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ABSTRACT
                 This report constitutes proceedings of a seminar held
in Portland, Oregon (September 1983), by representatives of 15 state
education agencies, conceived as a forum for exploring state-level
policy and program options. Four topical areas were the subject of
speaker presentations: "The Effective Schooling Research Base," by
Ronald M. Smith (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) Goal
Based Education Program); "Making Improvements Work: Advice from
Research on Change," by Dr. Pat Cox (The NETWORK, Inc.); "Moving
Toward Excellence: Recommendations from Reports on Schooling," by Dr.
Robert E. Blum (NWREL Goal Based Education Program); and "Moving
Toward Excellence: States Take Leadership," by Robert Van Slyke
(Alaska Department of Education). Discussions were also held,
focusing on specific questions and guided by a designated facilitator
who recorded and reported key discussion results. These include "The
Research Base: Perspectives from the States" (applicability of
research to school improvement efforts, laws, policies, and
regulations at the state level); "School Improvement: Approaches and
Policies"; "Moving Toward Excellence: Perspectives on Excellence"
(how states are meeting the challenge of recommendations from
national reports); "Moving Toward Excellence: Advice on Policy"; and
"Moving Toward Excellence: Networking among States for School
Improvement." In some cases, contradictory approaches to these issues
emerged from the discussions; these are included to assure
representation of all viewpoints. (TE)

From Effectiveness to Excellence: State School Improvement Policies and Programs

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Goal Based Education Program

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From Effectiveness to Excellence: State School Improvement Policies and Programs

Representatives of 15 state education agencies (SEAs) met in Portland, Oregon, September 12 and 13, 1983, to participate in the two-day seminar, "From Effectiveness to Excellence: State School Improvement Policies and Programs." The seminar, sponsored by the Goal Based Education (GBE) Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), was designed to provide a forum for the exploration of policy and program options in school improvements at the state level.

To fulfill this purpose, SEA representatives heard presentations and participated in discussions about key elements related to school improvement, including: 1) the effective schooling research, 2) the research on change from the state perspective, 3) recommendations for school improvement and 4) the relationships among research, policy and programs. During the course of the seminar, the effective schooling research was compared with recommendations of recent national reports on education, and the need for networking among SEA personnel responsible for state level school improvement programs was discussed.

Participants in the invitational seminar were selected by the GBE Program to include representatives of states in the NWREL region and others outside the region which have successfully undertaken statewide school improvments. Selections were based, in part, on reports of state programs included in the Education Commission of the State's publication State Program of School Improvement: A 50-State Survey (Odden and Van Dougherty, Report No. 182-3, August 1982).

The overall approach taken in the seminar was to stimulate and record interactions among participants on key topics related to state level school improvements. Four topical areas were the subject of speaker presentations:

o   "The Effective Schooling Research Base," presented by Ronald M. Smith, NWREL Goal Based Education Program.

o   "Making Improvements Work: Advice from Research on Change," presented by Dr. Pat Cox, The Network, Inc..

o   "Moving Toward Excellence: Recommendations from Reports on Schooling," presented by Dr. Robert E. Blum, NWREL Goal Based Education Program.

o   "Moving Toward Excellence: States Take Leadership," presented by Robert Van Slyke, Alaska Department of Education.

Alternating with presentations, participants met in small groups to discuss their reactions and related topics. Each discussion period focused on specific questions and was guided by a designated facilitator who recorded and reported key discussion results. Discussion topics and highlights included:

o   "The Research Base: Perspectives from the States"

Applicability of the research to state school improvement efforts; the relationship of the research to laws, policies and/or regulations used in state level educational programs.

o.   "School Improvement: Approaches and Policies"

State level strategies for local school improvement and for guaranteeing quality in education; influences of the change research on state level improvement efforts; support for state strategies through laws, policies and/or regulations.

o   "Moving Toward Excellence: Perspectives on Excellence"

. The concepts of excellence and effectiveness; how states are meeting the challenge of recommendations from national reports, seeking to promote quality schooling and moving beyond minimum competency programs.

o   "Moving Toward Excellence: Advice on Policy"

Advice for states which are beginning to explore school improvement; the criteria for judging successes of state school improvement efforts; key factors with high payoffs in school improvements.

o   "Moving Toward Excellence: Networking Among States for School
     Improvement"

     The value of creating and using informational networks among
     personnel at state education agencies who are closely involved
     in state school improvement efforts.

This report constitutes the proceedings of the seminar and takes its form

from the two-day agenda, with presentations and discussion results

alternating in the sequence in which they took place. Much discussion

focused on the appropriateness of state level mandates, the provision of

incentives for local improvements and the support and/or technical

assistance SEAs can provide local education agencies (LEAs). In some

cases, discussion resulted in the identification of concerns or

approaches to issues that may seem contradictory: they are included to

assure that all viewpoints and concerns raised by participants are

represented.

1. THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING RESEARCH BASE

PRESENTATION: Ronald M. Smith

Effective schools are those in which most students reach relatively high levels of achievement and consistently exhibit appropriate social behavior. Specific elements of schools contribute to their overall effectiveness. These elements of effective schooling have been identified through the analysis and synthesis of a broad spectrum of research in schools.

Effective schooling research is characterized by the attempt to measure school effectiveness as defined by student outcome measures: high academic achievement and excellence in student social behavior. Studies emphasize a naturalistic method of inquiry, focusing on collecting data from which to extrapolate effective patterns of behavior and/or specific practices in schools rather than on testing specified theoretical constructs through experimental research. Exceptional cases (highly effective schools) are identified, studied and compared in correlational, quasi-experimental, field-based designs.

Six areas of research contribute to the effective schooling research and development knowledge base: school effects research, teacher effects research, research on instructional leadership, research on curriculum alignment, research on program coupling and implementation research. The relative sizes of these areas and the relationships among them in the creation of the research base are demonstrated below:

Relations Among the Parts of the

Effective Schooling Knowledge Base

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL EFFECTS

PROGRAM
COUPLING

IMPLEMENTATION
RESEARCH

5

3

1

6

CURRICULUM
ALIGNMENT

4

TEACHER
EFFECTS

2

10

6
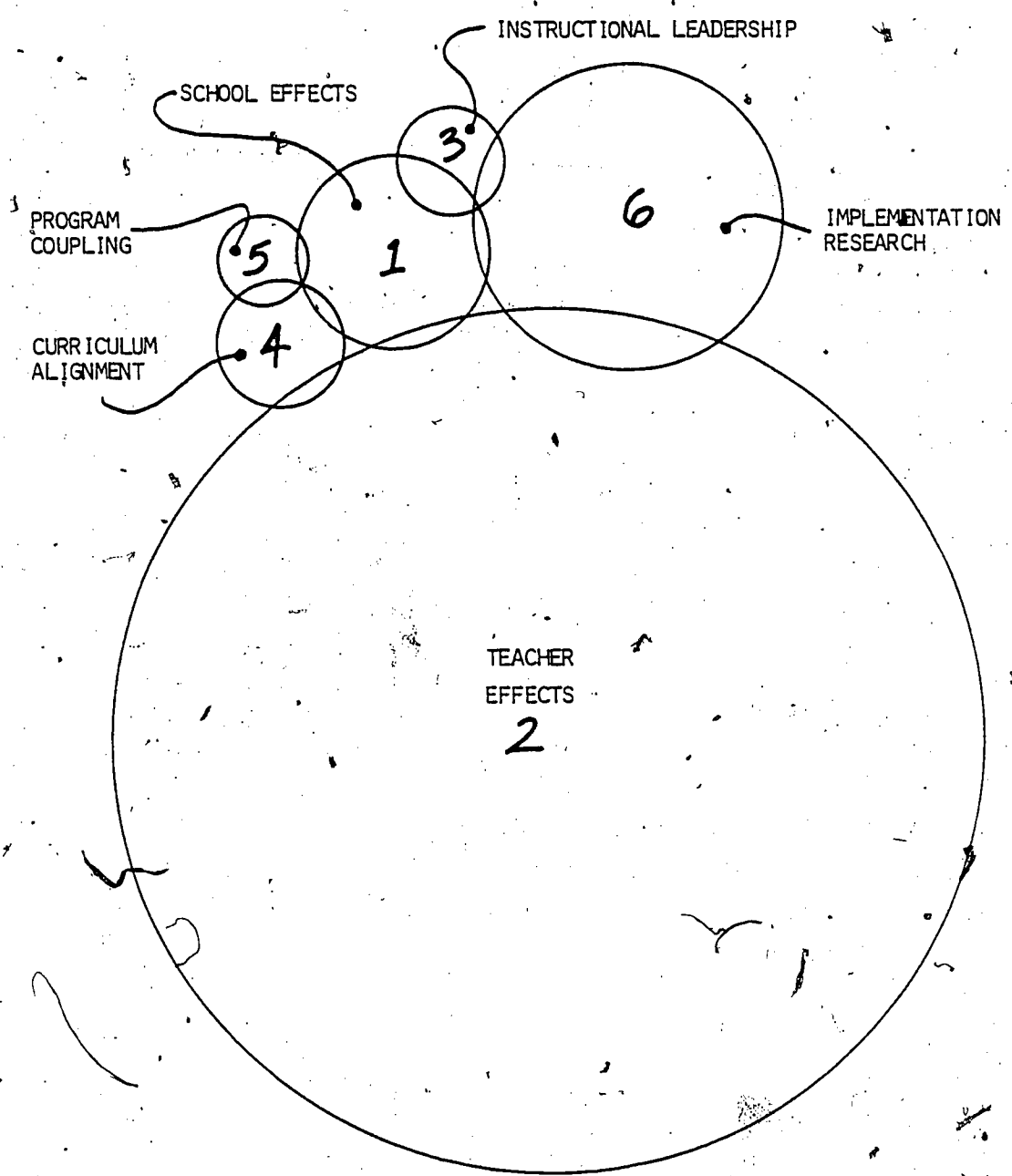
School Effects Research: The whole school is the unit of research analysis. Effectiveness is defined in terms of student outcomes. The most successful and least successful schools in terms of student outcomes are identified and studied, contrasting the two extremes of successfulness to identify characteristics and practices associated with effectiveness. Questionnaire and interview are the primary data collection methods. Important researchers in this area include Austin, Brookover, Edmonds, Lezotte, Madden, Rutter, Venezky/Windfield and Weber.

