977 and tests students in grades 3, 6, 9 and in grade 12 for graduation. The tests cover the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics and are constructed to allow local districts to use the results to modify curriculum and to provide remedial instruction. The state is now in the process of expanding the scope and raising the difficulty levels of the test and hope to have the revised testing program in place by the 1984-85 school year. Also, the state department of education is in the process of establishing a joint council between the state board of education and the University of Nevada for the purpose of linking curriculum requirements of postsecondary institutions to high school curriculum.

In cooperation with Far West Regional and South West Education Regional Laboratories, the department of education is beginning to identify and utilize effective schools concepts by designing workshops by which the information from this research base can be disseminated to local educators.

#### New Hampshire

In 1978, the department of education initiated an accountability plan to be used as a guideline to provide local school boards with a consistent link between education outcomes and planning. To comply with the accountability requirements, districts have to complete a six step process: (1) develop essential student outcomes for both state-mandated and locally-designed fields of learning, (2) develop performance indicators for all essential outcomes, (3) design and carry out sound assessment procedures, (4) analyze assessment data, (5) report assessment results to the department of education and (6) develop a management plan based on assessment results. In 1983, most districts are reported as being close to or beginning step six. The department of education has identified suggested essential student outcomes in English/language arts, mathematics, and history and government which local school districts may use as a guide for developing their own essential student outcomes. Competency testing in grades 4, 8 and 12 in these skill areas serves as a guideline for developing accountability plans. The department is now beginning to hold regional awareness conferences on the effective schools research in an attempt to identify ways to link the research to the development of the management plan.

To help districts carry out these procedures, the department of education has three levels of technical

assistance. The commissioner of education established an accountability unit within the department to assist local districts. He also created a joint management council, consisting of key education leaders in the state who serve as an advisory committee to the accountability unit. Other groups of department consultants, process specialists and subject area specialists work with the accountability unit and local districts to help develop their plans, including providing assistance in curriculum decisions and student assessments.

### New Jersey

Beginning July 1, 1982, a study was directed by the newly appointed commissioner of education to review the organizational structure and administrative practices of the New Jersey State Department of Education. As a result of this study, changes have been made in the organization of the department to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services to local school districts. Essentially, the new organization is comprised of fewer managers and more professionals. The rôle as intermediate units was redefined for the state's 21 county offices. In addition, three regional curriculum service units were developed. The study of administrative practices called for a review of the Public School Education Act of 1975, an act that defined the requirements for a thorough and efficient public school system. Department policy and procedure under this act emphasized strict compliance with law and regulation through extensive monitoring by state department of education staff. It also strongly focused on pupil performance in minimum basic skills.

As a result of the review of administrative practices, the efforts of the department's various organizational elements were redirected to focus on the planning process cited in the Public School Education Act of 1975. The policy of the department now centers on: 1) encouraging local school districts to plan more effectively; 2) having local school districts share information about successful instructional programs; 3) eliminating annual state department of education monitoring of districts that have been determined to have met the thorough and efficient requirements of law and regulation; and 4) directing more of the state's resources and assistance to local districts which have identified needs.

The revised policy of the department now requires districts to define needs and to set objectives for meeting these needs through an annual planning process.

While defining the needs and setting the objectives is a local responsibility, the state has responsibility for assisting local districts in this process by providing consultation and instruction in effective planning, as well as periodic progress checks and a year-end analysis of the district's progress in implementing its plan.

Three levels of assistance are available to assist local districts in the implementation of the planning process and the activities to meet the stated objectives. At the first level, there are 21 county offices of education that have the responsibility to help districts determine needs, set objectives and develop a plan of action to eliminate or reduce the needs. The county offices will review and approve district plans and generally advise districts on other requirements of law and regulation. The second level, which has been newly created, consists of three regional curriculum service units, each serving a seven-county region. These units have responsibility for distribution of curriculum products and programs and the delivery of necessary services for curriculum development. The third level of assistance is located within the central offices of the department of education. The staff of these offices will be responsible for developing products and services to meet specific needs of districts as identified by managers at the first and second levels of assistance.

Finally, since the process ultimately calls for higher achievement by pupils, a new statewide testing program is being developed. Instead of a state mandated test, districts may now select commercially published tests to measure pupil progress in the basic skills. In conjunction with this, the department of education will collect and analyze test data for grades 3 and 6 of the public schools and report its findings to the public. A new and more rigorous test for pupils in grade 9 will be developed by the department to encompass skills required for reading, writing and mathematics. Beginning with the graduating class of 1989, successful completion of the test will be required of all pupils to receive a high school diploma.

#### New Mexico

For the past five years, the department of education has made a concerted effort to review local programs in every district for compliance with state regulations. This effort involves monitoring, technical assistance and follow-up monitoring. Districts are required to develop program plans, including curriculum development. Beginning with the 1983-84 school year, districts must use a state-developed list of exit competencies in their instructional programs.

In 1977, the state board of education adopted the Basic Skills Plan. This testing program is required of all students in the 10th grade and measures a student's ability to apply basic skills to realistic problems. This test covers items such as problem solving; computation; reading and writing in areas of consumer economics, government and law, and occupational knowledge. An independent testing agency works with school districts to distribute, score and report results of the test. Although not a requirement for graduation, it is used as a proficiency endorsement on the high school diploma. Local districts also administer the CTBS in grades 3, 5 and 8; results are used for local district planning and identification of problem areas.

### New York

The New York State Education Department has a long history of direct involvement with its students and schools. Over the past few years the focus has been on programs that meet department objectives of (1) establishing standards, (2) monitoring student achievement and (3) improving school effectiveness. It now has three major programs that forge a stronger school improvement link between the department and local schools and school districts. The first is the Regents Competency Testing Program begun in 1978. Under this program, mandated tests establish minimum competency standards for high school graduation in reading, writing and mathematics, with checkpoints along the way in grades 3, 6 and 8 or 9. Any student who is identified at these checkpoints as potentially having difficulty in passing the Regents Competency Tests must be given remedial help. The second is the Resource Allocation Plan which reorganized the department's staffing, planning and technical assistance structures to better identify which schools in the state need which resources and to coordinate the delivery of federal, state, local and regional resources. Schools with achievement trend data below state expectations may request assistance. Department staff members assigned to schools give the building principals a direct link to all state education agency technical assistance resources. This enables administrators and teachers in individual schools to work directly and indirectly with education department personnel to plan, develop, implement and evaluate programs for the schools that will prepare students to meet the Regents Competency Testing Program standards.

The third program is the Secondary School Registration program that implements the regents' authority to set

and enforce minimum standards for high schools. High schools in New York cannot issue diplomas unless registered, and junior and senior high schools are visited every five years to ensure compliance with regulations and to ensure that they are providing minimum basic skills instruction and courses with acceptable levels of pupil retention. If not, the department can refer schools to regional or state resources and recommend changes in programs to bring them into compliance so that the schools may be registered.

For the past six years, the Regents and the New York Department of Education have conducted regional conferences across the state that have focused on strengthening basic skills. The conferences in 1982 and 1983 have focused on progress toward meeting the education goals that were established by the Regents in 1974 and actions that could be taken to better achieve the goals. Representatives from elementary and secondary education, postsecondary institutions, and business and industry have all participated in the conferences. This effort launched a long-term project through which the Regents and the department will examine goals and actions for elementary and secondary education, with public hearings to be held in the fall of 1983 and a comprehensive proposal for education reform scheduled for completion in 1984.

#### North Carolina

North Carolina's support for school improvement from the department of public instruction is provided through teams of consultants from eight regional service centers, organized to aid local districts and schools. These centers are staffed with department specialists and consultants with expertise, for example, in staff development, child nutrition, exceptional children, curriculum development, vocational education and community/school relations. The centers hold workshops, help write grant proposals and help develop local district plans and budgets. A Principals' Institute, which conducts its training and technical assistance functions largely through the regional centers, focuses on principals' needs including time management and performance appraisal. Most of the state education agency's services provided to local school districts are delivered through these centers -- branches of the department of public instruction, not intermediate units.

The state also tests students as they move through school. In 1978, at the initiative of the governor, it began to administer a competency test in grade 11; passing this test is required for high school graduation. For students who fail the test, a state compensatory education and remediation program was created. A criterion-referenced test in grades 1 and 2, and a norm-referenced test in grades 3, 6 and 9 also are given annually, primarily for local district planning and assessment purposes.

Two districts in the state are now participating in a pilot project that lengthens the school year to 200 days and extends classroom time to seven hours each day. The plan is voluntary and state funds have been appropriated to implement it.

Investment in education improvement was a cornerstone of the governor's economic development plan, including the minimum competency test. He can now guarantee companies that all high school graduates will have competency in specific basic skills. In addition, the mission of the community college system has been focused on training in labor market skills needed by employers in high technology industries, which the governor is encouraging to move to the state. The overall program shows how a state education system and a school improvement program can be part of a broader political goal -- in this case, statewide economic development.