Findings from the school effects research indicate that in effective schools, (1) there are high expectations for student achievement; (2) clear goals and objectives for student learning are known by all; (3) firm, consistent discipline is practiced; (4) there are high expectations for the quality of instruction; (5) school time is used for learning; (6) excellence in student achievement and teacher effectiveness are recognized and rewarded and (7) options exist for parent involvement, especially in support of the instructional program.

Teacher Effects Research: The teacher in the classroom is the unit of analysis. With effectiveness defined in terms of student outcomes, classroom teachers are identified whose students make greatest gains in academic achievement or improved social behavior. Both correlational and experimental methods are used, with data collection primarily through observation, interview and questionnaires. Practices used by teachers whose students have relatively high outcomes become the basis for statements about effective teaching. Important researchers in this area include Berliner, Brophy, Emmer, Evertson, Good, Rosenshine and Stallings.

Teacher effects research indicates that effective teachers (1) set clear rules and teach them at the beginning of the year or course; (2) provide clear routines and procedures; (3) use specific, fair consequences and follow through consistently when handling discipline; (4) monitor student work closely; (5) hold high expectations for student achievement; (6) structure learning experiences for students; (7) give detailed and more

redundant instructions and explanations; (8) check frequently for student understanding and reteach as necessary; (9) provide activities, questions and exercises that result in high student success rate and (10) set and maintain a brisk instructional pace.

Research on Instructional Leadership: Studies focus on the principal as instructional leader. Survey and interview methods are used, with observational studies becoming more frequent. Only in the school effects studies have principal actions been directly connected to measurements of effectiveness. Studies of leadership include those by CEPM, FWL/Bossert, Leithwood, Willower and the Wisconsin R & D Center/Lipham. According to research findings, effective instructional leaders (1) establish curriculum; (2) allocate/protect instructional time; (3) maintain order; (4) monitor student achievement and behavior; (5) maintain incentives and rewards for students and teachers; (6) allocate resources according to instructional priorities; (7) coordinate parent involvement; (8) motivate staff and establish/maintain teaching focus and (9) stimulate and lead improvement efforts.

Curriculum Alignment Research: Studies focus on relationships among learning goals, teaching resources, instructional activities and assessments. Most evidence is derived from meta-analysis of research and program evaluation which discloses practices related to the effective organization and management of curriculum and assessment. Researchers include the SWRL/Los Angeles Unified School District collaboration and Cohen. Curriculum alignment research findings indicate that effective schools characteristically (1) specify and document learning goals, instruction and assessment and (2) match precisely instruction, assessments and learning goals.

Research on Program Coupling: This small research base draws findings mainly from studies of general school organization and of school effects which focus on the relationships among classroom, building and district levels of program organization. These studies disclose practices related

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to organizational expectations, policies, support and resources. Researchers include Baldridge, Carnine and Weick. Program coupling research findings indicate that in effective schools. (1) goal structures, assessment efforts and information flow are more unified among levels; (2) policies and procedures are more integrated across levels; (3) support is more focused at the classroom level, and on priority learning outcomes and (3) the targeting of resources by matching them to priority instructional goals is more common.

Implementation Research: Studies focus on successful implementation/ change efforts to identify conditions and practices that promote significant, durable changes in educational programs. Knowledge sources include evaluation of large-scale federal programs, curricular projects and locally-developed innovations. Researchers in this area include ABT Associates, Berman/McLaughlin, Cheever/Neill/Quinn, Fullian, Hall/Alford, Hall/Loucks and The NETWORK, Inc. Characteristics of successful change/implementation efforts include (1) improvement efforts that meet local needs; (2) involvement of persons asked to alter practice in all phases of improvement design/planning; (3) visible results, often in the short run; (4) principal support of the effort; (5) an optimal improvement focus which seems to be at the building level; (6) staff development focused on skill development; (7) explicit management and monitoring of improvement efforts; (8) allocation of local resources for the improvement and (9) institutionalization of the orientation toward change/improvement.

There is a great degree of variance among the six areas of research in terms of number, breadth and scope of completed studies. Because of this variance, areas of research have been categorized by the degree of confidence in the quality of the recommendations derived from research results. Those ratings are:

School Effects Research:	Moderately firm confidence in results
Teacher Effects Research:	Firm confidence in results

Research on Instructional Leadership:	Moderately speculative results
Curriculum Alignment Research:	Moderately speculative results
Research on Program Coupling:	Speculative results
Implementation Research:	Moderately firm confidence in results

PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION: "Research Base - Perspectives from the States"

Participants discussed the nature of the research that is/should be used in state level school improvement efforts; the ways research is/should be used; and laws, policies and/or regulations which have grown/should grow from the research base.

A. Nature of the Research

The effective schooling research provides a valuable data base to support both established and new state level school improvement efforts. Participants cited the teacher effects, school effects, instructional leadership and implementation research as being particularly useful in state level improvement efforts. In many cases, states are focusing on one area of research as they move toward priority school improvement goals.

State representatives also expressed a number of issues and concerns that should be considered in using the research and in the continuation of studies to increase the research base:

o   The research should be used in an integrated fashion because each research area influences or affects others. A "holistic" approach to applications of effective schooling research is recommended.

o   While the major focus has been on school effects and teacher effects research in state level school improvement efforts, states are increasingly interested in the implementation research. There is need for further information about how to implement the knowledge base: how to move from research findings to implementation of "effective practice."

o   There is lack of clarity about what actually constitutes effective practice in schools, and there is concern about how to communicate about effective practice with local schools and districts. The processes of research-based improvement are, as well, difficult to communicate.

o   The research does not appear to take into account "futures" research: how will schools be required to respond to prospective changes in the society as pictured in this research.

o   There is need for further research to clarify the appropriate and most effective role of the states in effective schooling.

B.   Uses of the Research

Participating state education agencies are making use of the effective schooling research in a variety of ways. Efforts seem to be concentrated on assisting in the implementation of research findings at the local district and school levels, whether through technical assistance programs or training programs for local staff. In many states, local control of improvements is an important issue. For some states, the effective schooling research creates a common language and provides a valuable framework that can be used to focus school improvement efforts.

Examples of SEA applications of the research include:

o   Provision of technical assistance to school districts, upon
      request, to help them achieve local school improvement
      goals. Areas of assistance include goal identification,
      staff development and the establishment of cooperative
      relationships among higher education, local schools and
      central office administrations.

o   Training programs to familiarize school level personnel
      with the content of the research and the processes
      necessary to implement research results, often involving
      the creation of "teams" (administrators, principals,
      teachers) to spearhead improvement efforts.

o   Requiring districts to develop profiles of schools to
      identify local improvement needs.

o   Development of models of effective instruction and the
      testing of hypotheses through special projects, often
      working with clusters of schools. This indicates a shift
      from short-term to long-term approach to improvement
      efforts.

o   Creating information-sharing networks and/or brokering
      information to provide a means whereby schools can exchange
      data about successful school improvements.

o   Emphasis on the development of the principal as
      instructional leader, with the focus shifting from a
      management to leadership role.

o   Identification of school improvement priorities which may
      be used as criteria for funding discretionary programs.

o   Focus on the areas of curriculum and instruction as
     priorities for school improvement.

o   Use of the effective schooling research to generate
     interest in and commitment to school improvement in times
     of fiscal retrenchment.