#### North Dakota

North Dakota's approach to school improvement stresses enhanced accreditation standards, curriculum coordination and an instructional program designed to track individual student progress throughout his stay in the school system. The state has a school approval statute mandating that schools meet minimum standards. The revised accreditation standards are voluntary and provide opportunities for schools to concentrate on school improvement procedures. Accreditation with commendation requires the development of a school improvement plan: (1) planning, (2) self study, (3) out-of-district team visitation, and (4) validation methods and a follow-up plan. Parents and community members must also be involved. For the 1982-83 school year, about 30 elementary schools were in various stages of developing and implementing plans and it is expected that secondary schools will join in the effort the following year.

In 1982, the department of education established a statewide curriculum council made up of district educators to coordinate curriculum development in the state. Although the state does not mandate curriculum, the department does develop guidelines and provides assistance to the districts in their curriculum development activities.

Using Chapter 2 funds, the state department of education created a student-focused initiative, Each Student Is Special, which is based on three premises: (1) each student is unique, (2) rural education has significant potential for the delivery of learning experiences and (3) rural parents should share in a partnership role in education decision making. The project was piloted in the 1982-83 school year in 12 predominantly rural schools and 12 more schools will participate in the 1983-84 school year. The project creates a parent/faculty team for each student, establishes learning objectives and evaluates the progress of the student throughout the instructional process. The state has designed documents and processes for implementing the project and provides training to both faculty and parents.

Additionally, North Dakota has announced new graduation requirements in English/language arts and mathematics to be phased in over the next three years and has increased the length of the school day to address time on task. The department, along with schools and school districts, are developing alternatives to bring school dropouts back into some form of learning experience.

#### Ohio

Ohio has long been committed to improving public education and the state department of education has evidenced its commitment to educational excellence by designating 1983 as "Ohio's Year of Educational Excellence for All." A number of improvement strategies have been initiated on a statewide level. First, the state provides inservice training dollars to local districts for the purpose of upgrading teaching skills. Second, administrators no longer receive lifetime certificates after a course of study. New courses or formal coursework are needed to maintain certification. Third, the state has made significant changes in its high school graduation requirements. The requirements were rewritten to emphasize outcome-based skills and competencies, rather than simply measuring inputs. An extra unit of mathematics was added to increase high school graduation requirements to 17 credits. To help

implement these new standards, the department is in the process of developing 15 new state curriculum guides. Finally, a student competency test is now required, in part, as a support for the new high school graduation standards and as a check on promotion from elementary to middle to high school. The tests are state mandated but locally developed, and cover reading and mathematics. Students must be tested three times during their years in school, once during grades 1-4, grades 5-8 and grades 9-12. The tests identify student competency and intervention programs for students whose performance falls short of the required standards.

In addition to the above strategies, the department has initiated a major school improvement program. In 1982, 100 local districts participated in the program; 200-300 districts are expected to participate this year. The program draws upon the effective schools research of the late Ron Edmonds, a University of Michigan professor of education administration. The department has identified seven critical elements of an effective schools program: (1) a clear school mission, (2) strong building level instructional leadership, (3) high expectations for students and staff, (4) frequent monitoring of student progress, (5) a positive learning climate, (6) sufficient opportunities for learning, e.g., time on task and (7) parent and community involvement. The basis of this program is that all students can learn the basic skills necessary to succeed at the next level of learning. A key factor is the focus on developing an effective schools program at the building level; however, all actions are coordinated through district superintendents. Local districts and schools volunteer to participate in the program which is viewed as a cost effective program at the local level.

The effective schools program is administered by the school improvement section of the Division of Equal Educational Opportunities within the department of education. Technical assistance is provided by school improvement staff supported by state funding. The division is responsible for implementing desegregation in the state, but considers desegregation and effective schools as complementary rather than separate objectives. The division normally concentrates its efforts on urban schools; however, given the thrust toward improving schools, the division works with all schools. When the programs are developed in urban schools with high concentrations of low income students, they tend to be called effective schools programs (following strictly the research literature), but when located in other types of schools, they are called school improvement programs.

As a highlight of the division's focus on effective schools, in 1982 the first annual Ohio Academy for School Improvement Strategies was created for principals. The Academy consisted of a week-long, summer, live-in conference. Building level issues related to effective schools are emphasized. Elementary and secondary principals are both represented at the Academy. Due to its success, it has been decided to hold the Academy on an annual basis. This success was demonstrated by the increase of almost 400% in the number of participants and school districts in 1983 as compared with 1982.

Other divisions, such as the Division of Educational Services (block grant) and the Office of Inservice Education have provided school improvement activities at the building level for teachers and administrators. These initiatives on the part of the department of education demonstrates its commitment to promoting building level based school improvement programs for all Ohio schools.

#### Oklahoma

For the past few years, education improvement has been a major legislative policy issue. In 1980 the legislature passed a comprehensive teacher education bill that addressed teacher preparation, certification, competency testing, staff development and establishment of the entry year assistance program for beginning teachers prior to certification. In 1981 the legislature passed HE 1236, a major school finance reform that significantly increased school funding, targeting the bulk of the increase to higher teacher salaries.