C. Laws, Policies and/or Regulations

In many states, boards of education and/or legislatures have adopted
or are considering policies, laws and/or regulations governing
educational programs. This type of activity is increasing in some
states in response to the intense focus on education created by such
recent reports as A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational
Reform (U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., April 1983).
Participants identified the effects of such mandates and considered
ways that laws, policies and/or regulations can contribute to
statewide school improvement efforts.

o   Policies set by state boards of education can give explicit
     direction to SEAs for school improvement priorities. A
     policy calling for overall school improvement, for example,
     might be more useful than specific rules or regulations
     about the content of the curriculum. In one state,
     professional development for instructional staff has been
     identified as high priority through policy rather than by a
     prescriptive mandate.

o   Existing laws can be used to leverage school improvement or
     can be counterproductive. Changes in certification of
     principals as instructional leaders and changes in teacher
     training programs to reflect new knowledge about school
     effectiveness can support school improvements. Laws
     affecting funding patterns, governance structures and

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procedures for board/school interactions can have a
negative effect. One state undertook a study to discover
whether laws, policies and regulations were inhibiting
factors to school improvment efforts and discovered that
this was not the case.

o. There is concern that the proliferation of new laws and
regulations could force schools to "reinvent the wheel"
rather than allow them to complete school improvement
processes based on the effective schooling research.
Current school improvement efforts may be threatened by or
placed in a "tug-of-war" with recommendations from national
reports on education. States should be cautious in
enacting new legislation.

o As states move toward more controls for education, it
becomes even more critical to communicate effectively with
legislators. There is a need to translate research into
statements describing successful, effective schools for use
by and benefit of legislators.

2. MAKING IMPROVEMENTS WORK: ADVICE FROM
RESEARCH ON CHANGE

PRESENTATION: Dr. Pat Cox

Research is now drawing a coherent, comprehensive picture of the actual
implementation of change in education. The elements of change which have
been studied individually--settings for innovations, various types of
assisters and the stages of the change process--are now being considered
together. Three different aspects of implementation research are of
particular interest to state education agencies: A) what is known about
implementation in local schools; B) what is known about school
improvement efforts in state education; and C) what state education
agencies can do to foster school improvement at the local level.

These aspects were considered in the Study of Dissemination Efforts
Supporting School Improvement (DESSI) conducted by The NETWORK, Inc., in
collaboration with several other organizations. This study looked at the
processes of change in 146 schools in 10 states which had adopted or
developed new practices through one of four different programs: 1) The
National Diffusion Network (including Title I); 2) state-administered
dissemination programs; 3) the Title IV-C local development program; and
4) the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now Office of Special
Education) marketing program, which funds curriculum development for
special education, the products of which are distributed through private
publishers.

The DESSI Study included interviews with teachers using innovations,
administrators in the schools and districts and external assisters. Data
were also collected from federal personnel involved with the four
programs and with dissemination efforts generally. In addition, state
education agency staff were consulted extensively in the 10 study states
about dissemination and school improvement activities. Research on
various elements of change in education was also considered in completing
the study.

A. Local School Implementation

Specific factors or "Ingredients for Improvement" contribute to the
successful adoption or development of new practices, according to the
DESSI study:

1. Identified needs: Understanding what elements are lacking or
    needed and what elements are in place (previous experience,
    capabilities) that are necessary for implementing the
    improvement. The amount of change in current teaching practice
    needed during implementation of a particular new practice is
    related to the amount of assistance and support necessary:
    sustained assistance is more crucial for teachers making major
    changes than for teachers making minor changes.

2. Identifiable practices: New curricula or instructional
    strategies that are carefully developed, well-defined and
    determined to be effective.

3. Implementation assistance: In-person assistance focused on the
    specifics of actually performing the practice. External
    assisters (state personnel, program consultants) and local
    facilitators (district office program directors, specialists)
    can provide assistance that is geared to users' concerns and
    levels of mastery.

4. Involved and forceful leadership: A leader who sets the new
    practice as a priority, acquires resources, provides access to
    assistance, facilitates good school climate and makes time for
    teachers to use the new practice. Often the principal, the
    leader emphasizes utilization of the new practice, encourages
    teacher initiative, and maintains fidelity to the original
    blueprint for the practice which is important to making
    substantive change. The DESSI Study showed that teachers'

commitment or ownership of a new practice often develops <u>after</u>
they have experience working with it. With support for change
efforts, results begin to develop which leads to commitment
and/or ownership.

5. <u>Institutionalization</u>: Assuring the survival of the new practice
    over time through planning and monitoring implementation:
    whether funds for the practice are a line item in the school
    budget, whether there are mechanisms for training new staff in
    the practice as others leave, etc.

6. <u>Impact</u>: An assessment of the outcomes of the implementation
    effort both in terms of the changes resulting from the new
    practice (student impact, organizational change) and of the
    implementation process itself.

B. <u>School Improvement Efforts in State Education Agencies</u>

State education agencies characteristically perform regulatory
functions (enforcement), administrative functions (sort, compile,
categorize) leadership functions ("carrying the torch") and/or
provide direct services to LEAs. The DESSI Study isolated a number
of factors that influence whether or not state education agencies
become involved in school improvement activities and the nature of
the strategies employed. Factors include the political climate, the
leadership style of the chief state school officer, the SEA's
relationship with local districts and schools, the severity of the
within-state problems confronted, the strength of localist traditions
and the level of available resources. Two patterns of organizational
behavior for SEAs emerge:

1. <u>Maintenance organizations</u>: Agencies which appear oriented
    primarily to preservation of political equilibrium and
    bureaucratic functioning. Characteristics include

relatively placid, undemanding political environments; strong traditions of localism; tight constraints on resources; leaders oriented toward quiet and efficient performance of basic SEA functions; a high priority of preserving harmony (with local districts, with the federal government, within the agency).

2. Development organizations: Agencies which appear to be actively involved in adapting to substantive and political problems through organized school improvement efforts. Characteristics include turbulent, demanding political environments; centralist or weak localist traditions; and adequate if not abundant resources which have attracted activist leaders who develop central school initiatives and coordinate resources and functions across the agency to support the initiative.

A major difference between the two types of SEAs is in the ways they reconcile bureaucratic and political goals (legislators, press, balance budgets, negotiate with superintendents, etc.) with substantive goals (deliver services to school districts, improve basic skills achievement, provide programs for special populations, etc.)? In maintenance SEAs, political and bureaucratic considerations sharply constrain the actions that may be taken to achieve service delivery goals. In development SEAs, the leadership pursues a mixture of political and substantive goals, with bureaucratic considerations viewed as just a means to those ends; and leaders accept some level of disturbance as the inevitable price of responding to new demands on the SEA. These two patterns of behavior affect the actions SEAs can take regarding school improvement.

As SEAs plan, organize and implement school improvements, they experience a change process which requires implementation within the agency itself. The six "Ingredients for Improvement" can be redefined for this internal situation:

1. Identified needs: Knowing the internal needs within the SEA for a school improvement program, particularly what capacities are required and whether those are in place. An SEA that must first address issues of legitimacy and image related to intervention at the school level has further to go--requires more internal change--than an SEA with a history of service and contact with local schools.

2. Identifiable practices (the school improvement plan): A clear plan, with behavior steps for personnel involved, a clear scope and realistic expectations for staff and resources, eliminating the risk of not being able to meet adequately the expectations of LEAs created by the promise of a major program that does not materialize. Many SEA school improvements are too ambitious for the resources and staff available to implement them.

3. Implementation assistance: Orientation and training for SEA staff, depending on the degree of change involved, staff concerns, degrees of mastery. This affects staff interactions with LEAs and LEAs' perceptions of SEA capacity.

4. Involved and forceful leadership: The chief state school officer or other leader (with clout) emphasizes the priority of the initiative, assures financial support and resources, sees that staff are prepared and a timeline developed and generally keeps the effort on track.

5. Institutionalization: Efforts to ensure that the program survives long enough to have impact, both within the SEA and local levels.

6. Impact: Formative evaluation of the school improvement program to assess progress, both within the SEA and at the local level, toward intermediate and ultimate goals of the improvement.

C. <u>What State Education Agencies Can Do To Foster School Improvement At</u>
   <u>The Local Level</u>

   The DESSI Study identified several options available to both types of
   SEAs interested in fostering local level school improvements:

   <u>Maintenance SEAs</u>   o   <u>Non-interference</u>: Setting a tone
                              without planning intervention at the
                              local level, not hampering efforts of
                              other agencies within the state to
                              provide services to schools.

                         o   <u>Enhancement</u>: Facilitate change at the
                              local level through support of other
                              organizations.

                         o   <u>Direct brokerage</u>: Putting schools in
                              touch with resources and services.

   <u>Development SEAs</u>   o   <u>Objectives-focused school improvment</u>
                              <u>programs</u>: Leaders concentrate on
                              addressing particular substantive
                              issues that have been dramatized
                              politically, mandating goals or
                              priorities for local districts while
                              delegating authority to choose the
                              means of achieving those objectives.
                              Districts and schools may decide ways
                              to make the changes necessary to meet
                              defined standards.