Additional funding was used by the department of education to develop curriculum guides in all disciplines for all grade levels. These guides are used by local schools and districts for curriculum planning and review. In 1982 the legislature mandated that the basic skill areas of mathematics, science, language arts and citizenship education (social studies) be taught in grades K-12. It also mandated that each school district shall annually review its curriculum in the basic skill areas. The mandate required that each district complete the curriculum review by the end of the 1983-84 school year. A curriculum review model was developed by the state department of education and schools have the option of utilizing this method or developing their own. The state agency provides inservice on request to help school districts with the review process. Additionally,

the legislation mandates that each school district have a written discipline policy on file that must be approved by the local school board.

Graduation requirements were also increased due to this legislation. Graduating seniors in 1986-87 will be required to have 2 units of mathematics, 2 units of science, 1/2 unit of world history, 1/2 unit of Oklahoma history, 1 unit of American history, 4 units of language arts and 10 electives for graduation. This is an increase from 18 units to 20 units for graduation.

### Oregon

Oregon's program of school improvement rests on state-required but locally developed student tests of competence in reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, listening, reasoning; on instructional programs that must be linked to individual student needs; and the use of achievement test data to monitor student progress and revise instructional strategies. In 1974, the Oregon State Board of Education adopted revised education standards requiring that instruction be based on student abilities and interests, with goal statements of expected student outcomes and the charting of student progress in meeting those goals. In addition, each district is required to identify knowledge and skills at each grade level and to measure student progress, including reading, writing and mathematics. These actions reflect the approach in which the state sets down certain general requirements but allows the districts full authority over the design of the instruments and tools to comply with the state mandates. Current policy deliberations center on increased state insistence that local control be exercised in student performance areas and taking necessary action to assure achievement.

Current state priorities for improvement include a review of both the state goals for learning, and the state standards for schools. Plans are underway to modify the state accreditation system to focus primarily on school improvement with most compliance reviews conducted by exception. In addition, efforts have begun to reexamine science and social studies curriculum as the basis for further work in state and local assessment.

Statewide efforts continue in the development of improved teacher education in preservice, at induction and for continued professional development. Primary efforts have been to encourage teacher education

curriculum to be focused on teacher- and school-based needs, to provide support systems for teachers new to positions and to examine the desirability and feasibility of a fifth year internship.

### Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania school improvement program is a broad-based, comprehensive program requiring the development of a long-range plan for school improvement at both the district and building levels. The plan is designed to cover a five-year period and is structured around school practices in five major areas: education programs and services, district management, personnel development, community/staff involvement and nondistrict support services. Districts assess current conditions and programs, identify key areas for improvement and develop plans to make those improvements. Goals and services should be closely aligned with the state's 12 quality goals of education which suggest student outcomes and competencies.

Each district's long-range plan requires evaluation at two junctures -- a midpoint progress report and an end-of-cycle evaluation report. The final report may be used by the district to apply for "registration," a department process culminating in formal recognition of the district's efforts. This process assists the department in publicly recognizing that the major outcomes of school improvement -- (1) increased growth in student achievement, (2) a systematic approach to district management and (3) effective use of community and nondistrict resources -- have been accomplished. Additionally, when districts enter the school improvement process, \$1.00 per child is awarded to the district to help offset the costs of long-range planning preparation.

The department of education has prepared a series of guides to assist districts in each phase of plan development and uses some 150 staff volunteers as field representatives to participating districts in brokering services of the department and facilitating the completion of the long-range plan. It has also organized a large percentage of its personnel and technology resources as a department technical assistance system. This has been combined with technical assistance from intermediate units and a "pairing relationship" process with institutions of higher education. Additionally, the department maintains a resource system to provide instructional and training materials, a personnel file, a data bank and descriptions of effective projects.

## Rhode Island

The Rhode Island approach to school improvement has as its focal point an "umbrella" program called the Basic Education Program. It was initiated two years ago as an effort to describe the basic curriculum and support programs that should be available to each student. More recently, by legislative mandate, the department of education was required to develop such a manual for local district use. The manual is in the final phases of development and public hearings will take place in the fall of 1983. The final manual will be used as regulations, and approval of schools' programs will be tied to these regulations.

Several other school improvement activities will be incorporated into the Basic Education Program. These include the Local Planning and Assessment Process, which is a long-range effort at school improvement activities that involves educators, students and the community in planning, implementing and evaluating education programs in the local district. The department of education focuses its technical assistance efforts on capacity-building by offering a test item bank, a state developed model reading program, written guides and manuals, and other technical services. Also to be incorporated is the coordinated curriculum project, which is designed to assist school districts assess the degree to which their curriculum is coordinated, and to make improvements based on this assessment.