                         o   <u>Process-focused school improvement</u>
                              <u>programs</u>: Initiatives that seek to
                              promote school improvement by changing

the ways in which schools address their
problems by 1) concentrating on
building new structures and enhancing
processes within local districts; 2)
developing a network to provide
problem-solving assistance to local
districts; or 3) viewing local
capacities for problem-solving and
external assistance as complementary
elements of a unified school
improvement program and attempting to
do both.

Specific activities for SEAs were identified by the study for each of
the six "Ingredients for Improvements". Efforts are affected by such
elements as the number of SEA personnel available, financial
resources, the number of school districts, etc.

1. Identified needs: Assistance or promotion of needs assessment
    or problem-identification processes, ranging from developing a
    procedure to mandating the creation of councils to address the
    questions.

2. Identifiable practices: Formal validation procedures for
    promising practices or informal mechanisms to assist LEAs in
    identifying and evaluating critical elements of effective
    schooling.

3. Implementation assistance: Training and support for external
    assisters working with local schools; work to make persons
    serving as change agents aware of assisting users in the
    specifics of new practices and the development of liaisons with
    local facilitators with the school districts who know specifics;
    encourage the applications of change research (Concerns-Based
    Adoption Model, Levels of Use Configuration) and attention to
    issues of replication and fidelity.

4. **Involved and forceful leadership:** The founding of
principal/administrator academies for professional development;
similar efforts for all personnel involved in the change to
become familiar with specifics of the changes; using such
academies and other training sessions to help administrators and
teachers to learn ways to shift to new behaviors in the midst of
regular routines.

5. **Institutionalization:** Helping local schools assure continuity
by structuring the terms of grants so that local support
gradually increases and by fostering attention to the "back end"
of the implementation process, urging that resources and staff
be committed in plans beyond the initial adoption phase.

6. **Impact:** Encouraging or assisting with formative and summative
evaluation and communicating the understanding that significant
change takes time--18 to 24 months for a major change in school
practice--to avoid discouragement and precipitous dismantling of
change efforts.

Finally, state education agencies should be aware of the extent of
activities the school improvement effort will include. Development
programs (creating curricula, diagnostic instruments, etc.),
awareness programs (increasing knowledge of a certain body of
information), assistance programs (help to LEAs in specified areas)
and staged implementation programs (gradual effecting of changes in
all local schools) will each require different kinds and levels of
involvement with local schools and will each be accompanied by some
degree of change within the agency.

PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION: "School Improvement: Approaches and Policies"

Discussion by SEA representatives focused on what strategies at the state
level are/should be used to promote/force improvement of local schools;

what state level strategies are/should be used to guarantee quality schooling at the local level; how has/should the research on change influence(d) state approaches to school improvement; and what laws, policies and/or regulations (should) support state strategies for school improvement.

A. Strategies for Local School Improvement

Strategies at the state level to promote local school improvements vary according to numerous factors in individual states. Participants discussed current strategies and a number of issues related to state level improvements.

o   It is important that school improvements be sustained to achieve impact on local schools, but this is not taking place in many states. There has been an emphasis at the state level on needs assessment and improvement planning, but states find it difficult to move ahead toward implementation of improvements due to changes in political climate and priorities and changes in personnel at both the state and local levels.

o   Emphasizing the concept of instructional leadership is important to the implementation of school improvements. One state is working with local school boards to redefine criteria/expectations used as a basis for hiring superintendents. This is intended to institutionalize the focus on instructional leadership and lead to lasting change.

o   The use of clusters of people with different skills from across the state can contribute to the continuation of school improvement efforts. Teams including representatives from higher education and other resource persons work with SEAs and LEAs to increase school improvement impact.

o   A strong element of volunteerism is apparent in many
    states: school improvements are initiated voluntarily at
    the local level with support/advice from the SEAs.

o   Changes are a critical issue: shifts in the roles of SEAs
    or of personnel have created concern about the definition
    of the mission and purpose of the state education agency.
    In some states, analysis of staff functions, changes in
    management techniques, fiscal analysis and training of SEA
    staff for changed roles are being used to stabilize SEA
    efforts.

o   Some states are following a strategy of providing school
    improvement models to LEAs, including offering training
    programs and providing incentives for local personnel
    participation.   One state offered four research-based,
    validated instructional models to LEAs who were encouraged
    (but not/mandated) to select among the models for local
    adoption.   Local schools occasionally import programs that
    suit local improvement needs.

o   Some SEAs have established statewide standards, competency
    requirements and training programs.   Schools/districts are
    monitored for compliance to regulations and SEAs intervene
    when necessary to assist local schools in meeting standards.

o   Data is used as a means for monitoring schools and
    identifying LEAs where school improvements are necessary.
    Data on student achievement, for example, provides a means
    of monitoring instructional programs.   On the other hand,
    some LEAs have used state-collected data as a tool to
    generate interest in and support for local school
    improvement efforts.

o   In some states, LEAs are required to prepare and follow
    improvement plans. In one state, a five-year planning
    requirement includes SEA monitoring of LEA progress.

o   Some states offer developmental support of local efforts
    through focused grant-making programs, e.g., training,
    activities.

B. <u>Strategies for Ensuring Quality Schooling</u>

Participants discussed current and potential strategies for ensuring
quality in local instructional programs:

o   Increasing statewide graduation requirements for students,
    instituting statewide assessment programs and providing
    staff development activities all provide ways for SEAs to
    influence the quality of local educational programs.

o   Changes in teacher accreditation programs may result in
    improved educational quality.

o   Criterion-referenced inservice training could be used as a
    vehicle for achieving increased quality in instructional
    methods and techniques.

C. <u>Research and State School Improvements</u>

Findings from effective schooling and change research can provide a
basis for school improvements at the state level. Some states are
already applying research findings. The application of research
potentially can have significant impact on state level efforts.

o   Linking school improvement research to the accreditation
    process is being used in one state to enhance school
    improvement activities. Statewide concentration on
    effective schooling research has been used to influence the
    standards used by the regional accrediting organization.

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o   There is little activity in most states regarding the
    research on change and little state-level action is being
    taken based on this research.

o   It appears that a "national curriculum" is evolving that
    will result in similar educational priorities (basic
    skills, computer literacy, etc.) in a majority of LEAs.
    There is question as to whether and how this would affect
    the implementation of the effective schooling research.

o   Widespread implementation of effective schooling practices
    might promote less discrepancy across socio-economic
    classes in the nation. In addition, similarities in
    approach may result in lessening the negative impact on a
    child's education caused by a family move from one
    district/school to another.

D. Laws, Policies, Regulations Supporting State Level Improvements

State level mandates can support or inhibit local school improvement
efforts, depending on state climate, traditions of localism and other
factors. A number of issues were raised regarding the impact of
existing and potential mandates.

o   Legislation in some states sets standards that must be met
    by local schools. The setting and enforcement of these
    standards can result in renewed local school improvement
    efforts.

o   New legislation should be undertaken with caution. There
    is concern about the lack of research on the effectiveness
    of mandates in causing improvements in schooling.

o   States could consider changing standards for teacher
    preparation, including statewide entry testing for
    admission to teacher training programs, experiential
    requirements for teachers and for administrators, and
    internships. Changes in standards must take place at the
    state level (rather than at the individual university
    level) to be effective.

o   Current discussion of performance incentives and merit pay
    does not offer direction in dealing with the teachers who
    are well established within the current system (tenure,
    etc.).

o   States should try to do well what is already "on the
    books," completing and assessing the impact of school
    improvement efforts already begun before mandating new
    programs.

o   There is concern that the real issue emerging in education
    is the choice between emphasizing "quality" education or
    "adequate" education. It appears that the main variable in
    this debate is time (hours, days of instruction) rather
    than content (curriculum). Concentrating on increasing
    instructional time without attention to content could lead
    to deterioration of quality in the nation's schools. As in
    the "tracking" issue, questions could be raised: legal
    considerations, possible equity issues and concerns about
    nurturing individual diversity among students while
    providing education for all.

o   The creation of new laws, policies and regulations is not
    an effective way to promote excellence in schools.

o   It would be valuable to know what contextual factors
     contribute to the adoption of a "development" or "mandate"
     approach in SEAs.

o   State education agencies need to know how to deal with the
     "knee-jerk" reactions of both the public and legislators to
     the content of recent national reports on education.
     Findings in the reports may be in conflict with current
     priorities in educational improvement.

o   Mandates alone are not sufficient to guarantee quality
     schooling. The nature of the mandate--level of detail,
     whether requiring implementation of a process or meeting
     specific goals--is also important to its effectiveness.

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3. MOVING TOWARD EXCELLENCE

PRESENTATION: "Recommendations From Reports On Schooling"

Dr. Robert E. Blum

Two major national reports have recently focused public attention on education: A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform prepared by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., April 1983) and Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools from the Education Commission of the States' Task Force on Education for Economic Growth (Denver, CO, June 1983).

Many recommendations in these reports fall into alignment with results of effective schooling research. The research provides a more detailed look at how these recommendations can be put into effect.

A NATION AT RISK

This report contains five groups of recommendations to improve schools. In each case, effective schooling research can be shown to be closely related to the recommendations.

A. Content

Recommendations: Strengthen high school graduation requirements, including requirements in the Five New Basics of English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science; more time spent studying the New Basics; students should study fewer areas for more time at greater depth.

Research	Instructional time should be allocated based
Findings:	on clear objectives for student achievement;
	curriculum alignment adds to effectiveness
	by matching objectives, resources and
	measurement of progress toward objectives;
	teachers focus instruction on objectives;
	monitoring the instructional program in
	terms of priority objectives can lead to
	improvements at the program level and in
	classroom methods, techniques and procedures.

B. Standards and Expectations

Recommendations:	More vigorous and measurable standards and
	higher expectations for academic performance
	and student conduct; raise requirements for
	admission to higher education.

Research	Expectations should be high: all students
Findings:	can and will achieve basic objectives;
	teachers will teach all students; students
	will behave; students and teachers will be
	recognized for good performance.

There should be clear standards:
assessments known, acceptable levels of
performance known; curriculum alignment;
frequent checking of student performance
with feedback to students.

C. Time

Recommendations:	Significantly more time devoted to learning
	the New Basics, requiring more effective use
	of the school day, a longer school day, or a
	lengthened school year.

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Research Findings:	School and classroom management should preserve and protect time for learning, including the use of a code of conduct, classroom rules and the setting of efficient classroom routines.

A high quality of instruction is desirable, using direct, clear instruction and direction, the assignment of appropriate learning tasks, an orientation toward success, and the use of placement and grouping as appropriate.

To increase time spent on learning, there should be assigned homework, extra learning activities and help available to students who need it.

D. Teaching

Recommendations:	High standards for teachers, increased teacher salaries, longer teacher contracts, career ladders for teachers, nonschool personnel to solve teacher shortages in mathematics and science, incentives for teachers, master teachers to assist in teacher preparation programs and supervising new teachers during probationary years.
Research Findings:	Teaching performance should be evaluated with an orientation toward improvement; there should be incentives and recognition for excellence in teaching.

E. Leadership

Recommendations: Educators and elected officials should
                        provide the leadership necessary to achieve
                        school improvement while the public should
                        provide fiscal support.

Research   Administrative performance should be
Findings: evaluated with an orientation toward
                        improvement and in light of specific
                        leadership skills; there should be
                        incentives and recognition for excellence in
                        administration.

ACTION FOR EXCELLENCE

This report includes recommendations for school improvements oriented to
reflect a partnership between business and education to improve schools
and thereby improve economic growth. The recommendations can be linked
with specific practices identified by research as effective in improving
schools.

Recommendation #1:   There should be state and local plans to
                         improve schools.

Research   The effective schooling research emphasizes
Findings: the need for planning to meet specific
                         educational goals.

Recommendation #2:   Partnerships should be created within
                         communities to improve schools.

Research   Parental and community involvement are
Findings: important to school improvement efforts.
                         The more directly parents are involved in
                         the instructional program of their children,
                         the higher achievement seems to be.

Recommendation #3:   Marshal resources, essential to improving
                       public schools: better use of existing
                       resources; more funds selectively invested,
                       including federal support.

    Research   Allocation of time, curriculum alignment,
    Findings: program monitoring and instructional
                       leadership can all contribute to effective
                       use of resources.

Recommendation #4:   Increase regard for teachers: improve
                       methods for recruiting, training and paying
                       teachers; create career ladders; provide
                       recognition.

    Research   Effective schooling research can be used as
    Findings: the basis for teacher training; incentives
                       and recognition are used in effective
                       schools.

Recommendation #5:   Make the academic experience intense and
                       productive: firm, explicit and demanding
                       requirements concerning discipline,
                       attendance, homework, grades; strengthen the
                       curriculum; increase the duration and
                       intensity of academic learing time.

    Research   Specific expectations for student learning
    Findings: and behavior contribute to effective
                       schools; a number of effective practices
                       define effective uses of school time;
                       curriculum alignment strengthens the
                       implementation of the curriculum; effective
                       classroom management and instruction
                       techniques can improve the quality of
                       teaching and student performance.

Recommendation #6:   Provide quality assurances: measure
                     effectiveness of teachers and reward
                     outstanding performance; improve the
                     certification processes; improve processes
                     for teacher/administrator retention;
                     periodically test student achievement
                     progress; promote students based on mastery,
                     not age; identify clearly skills students
                     are expected to master; raise
                     college/university entrance requirements.

Research   Monitoring teacher performance, curriculum
Findings: alignment practices and improved assessment
                     and evaluation techniques contribute to
                     school improvement.

Recommendation #7:   Improve leadership and management in the
                     schools: hold principals accountable;
                     improve recruitment, training and monitoring
                     performance of principals; use more
                     effective management techniques.

Research   Specific leadership skills are necessary in
Findings: school improvements: school leaders should
                     set high expectations, oversee instructional
                     planning and monitor teacher performance.

Recommendation #8:   Provide better service for special
                     populations: women and minorities in
                     technical fields; better curriculum for
                     gifted students; education for handicapped
                     students, etc.

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Research
Findings:

Effective schooling practices can contribute
to improving educational opportunities for
all students.

Use of the effective schooling research base can provide some answers to
issues raised by both these reports.

PRESENTATION: "States Take Leadership"
                                 Robert Van Slyke

A number of recent national reports have focused on the current state of
public education:

o   A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, The
     National Commission on Excellence in Education: U.S. Department
     of Education, Washington, D.C.; April 1983.

o   Action for Excellence, Task Force on Education for Economic
     Growth, The Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO; June
     1983.

o   Making the Grade, a report by the Task Force on Federal
     Elementary and Secondary Policy, The Twentieth Century Fund, New
     York, 1983.

o   High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America,
     Ernest L. Bayer for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement
     of Teaching, Harper & Row, 1983.

o   A Place Called School, John Goodlad, McGraw-Hill, 1983.

In addition, every state in the union either has initiated, or is in the
process of initiating, efforts to improve the quality of education.

Focus of public attention on education is welcome. A similar focus
following the launching of the Soviet Union's Sputnik 25 years ago led to
improvement of instruction at the secondary level in the areas of
science, mathematics and foreign language, with some carry over into
English and social studies. Both teacher preparation and elementary
education benefited from that attention, as well.

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The current focus on education may indicate public commitment to excellence in education, sorely lacking while public attention was focused on other issues. In addition, this focus re-emphasizes the work ethic and supports the notion that individuals have a responsibility to the collective well-being of society.

Most importantly, this new focus is causing re-examination of the historical application of a "factory model" to schools, a straight-line process in which the raw material or partially completed product comes on the line, a treatment or process is implemented, and the finished product comes off the line, where it is checked to determine whether or not it meets minimum standards. In schools, this is reflected in the use of minimum competency testing, which raises concerns about the disregard for individual differences among students, about the danger that minimums might become maximums and about whether the use of the factory model is appropriate for schooling. Assessment of the product of the public schools should take place, but the methods should be re-examined: when the means to quality control is the testing of the product at the end of the process and the elements of the process are ignored, a great deal is left to chance.

Currently in education, a number of elements can be identified:

o   Minimum competency testing as a movement to control quality: testing the product of the school to determine whether or not the minimum standard has been met.

o   Effective schooling as a move to address the question of inputs: effective processes or practices to insure a quality product.

o   Excellence in education as an effort to deal with the specification of product: defining what it is that we want students to gain from the 12 or more years of school most experience.

The most important issue is to determine what the product of the schools should be. Once a consensus on the goals of education is reached, those treatments can be applied which research suggest make a difference and which have come to be known as effective educational practices. Only with clear specification of product and appropriate treatment in the process (application of effective practices), can the product be adequately assessed.

In order to bring about this change in approach, two areas must be considered. First, the public must be kept involved in education or the current concern will disintegrate after initial efforts toward improvement. The public schools mirror society to a far greater degree than they influence the direction of society: public involvement is critical to effective school improvement. Second, there is a strong tendency in our society to blame public schools for all of the perceived public dissatisfaction with the young--to blame schools totally for the perceived lack of student learning.

In considering recent national reports on education, states should be cautious and avoid accepting unreasonable responsibility. To address both questions of public involvement and responsibility for student learning, the Alaska Effective Schooling Program made two critical distinctions:

1. Education and schooling can and should be differentiated to avoid the placement of all responsibility for education on public schools.

    o   Education is a process of instruction--either directly by teaching or indirectly by model, precept or example--in order that an individual or group may acquire knowledge, skills, understandings and appreciations. Education is a shared responsibility involving many segments of society with the aim of assisting the individual to maximize his or her potential as a human being living in concert with others.

o   <u>Schooling</u> is the process of providing or receiving
     instruction in a structured setting: a school.