The Rhode Island State Facilitator Center also provides literature, conferences, workshops and training to schools wishing to adapt or adopt National Diffusion Network programs.

Student testing is on a sample district basis. A norm-referenced test is given in grades 4, 6 and 8 in reading, mathematics, language and work study skills. A life skills test, which measures the ability to apply these basic skills, is given in grades 8 and 10. The results of these tests provide a statewide picture of student progress for the department of education and are used as a guide for state policy decision making.

A standing committee of local school district and postsecondary education personnel, entitled the Joint Committee on School and College Articulation, began to address cooperation and coordination between high school and postsecondary education. As a result, regulations in the following areas were adopted: (1) communication mechanisms between the education levels; (2) increased

course requirements if students are college bound; (3) requirements that schools specify and measure competencies for graduation; (4) better programs and policies for concurrent enrollment; and (5) requirements that postsecondary institutions specify course and competency requirements for entrance to the institution.

### South Carolina

South Carolina is focusing its education improvement efforts on student assessment and a new effective schools program. The Education Finance Act of 1977 mandated the establishment of school level citizens advisory councils for the purpose of providing input into the school planning process. Additionally, the Finance Act requires that school districts participate in the statewide testing program as prescribed by the state board of education. The required program involves the administration of a standardized norm-referenced achievement battery in grades 4, 7 and 10.

The Basic Skills Assessment Act, enacted in 1978, required the establishment of common curriculum objectives in reading, mathematics and writing in grades K-12. The legislation also established a state Basic Skills Advisory Commission and mandated a readiness test at the beginning of grade 1; criterion-referenced tests in reading and mathematics at the end of grades 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 and 11; and writing tests in grades 6, 8 and 11. The test results are used for evaluating student progress toward meeting the curriculum objectives and for identifying students needing remedial assistance.

The effective schools program utilized these two preceding efforts as the initial step in developing a pilot program in five districts in 1982. The objective of the program is to develop seven characteristics of effective schools, as identified in the effective schools research. Results are now being evaluated and the program is expected to expand to additional districts in 1983-84. Using existing state and district money, the department of education will assist schools to identify their strong and weak areas, using tests score results as the main criteria or by focusing on any area which the school feels needs strengthening and in implementing effective schools components. The department is using the "Indicators of Quality Schools" diagnostic instrument developed by Colorado.

The department of education is now developing an Assessment Center Program based on the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASPP) project. The primary purpose of the program is to

improve the quality of education leaders at the school building level. Operated by the department of education, the program will assist districts and schools in the selection of school principals, with an emphasis on management and administrative skills. Each candidate will be evaluated by assessors who have been trained by NASSP and will begin assessing potential principals in the 1983-84 school year.

#### South Dakota

South Dakota began a series of new efforts over the past few years that focus on effective schools, and curriculum and leadership development. The current Local Field Site Program, sponsored by state, Chapter 2 and some local funds, is designed to address a wide range of school improvement priorities. Participating schools utilize the research on effective schools as it relates to curriculum and instruction, parent and community support, decision making, organization and management, and staffing and staff development. These efforts are geared toward in-depth development and take place throughout the year with concentrated work during the summer. Curriculum guides and standards of excellence are available to all schools to use in local curriculum development.

Statewide leadership development efforts are also addressed through 12 regional workshops that are planned and implemented by local planning committees in conjunction with permissive legislation for two inservice days as part of the school calendar. In addition, eight special education cooperatives have been formed so that local school districts can meet priority needs of schools that participate in the cooperatives. South Dakota has also expanded the technology-in-education initiative.

#### Tennessee

The governor has proposed the comprehensive Better Schools Program to the legislature and has asked for a one-cent sales tax increase to implement it. The proposal is an effort to integrate many programs already in place and to create new ones that will promote an improved and effective education system in the state. The program consists of 10 major initiatives: (1) a teacher designed basic skills curriculum, (2) a computer skills curriculum for 7th and 8th grade students, (3) kindergarten for all children, (4) increased mathematics and science credits for high school graduation, (5) special summer schools for gifted junior and senior high

school students, (6) alternative schools for students who disrupt class, (7) a redefined secondary vocational education curriculum, (8) realignment of vocational and technical institute governance under the state board of regents, (9) create centers of excellence at universities to support teaching and research, and (10) development of master teacher and master administrator programs. This last initiative is an incentive pay system for teachers and administrators to attract and retain the best teaching professionals.