2.   The <u>responsibilities of schools</u> can and should be defined as
     "primary," "shared" or "supportive" to emphasize the cooperative
     role of schools with parents, students and the community.

     o   Schools have a <u>primary</u> responsibility to insure that
          students master basic skills.

     o   Schools have a <u>shared</u> responsibility with other agencies
          relative to career and vocational education.

     o   Schools have a <u>supportive</u> responsibility with respect to
          moral and ethical development, with the family having the
          primary responsibility.

Because of differences in state education agencies, ways to facilitate
the movement toward effectiveness and on toward excellence will vary.
Some factors affecting SEAs include:

1.   Levels of authority: some SEAs have powers others do not.

2.   Traditions: in Alaska, for example, the SEA has substantial
     authority but there is a statewide tradition strongly supporting
     the concept of local control.

3.   Circumstances of the moment: transitory political alignments
     may suggest particular courses of action.

A number of issues should be addressed and particular practices by SEAs
should be considered:

1.   The revisions of the elementary course of study, expanding it
     into an elementary curriculum framework which incorporates scope
     and sequence.

2. Review of high school graduation requirements to recommend
   revisions to the State Board of Education, recognizing that
   too-rigorous requirements for all students could increase
   student dropout rates.

3. Review of the length of the school day.

4. Consideration of the length of the teacher contract year.

5. Teacher compensation, both from the standpoint of equity and as
   a means of attracting capable people to the profession.

6. Teacher preparation and certification.

7. The incorporation of effective schooling practices into
   accreditation criteria.

8. Staff evaluation which takes into consideration effective
   practices in the broad sense and is based on the premises that
   all persons can improve and that the purpose of evaluation is
   improvement of performance. Such evaluation should be for all
   professional staff, not just for teachers: it may be
   appropriate to pilot any revised system first with evaluation of
   administrators.

9. Implementation of a consistent, ongoing public information
   effort to keep the public informed about what is happening in
   schools.

10. Continual focus on the difference between education and
    schooling.

11. Encouragement of local board examination of district goals and
    subgoals to identify them as primary, shared or supportive
    responsibilities of schools.

12. Implementation of the "Big Five" of effective schooling: 1) high expectations, 2) orderly environment, 3) frequent assessment of student progress, 4) high levels of engaged time and 5) tasks which challenge but do not overwhelm students.

13. Promote staff development and implementation efforts focusing on:

    o Leadership enhancement involving principals, supervisors of principals and key teachers.

    o Curriculum development resulting in a well-defined district curriculum which addresses basic skills and higher order cognitive skills and which avoids specifying objectives so numerous that teachers cannot use them effectively.

    o Orderly school environment with few interruptions, supported by an effective discipline structure.

    o Classroom instruction and management incorporating consideration of time factors (allocated time, time on task, academic learning time), characterized by high expectations and utilizing direct instruction and mastery learning as appropriate in basic skill acquisition.

    o Assessment and evaluation which enable personnel to determine student mastery levels, track student programs and determine the effectiveness of instruction.

    o Parent participation and computer-assisted instruction should both receive consideration.

14. Focus on the alignment of goals, curriculum, instruction and assessment: although the research supporting the concept may be termed "moderately speculative," it makes good sense.

15. Assist current principals in improving their effectiveness and look to specification of requirements for preparation and selection of new principals.

Consideration of these issues can lead to clear specification of expectations of students (product), can improve the processes of education and can result in clear assessment of outcomes to assure the delivery of excellence in schooling.

PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION: "Perspectives on Excellence"

Discussions centered on the concepts of excellence and effectiveness:
how states are meeting the challenge of recommendations from commission
reports, seeking to promote quality schooling and moving beyond minimum
competency development. Questions included what state strategies
are/should be used to guarantee achievement of basic skills for all
students; what state strategies are/should be used to promote performance
beyond the basic skills; and what laws, policies and/or regulations
(should) support efforts to guarantee minimum standards and promote
excellence.

A.   Strategies to Guarantee Basic Skills

     A good deal of activity is taking place in SEAs in support of student
     acquisition of basic skills. A number of strategies, ranging from
     providing specific technical assistance through mandating statewide
     testing programs, are being used. Many states are drawing on the
     effectiveness research in implementing basic skills programs.
     Participants discussed current and prospective strategies and raised
     several related issues:

     o   Many state efforts began with a focus on minimum
          competencies in basic skills areas but have moved or are
          moving beyond this focus toward a definition of and support
          for a more generalized approach to quality in education.

     o   Most states are concentrating on three areas for school
          improvement: 1) staff development, 2) curriculum
          alignment/instruction and/or 3) assessment. Many are
          already using elements mentioned in the national reports.
          A common emphasis is the examination of the curriculum:
          how it matches assessment and how it is related to what is
          taking place in classrooms.

o   State focus on basic skills acquisition has in some cases
    resulted from legislative mandate.

o   Testing programs are widely used to assess basic skills.
    Some are mandated, some are encouraged for use by LEAs on a
    volunteer basis. In one state, teacher training to build
    skills in preparing students for basic skills testing
    resulted in general improvements in teacher skills.

o   Some SEAs are focusing on providing money and programs for
    efforts to provide remediation to children who are not
    acquiring basic skills.

B. Strategies Beyond Basic Skills

Participants discussed issues and approaches appropriate to expanding
state-wide efforts beyond the assurance of acquisition of basic
skills for all students:

o   Many processes now in use in schools do not facilitate
    acquisition of the higher levels of cognitive achievement.

o   A short-term, short-range focus in school improvement is
    common: concentration on immediate problems (improve
    achievement test scores, improve grades, increase
    requirements or standards). The lack of a long-range focus
    is problematic.

o   The focus on the impact of tests reflects a conservative
    definition of competencies and/or basic skills. The focus
    on school improvement will remain at this minimal level
    until new priorities for schooling are established and
    reflected in assessments.

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o   Some state boards and/or legislatures are considering
        mandating new requirements in higher level skills; some
        already monitor specified competencies. Some SEAs are
        setting up processes requiring local district specification
        of requirements. In other states, it is the responsibility
        of the public to put pressure on local school boards for
        change.

o   Schools are responding to public demands. If there is
        another shift, consequences, particularly in terms of
        equity, must be considered. Elevation in the drop-out rate
        may be an unfortunate hidden consequence of increased
        requirements. On the other hand, the middle track of
        students--those neither needing remediation nor additional
        challenge--may be losing out. Insufficient thought may be
        concentrated on how to deal best with the needs of average
        students following the general curriculum. A recent NAEP
        report indicates that, over the past 10-12 years
        nationally, there has been an increase in the number of
        lower performing students and a decline in higher
        performing students.

C. Support from Laws, Policies and/or Regulations

Current and prospective laws, policies and/or regulations to
guarantee minimum standards and promote excellence and other issues
were discussed:

o   Through legislation and policy, states are able to set up
        conditions for the possibility of student acquisition of
        basic skills. States can then provide technical assistance
        and/or resources through intervention in schools as
        necessary. This approach is predicated on the existence of
        an adequate assessment system to identify schools where

intervention is necessary. Schools should be accountable for assuring basic skills acquisition but should have options for how to do so.

o   SEAs face a problem in balancing the reactions of the public and legislators with already existing state department improvement efforts.

o   Overall school improvement requires quality leadership. The SEA should assume a leadership role in the movement toward quality education, particularly in the tasks of integrating many elements into a focused plan for quality.

PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION: "Advice on Policy"

Participants considered advice for states which are beginning to explore
school improvement; discussed the criteria which are/should be used to
judge the success of state school improvement efforts; and pinpointed key
factors in state school improvement efforts which would pay the greatest
dividends in improved student performance.

A. Advice for States Beginning School Improvements

Representatives from SEAs brought a wide variety of expertise and
experience to bear on the discussion of advice for states currently
considering or beginning statewide school improvement efforts. All
participants had been involved in statewide efforts, some for a
decade or more. Major points were addressed in three areas: policy
advice, advice about approach and advice about expectations for
results.

Policy   o   There is need for direction from policy-makers before
               instituting large-scale change efforts, whether from
               the state board of education or from the legislature.

          o   Part of the state role is to define the mission and
               goals of education, providing the leadership that is
               needed for effective school improvements.

          o   The setting of policy is important, and it is critical
               that policy-makers consider the implications of new
               policies: what implementation of policy actually
               means at the school level. A simple, common-sense
               policy may have tremendous implications in the field.

          o   Policy-makers should carefully retain a broad
               perspective on the state's educational system: they
               should act rather than react and be careful about
               "jumping on the bandwagon."

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o   Use should be made of policies that already exist:
    re-examine current policies to find ways to support
    entering into school improvements.

o   Programs that are currently under way should be
    analyzed to protect the ground already gained: many
    states were involved in improvements before the
    research told them what they should be doing, and much
    of that effort has value that must not be lost through
    precipitous changes in policy.

o   Set up the expectation that there will be an
    improvement process.

o   Decide how improvement goals will be established,
    whether at the SEA or LEA level, and pinpoint the
    responsibilities for the goal-setting process. Some
    states have used seed money to help institute this
    planning process.

o   Recognize that education is a shared responsibility
    with others outside the school.

o   Be wary of the "multiplier" effect of regulation: one
    federal regulation, for example, may balloon into two
    state, four district-level and eight building-level
    requirements to assure compliance.