In November 1981, as part of a state department of education reorganization, nine district service centers began to function as technical assistance teams providing services to local school systems. This leadership role reflected an effort to bring resources closer to the system and school levels. The centers have no monitoring or regulatory functions; three separate regional teams function in that capacity. The creation of these centers occurred simultaneously with the development of a set of statewide school improvement strategies and requirements. First, all systems are required to develop annually a school improvement plan. These plans must include system efforts to improve instruction as they relate to curriculum, staff development and community/parent involvement. Second, in 1979 the legislature and state board of education mandated that teacher inservice education programs should be part of, and directly related to, the overall system plan. Third, Basic Skills First, a curriculum program identifying basic skills in reading and mathematics for grades 1-8 was developed by teachers and is now available to all schools. Mastery tests are provided to measure pupil progress, an inservice training program was developed to implement this systematic approach to basic skills instruction, and a computer managed instruction program was written to be used as a record-keeping aid for teachers. Additionally, the Computer Skills Next program, which will require computer literacy instruction in grades 7 and 8, is being piloted in 14 school systems. Fourth, various advisory committees have been formed to study evaluation plans as required by the state board of education, and statewide and local school system testing programs. These committees are composed of staff from the state department of education, local school systems and institutions of higher education.

A commissioner's discretionary fund using state dollars has been made available to assist schools in curriculum improvement and instruction based on needs identified in the instructional improvement plan, inservice plan or local needs assessment. These grants may be used, for example, to acquire consultants to work with the local

school in curriculum improvement activities, for assistance in implementing a school or classroom 'improvement' model, for assistance in planning and evaluating curriculum. A project to provide incentives for school improvement, the Incentive Funding Project, is being piloted in 12 school systems. Incentive awards are based on measured gains of student proficiency or percentage of students performing above a certain level and are given to the school to be distributed as determined by the school faculty.

#### Texas

In Texas, school improvement activities have been closely tied with revised accreditation standards that were established for the 1977-78 school year. Based on the belief that accreditation could assure responsive educational improvement, the state requires school districts to submit a five-year plan identifying their education needs and program priorities. Each district that has grades K-12 must offer a well-balanced curriculum that includes English and other languages, mathematics, science, health, physical education, fine arts, social studies, economics (with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits), business and vocational education, and Texas and U.S. history. The state board of education is in the process of defining the essential elements for each of the subject areas and determining the grade levels at which the essential elements will be taught. The elements will provide an essential core curriculum for all 1100 school districts in the state. Implementation will begin with the 1984-85 school year. The Texas Education Agency will monitor these efforts and offer technical assistance primarily through 20 education service centers. These centers aid the districts in meeting the accreditation requirements by teaching districts how to assess their programs and curriculum problems and how to solve them.

In addition, the Agency has implemented the Basic Skills Project to assist low-achieving districts in improving the delivery of instruction. The project is based on certain premises: (1) the classroom teacher is the basic unit for delivery of instruction; (2) supportive personnel are responsible to the classroom teacher; and (3) the principal has the overall responsibility to provide instructional leadership. Using the effective schools and teaching research, effective school practices have been identified -- materials, resources, training and funding are made available to the education service centers to provide assistance to these districts.

In the 1984-85 school year the state will initiate a special pilot project to train elementary and middle school principals. This project will focus on management instruction, the evaluation and counseling of teachers, and the management of time. Further, pilot projects in mathematics and science teaching have been directed by the 68th Legislature and will be conducted during the 1984-85 biennium.

A student competency test is administered for basic skills assessment purposes in grades 3, 5 and 9 in the subject areas of reading, mathematics and composition.

### Utah

The Utah school improvement initiative has a curriculum focus. It is based on the State Curriculum Framework, a model for curriculum development that grew out of a comprehensive study conducted in the late 1960s involving educators, students and citizens in the identification of goals for education. The model outlines the procedure for using the content of each subject area as a vehicle for acquiring life-coping skills, rather than emphasizing the content knowledge in specific subject areas as an end in itself. Department curriculum specialists work with the local districts to help them develop a course of study, objectives and guidelines, inservice activities and assessment strategies. The skill areas addressed are: language (reading, writing, speaking, listening), arithmetic, democratic governance, consumerism and problem solving. Local districts are required to develop or select student competency tests and set cut-off scores in these five skill areas. The tests are used as a high school graduation requirement and for identifying students needing remediation. Grade levels tested are determined by local districts.

The state board of education is currently reviewing high school graduation requirements and curriculum expectations for elementary, junior high and middle schools. This effort has been stimulated by recent reports such as "A Nation at Risk." The review is expected to be completed by October 1983 and it is anticipated that high school graduation requirements and other curriculum expectations will be increased.

Nearly \$1 million was awarded to local districts during the 1982-83 school year to support state board of education initiatives in the areas of productivity studies, technology projects and inservice activities for principals and mathematics teachers.

## Vermont

Over the past few years, several school improvement initiatives have begun in Vermont including new school approval standards to be implemented in the fall of 1984, dissemination programs, and an ongoing process of assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Vermont schools. A mandated, ongoing program in student basic competency testing in the local schools is now in its sixth year, with students being tested in reading, writing, listening, mathematics and reasoning. In the past year a department reorganization has created five regional technical assistance teams. Curriculum consultants within the department have been assigned to provide curriculum assistance to districts and to provide a link between the department and the local districts.

Using funding from the state, the University of Vermont and local school districts, the effective schools research from both the national base and the locally-developed base is beginning to be implemented in many districts. With the initiative coming from the districts, teams are sent to a School Improvement Institute, a combined effort of the department of education and the University of Vermont to be trained in implementing effective practices. The program has been in place for three years and, often, district personnel who have been implementing a successful effective schools project will conduct the workshops.

The department of education also offers three successful dissemination/adoption assistance programs for Vermont educators. Since 1974, the Resource Agent Program has been operating as a way to disseminate successful education practices. Administered through the department of education, teachers and administrators who have developed a special activity, program, method or skill that has been successfully tested, are given special workshop training, then become available to offer support, in the form of school-site visits and workshops, to schools that are in the process of developing an idea into an effective education practice. The department also provides a Vermont-developed collection of education resources to all educators. The Vermont Educational Research Base serves a collection and linkage function, and materials include practices, products, methods and classroom techniques, and human resources that have originated and been developed in the state. Last, the ERIC data base provides access to numerous education programs, practices, exemplary programs and research.

## Virginia

Virginia's school improvement efforts have their basis in a constitutional mandate called the Standards of Quality. Begun in 1972, the standards are revised every two years by the general assembly. Schools are monitored for compliance with the state-mandated Standards of Quality: basic skills, career preparation, special education, gifted and talented, alternative education, responsible student conduct, personnel, staff preparation and development, testing and measurement, accreditation and school evaluation, planning and public involvement, and policy manuals. In addition, the state school funding formula is tied directly to these standards.

Under the Standards of Quality, criterion-referenced tests are required in grades 1-6 to measure the progress of students in achieving basic skills. Learning objectives have been or are being developed in language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, social studies, health and physical education, and other subjects. State-designed assessment tests in language arts and mathematics will be field-tested in 1983-84. Additionally, norm-referenced tests are administered statewide in grades 4, 8 and 11; minimum competency tests also are required for high school graduation.

More rigorous accreditation standards, effective in 1984-85, will increase the number of units required for high school graduation from 18 to 20, including 2 units of math, 2 of science, and 1 unit of either mathematics or science. An optional "advanced studies" program will require 22 units of credit for graduation, including 3 units each in mathematics and science, and 3 units in a foreign language. Other requirements call for more demanding instructional programs in the schools, stronger instructional leadership in school and classroom, and greater involvement in education on the part of parents, business leaders and other citizens.

A recently launched Rural School Effectiveness Project, serving 22 school divisions with a total of about 61,000 students, is intended to help small localities implement research on effective schools and teaching, and strengthen instructional programs in rural schools. During the 1983-84 school year, teams of educators, composed of department of education staff members and college and university personnel, will serve as consultants to the school divisions.

## Washington

The Basic Education Act of 1977, which was the programmatic complement to the 1977 school finance reform bill, requires all local school districts to develop curriculum options and student assessment procedures and specifies programmatic requirements districts must meet as a condition to receive state funds. A student learning objectives law specifies that districts must establish student learning objectives in all subject areas in every grade, and that achievement assessments must be made annually. The state monitors 10% of the schools each year for compliance. The process of curriculum development involves parent, teacher and administrator committees in an effort to encourage parental participation and support of student academic efforts. Statewide workshops for parents and administrators provide strategies for helping parents participate in their child's academic experience.

In 1978, a Task Force for School Accreditation developed alternative accreditation procedures to address program improvement and the new, voluntary K-12 accreditation program has been in place since the 1981-82 school year. Although schools and districts may still become accredited through "standards-only" procedures, the new procedures provide a method of establishing a locally-initiated improvement plan. Schools may opt to initiate a self-study (requiring extensive staff and community involvement) to develop a needs assessment profile and, using the assessment results, establish an instructional improvement plan. The department of education approves the plan, provides orientation and inservice training activities, and other technical assistance to schools who are developing plans. An extensive set of resource materials is provided by the department for help in developing process and outcome models.

A state capacity-building/dissemination project is now in its fourth year, providing research results, model programs and other information to staff of the state agency, the nine educational service districts and local school districts. The project, financed largely from state funds, coordinates information from the Washington Library Network, labs and centers, as well as conducting computer searches on request.