Approach o   A unified approach to improvement seems to be most
             powerful.

          o   Clearly define the improvement effort, emphasizing
             that it is a collaborative undertaking and will
             require cooperation from all parties involved.
             Determine how the effort will be initiated, given
             generally restricted resources.

o   Establish effective communications processes, both
    externally and internally within departments,
    districts and/or schools.

o. Be systematic.

o   Manage resources effectively.

o   Maintain a clear focus in the improvement effort.

o   Use research findings to influence practitioners.

o   Provide inservice training.

o   Provide models that districts can use or modify: do
    not mandate improvements without providing process
    models.

o   Proceed slowly: begin on a small scale, perhaps with
    pilots in one or a few LEAs, learn from the pilot and
    slowly build, using experienced LEAs as resources.

o   Provide clarity about the level at which the process
    will be implemented, whether at the district or school
    level.

o   An approach: mandate and set standards, create a plan
    for monitoring, then provide resources/technical
    assistance to facilitate implementation.

o   An approach: 1) begin with immersing people in the
    effective schooling research and consider expected
    needs for the future; 2) facilitate the definition of
    desirable results by examining the system and using

that information to define clearly the direction the system should go; 3) define a policy at this point, either at the state or local level, keeping the policy limited and implementable, starting with the smallest possible unit and working out from there before setting a general policy; 4) provide clear, simple guidelines, examples and technical assistance that can be useful.

o   An approach: set the general framework and expectations, provide the technical assistance and then get out of the way.

Expected   o   Know target audiences and structure expectations for
Results   success for each audience.

o   Clearly demonstrated commitment and involvement at the top is extremely important to successful school improvement efforts: no substantive results can be expected without them.

o   Begin improvement efforts with a program which will result in high visibility and immediate return to demonstrate both intention and efficacy of efforts.

o   Implement improvements a step at a time to build a record of success.

o   Clarify decision-making (state vs. local control) so expectations are clear.

o   Structure improvements to build ownership at the local level.

o   Be cautious about restricting expectations for success
     to student achievement.

o   Consider gathering baseline data against which to
     measure focused successes. One state surveyed
     administrators and teachers to determine SEA
     credibility and re-surveyed three years later to
     determine whether improvement efforts had been
     effective.

B. Criteria for Judging Successes

Indicators of successful school improvement efforts are/can be as
diverse as the efforts themselves. Participants suggested a number
of criteria for judging success and discussed issues related to this
process.

o   Care should be taken in looking for success indicators:
     "you get what you inspect, not what you expect." If
     success criteria are based on testing programs, the measure
     will be of testing program results, not necessarily of the
     effectiveness of instruction or overall quality in
     education. Other ways to measure achievement or other
     measures of success should be explored.

o   Success is dependent on the clarity of expectations for
     success set at the beginning of the improvement effort.
     With clear focus and expectations, results can be
     measured. Start with expectations, rather than working
     backwards by using results to discover unmet expectations.

o   The success of the process (the degree of implementation)
     can itself be an indicator of the impact of the improvement
     effort.

o   Student outcomes (achievement levels, behavior changes) can
    be effective indicators.

o   A measure of the effectiveness of the SEA in implementing
    the improvement can be an indicator of success.

o   A simple tally of positive and negative press reports can
    be a success indicator.

o   Monitoring the narrowing of inequities can indicate success.

o   Measures of shifts in retention of students and of the
    quality of teachers can be valuable.

C. Factors with Greatest Dividends

There is very little data available to indicate which factors in a
state school improvement effort contribute most to improved student
performance. There are, however, a number of elements which can be
identified as contributors to the success of a school improvement
effort.

    o   The alignment of state and local level efforts to increased
        focus on school improvements can directly contribute to
        success.

    o   Long-range planning for school improvement is imperative.
        A systems approach is far more effective than a "piecemeal"
        approach. The whole of an improvement effort is equal to
        more than the sum of its parts.

    o   A policy about the use of the process is important. A
        policy provides the conceptual framework, can stress the
        fact that school improvement is an ongoing process, not an
        isolated event.

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o   Communications--about policies, goals and process--are very
    important to generate and sustain support for school
    improvements.   Careful communications that match audience
    needs are critical.

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PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION: "Networking Among States for School Improvement"

The final discussion period focused on the value of creating and using informational networks among personnel at state education agencies who are closely involved in state school improvement efforts. Discussion questions included whether there is a need for and interest in networking, the mechanisms currently available and networking activities which would be most useful.

A. Need for/Interest in Networking

There was participant consensus that networking is a valuable tool for SEA personnel involved in school improvement efforts. They agreed that another similar seminar should be conducted within one year.

o   The most useful networking would provide the exchange of information about positive efforts responding to issues raised in national reports on education. Shared information about how to implement individual state mandates is not as critical an issue.

o   The need for networking varies among states, reflecting the degree of involvement and type of effort in each SEA.

o   Networking can provide important information: what other states are doing and their successes with particular programs; feedback, r .ctions and/or advice from other states on a new or prospective program; information about the national climate in education.

o   There are a number of inhibitors to successful networking: distance; restricted funds for publications and/or travel; differences among states in the ways tasks and activities

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are assigned to SEA personnel which leads to specialization
and makes it difficult to establish for clear lines of
communication about similar activities; there is a lack of
tradition of networking among SEAs.

B. Current Mechanisms for Networking

Professional organizations, telecommunications hookups, regularly
scheduled meetings, and Regional Exchanges all currently provide
opportunities for networking among SEAs.

C. Beneficial Networking Activities

The major benefit of networking among SEAs would be access to
information about other states' school improvement activities,
policies and programs. Participants identified ways in which
networking can benefit state level efforts:

o   Exchange of descriptive material and information about
    school improvement models being used at the state level.

o   Face-to-face contact with individuals which can facilitate
    further contact about specific school improvement efforts.

o   Access to current information about research and innovative
    applications of research results at the state level.

o   Identification of individuals who would be available for
    quick telephone surveys or other inquiries concerning state
    activities.

o   Development of clearinghouses for information and the
    potential sharing of specialized personnel among states
    involved in related efforts.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

Monday, September 12

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.   Registration

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.   Welcome and Opening Remarks

                        Dr. Ethel Simon-McWilliams, NWREL Associate
                        Director.

9:30 - 10:15 a.m.   "The Effective Schooling Research Base"

                        A broad view of the effective schooling research
                        base will be presented by Ronald A. Smith, NWREL
                        Program Associate. The presentation will
                        synthesize school effects, teacher effects,
                        curriculum alignment, leadership research and
                        other research into a form useful for school
                        improvement.

10:15 - 10:30 a.m.   Break

10:30 - 12:00 noon   "Research Base: Perspectives from the States"

                        Small groups will discuss their views on uses of
                        the research base. Diverse ideas will be
                        recorded and shared.

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.   Lunch

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.   "Making Improvements Work: Advice from Research
                        on Change"

                        Dr. Pat Cox from the Network, Inc. will describe
                        the strong body of research on change and
                        highlight findings from her own research on state
                        efforts in school improvements. Pat is just
                        completing case studies involving both states ad
                        local districts and will share her findings with
                        the group.

2:30 - 4:30 p.m.   School Improvement: Approaches and Policies

                        Small groups will discuss their school
                        improvement efforts, policies and practices, and
                        compare the features of their efforts with the
                        recommendations from the research on change.

4:30 - 5:00 p.m.   Summary of the day

Tuesday, September 13

8:30 - 8:45 a.m.	Agenda Review and Adjustment
8:45 - 9:30 a.m.	"Moving Toward Excellence: Recommendations from Reports on Schooling"

Recommendations from A Nation at Risk and Action for Excellence will be reviewed and compared to the findings from the effective schooling research. Dr. Robert E. Blum, Director of Goal Based Education at NWREL, will highlight areas where research supports and extends the recommendations as well as where the research and the recommendations diverge.

9:30 - 10:15 a.m.   "Moving Toward Excellence: States Take the Leadership"

Robert Van Slyke, Deputy Commissioner of Education in Alaska, will describe the various policies and approaches to school improvement that states have used over the years and describe how effective schooling is moving states toward excellence.

10:15 - 10:30 a.m.   Break

10:30 - 12:00 noon   "Perspectives on Excllence"

Small groups will discuss the concepts of excellence and effectiveness along with how state efforts are meeting the challenge of recommendations from commission reports, seeking to promote quality schooling and moving beyond minimum competency development.

12:00 - 1:15 p.m.   Lunch

1:15 - 2:30 p.m.   "Analysis of Issues and Policies Related to School Improvement"

Small groups will discuss issues surrounding research-based school improvement as well as policies and regulations that promote and inhibit state level school improvement efforts.