The department of public instruction has conducted an extensive statewide survey in an attempt to pinpoint citizen and educator concerns about education. Three high priority areas were identified -- oral and written communication, student motivation and discipline, and computer technology. A task force in each area has been

formed to develop programs and suggest alternative state policies in the priority areas. A major study of discipline in the schools has been conducted, the results of which will be available in the fall of the 1983-84 school year.

### West Virginia

A Master Plan for Public Education was developed by an advisory committee of laymen and professionals appointed by the West Virginia Board of Education, which approved the plan in January 1983. The state supreme court, which had overturned the school finance system of the state, had mandated a document with high quality educational standards and facilities and for an equitable method of financing the public schools of West Virginia. The plan, to be reviewed and updated every four years, identifies and describes the elements of a thorough and efficient system of education as (1) high quality educational programs and services; (2) required administrative and instructional practices, personnel, facilities, and materials, supplies and equipment; (3) possible methods of fundings; and (4) accountability measures needed to assure the public that a thorough and efficient system of education is being provided students enrolled in the public schools of West Virginia. Also in 1983, the state legislature provided \$750,000 to establish a microcomputer network for 17 public vocational schools. This amount will be supplemented with \$600,000 of Appalachia Regional Commission funds. The computer network is designed so that it can be expanded to include additional vocational schools and can also be used for regular and special education instructional programs.

Legislation was passed in 1981 requiring the West Virginia Department of Education to develop minimum standards for quality education and requiring each school district to develop an annual plan for school improvement that addresses locally identified needs. The department will review plans annually. Every fourth year, an on-site review will be conducted to verify compliance with the standards and to review the district's school improvement plan. This review will determine the district status for each county -- full approval, substantial full approval, probation, nonapproval. Technical assistance will be provided for remediation if necessary. Each district must also set aside three noninstructional days each school year for continuing education activities. Each district must establish a continuing education council to assess needs and to write a district plan that will be reviewed by the department of education.

In the area of curriculum, West Virginia has initiated or has completed: specification of learning outcomes and learning objectives for all content areas in early childhood, middle childhood and adolescent education; development, implementation and evaluation of competency-based staff development packages in reading; replication and evaluation of the Stallings classroom management model; replication, implementation and evaluation of Teacher Expectations Student Achievement project (TESA); design, development, implementation and evaluation of a computer-assisted mathematics laboratory; design, development, implementation and evaluation of a Chicago mastery learning project in reading; design and implementation of systematic model for staff development packages in curriculum development; design of a competency-based staff development package for the implementation of new curriculum in the content areas; initiation of the development of an education program development model that brings together special and regular educators for the benefit of exceptional children; design and implementation of a statewide computerized textbook adoption and use reporting system; implementation of a supervised entry level guidance program (fifth year on-site supervision); development of objective-referenced tests based on reading learning outcomes and learning objectives; and implementation of a statewide model for competency-based staff development.

#### Wisconsin

Wisconsin's education improvement efforts focus on a general school improvement project emphasizing curriculum and student programs. Revised state-developed curriculum guides will be available in 1985. Assistance in the use of the guides will be available through training sessions at local sites and at the 12 newly-restructured regional centers. The guides will serve as an important instructional link to student testing.

The voluntary criterion-referenced testing program in reading, mathematics and language arts is administered at three grade levels in grades 1-10. Using the curriculum guides and a state-provided test item bank as a base, schools may choose a state-developed test, buy a commercially developed test or develop their own test. The results of the test are used for planning and evaluation in the local districts. The second testing

program is a pupil assessment in grades 4-12. The results are used for statewide measures of student performance.

### Wyoming

Wyoming's school improvement efforts focus largely on a brokering system of assistance to local districts and staff development. The department of education has created 10 state regions and assigned department staff to work with the districts in all areas of education.

Although curriculum development is a local district activity, the department requires a needs assessment from each district indicating what the local needs are and a long-range plan indicating how they will address those needs. Districts may use a state-developed model of assessment or develop their own model. The assessment and plan are part of Wyoming's accreditation standards. In the spring of 1984, the department will be administering the NAEP assessment instrument in reading and writing to 9-, 11-, and 17-year-olds. The results will be reported to the superintendent and used for planning purposes within the department.

Additionally, the department of education underwrites administrator's workshops throughout the year. These workshops are presented by department staff, outside consultants and local district staff.

In the summer of 1983, the superintendent of public instruction created a blue ribbon panel comprised of education and business leaders to assess the quality and goals of education in the state. Among issues to be addressed are: state expectations of education, business/education alliances and boundary issues between secondary and postsecondary education. It is expected that the first report will be available in 1984.

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