2:30 - 3:00 p.m.   "Networking Among States for School Improvement"

Small groups will discuss current networking efforts and the need for continued networking among individuals in states by region or nationally.

3:00 - 3:30 p.m.   Seminar Highlights and Closing

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"Research Base: Perspectives from the States"

1. What constitutes/should constitute the research base used in state school improvement efforts?

2. How is/should the research base (be) used in state school improvement efforts?

3. What laws, policies and/or regulations have grown/should grow from the research base?

"School Improvement Approaches and Policies"

1. What strategies at the state level are/should be used to promote/force improvement of local schools?

2. What strategies at the state level are/should be used to guarantee quality schooling at the local level?

3. How has/should the research on change influence(d) state approaches to school improvement?

4. What laws, policies and/or regulations (should) support state strategies for school improvement?

"Moving Toward Excellence: Perspectives on Excellence"

1. What state strategies are/should be used to guarantee achievements of basic skills for all students?

2. What state strategies are/should be used to promote performance beyond the basic skills?

3. What laws, policies and/or regulations (should) support efforts to guarantee minimum standards and promote excellence?

"Moving Toward Excellence: Analysis of Issues and Policies Related to School Improvement"

1. What advice have you for states that are beginning to think about school improvement?

   a. What policy advice?
   b. What advice about approach?
   c. What advice about expected results?

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2.   What criteria are/should be used to judge the success of state school improvement efforts?

3.   In your collective opinion, what one (or two) factors in a state school improvement effort will pay the greatest dividends in improved student performance?

"Moving Toward Excellence: 1.   Is there a need for and interest in
Networking Among States for   networking among people intimately
School Improvement"   involved in state school improvement
                                   efforts?

2.   What mechanisms exist for such networking?

3.   What networking activities would be most beneficial?

APPENDIX 4

MATERIALS DISPLAYED/DISTRIBUTED
BY PARTICIPANTS

The following list includes booklets, documents and handouts displayed and/or distributed at the Seminar. Unless otherwise noted, materials are published by the state department of education in each state. Copies are not available from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratoy but may be available on a limited basis from individual states. For further information contact the state representative for the particular state included in the seminar participant list, Appendix 2.

ALASKA   Leadership Guide, Alaska Effective Schooling Program, 1982.

                  Trainer Manual, Training One, Alaska Effective Schooling Program, 1982.

                  Trainer Manual, Training Two and Training Three, Alaska Effective Schooling Program, 1982.

ARKANSAS   "Classroom Management: Research & Development," Division of Management and Development.

                  "Effective School Efforts in Arkansas Schools: 1979-1983," draft.

                  "Staff Efficiency Saves Dollars," Greer Lingel, The Reporter, Arkansas School Boards Association, June 1983.

                  "Improving Student Achievement by Appropriate Teacher In-Service Training: Utilizing Program for Effective Teaching (PET)," Peggy Dildy, Education, Winter 1982, pp. 132-138.

                  "Program for Effective Teaching: PET Aims for Effective, Efficient, Relevant Instruction."

COLORADO   Status of K-12 Public Education in Colorado 1983.

                  "Quality Descriptors: A School for the Eighties and Nineties," 1983.

"School Improvement Through Leagues and Clusters - A
Colorado Department of Education Project."

"The School Improvement Cluster: A Concept Paper,"
Office of Field Services, 1983.

"CDE Program Onsite Visit Plans," memo to School
Superintendents and BOCES Directors, August 31, 1983.

"School Climate Improvement Background Information,".
Eugene R. Howard.

"Involving Students in School Climate Improvement,"
Eugene R. Howard.

District Level Indicators Supporting Quality Schools,
School Improvement and Leadership Services Unit, March
1983.

Indicators of Quality Schools: Instrument to Assess
the Educational Quality of Your School, School
Improvement and Leadership Services Unit, May 1982.

Indicators of Quality Schools: I. Overview, School
Improvement and Leadership Services Unit, May 1982.

Indicators of Quality Schools: II. User's Guide,
School Improvement and Leadership Services Unit, May
1982.

Indicators of Quality Schools: III. Review of the
Literature on Effective Schools, School Improvement
and Leadership Services Unit, May 1982.

1981-82 Annual Report: Overview of Educational
Accountability and Accreditation in Colorado.

Action Planning for School Improvement: A Resource
Paper, Eugene R. Howard, 1979 Revision.

Reporting to the Public: A Sourcebook on Effective
Reporting and Being Accountable, July 1983.

Community Involvement: A Sourcebook for Improving the
Involvement of Parents and Community in Colorado
Schools, 1983.

"Characteristics of Effective Improvement Strategies:
An Analysis of Three Major Studies," November 1982.

"Concept Visuals: The Denver Area School Improvement
Cluster," November 1982.

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CONNECTICUT   Instructionally Effective Schools: A Model and A Process, Monograph Number One, William J. Gauthier, Jr., 1983.

Secondary School Development Process: Student Questionnaire, Form 2, Research Edition, 3/83.

Secondary School Development Process: Student Questionnaire, Form 3, Research Edition, 3/83.

The Connecticut School Effectiveness Interview, Research Edition, 2/82.

Secondary School Development Questionnaire, Research Edition, 3/83.

The Connecticut School Effectiveness Questionnaire, Research Edition, 2/82.

"Data Display for Connecticut School Effectiveness Interview," January 1983.

IDAHO   "Idaho School Improvement Efforts," 9/12/83.

MARYLAND   Instructional Leadership Conference: LEA (Conference Proceedings), May 4, 1983.

"Instructional Improvement in Maryland," April 1983.

"Instructional Improvement: Roles and Responsibilities in Statewide Change (Summary)," April 1983.

"Planning: Its Evolution Through Knowledge Utilization (Summary)" April 1983.

"Management of Change: Who Does What to Bring About Instructional Improvement?," July 1983.

"Instruction -- The Principal (and Other School-Based Administrators)," October 1982.

"Instruction -- Central Office Staff," October 1982.

"Instruction -- The Teacher," October 1982.

Instructional Improvement in Maryland: A Study of Research in Practice, Executive Summary, October 1982.

Critical Factors Teachers Can Control to Improve
Instruction, February 1983.

Instructional Leadership Conference: MSDE, (Conference
Proceedings), May 5, 1983.

SITIP Summer Institute (Conference Report), July 1983.

MASSACHUSSETTS   The Commonwealth Inservice Institute: What It Is, How
                   It Works, How to Apply, 1982-1983.

                   The Commonwealth Inservice Institute, Policy,.
                   September 1981.

                   More Effective Schools Project Skills Seminar for
                   Group Facilitators, September 14-15, 1983.

MISSOURI   Introduction to Instructional Management, September
                   1982.

MONTANA   Excellence in Montana Schools, 1983 Task Force Report.

                   Standards for Accreditation of Montana Schools, Fourth
                   Edition.

                   Curriculum Review: A Process for Montana Schools.

                   Working Toward Excellence in Education 1981-1982: The
                   First Annual Report of the Office of Public
                   Instruction and the Board of Public Education:
                   1981-1982.

NEW YORK   Proposed Action Plan to Improve Elementary and
                   Secondary Education Results in New York, August 1983.

OREGON,   Elementary-Secondary Guide for Oregon Schools, 1980.

                   Standards Guidelines: Units of Credit, OAR
                   581-22-316, June 1980.

                   Standards Guidelines: Units of Credit (Supplement),
                   OAR 581-22-316, March 1981.

                   Standards Guidelines: The High School Diploma and
                   Alternative Awards, OAR 581-22-316, June 1980.

Standards Guidelines: Career Education, OAR
581-22-405, Summer 1981.

Standards Guidelines: Guidance and Counseling, OAR
581-22-702, April 1981.

"Changing Oregon's Standardization Process for 1983-84
(Increasing Emphasis on School Improvement)," Abstract
of Policy Study 83-002, draft, April 12, 1983.

"Study of Agency Mission: Fact Sheet," May 12, 1983.

"Agency Mission/Organization," memo, July 22, 1983.

Improving Schools: A Strategy for Change, draft,
September 1, 1983.

PENNSYLVANIA   Pennsylvania's Educational Needs Assessment:
Elementary Schools Self-Study, 1981.

Pennsylvania's Educational Needs Assessment:
Middle/Junior High Schools Self-Study, 1981.

Planning for School Improvement: Relationship of the
Middle State Elementary and Secondary Evaluations to
the Long Range Plan for School Improvement, March 1981.

Long-Range Planning for School Improvement: LRPSI
Process Guide, Reprint 1983.

Long-Range Planning for School Improvement: LRPSI
Resource Guide 1: Administrative Planning, 1983.

Long-Range Planning for School Improvement: LRPSI
Resource Guide 2: Planning for Community/Staff
Involvement, 1981.

Long-Range Planning for School Improvement: LRPSI
Resource Guide 3: Programs and Services Needs
Assessment, 1983.

Long-Range Planning for School Improvement: LRPSI
Resource Guide 4: District Management Needs
Assessment, 1983.

Long-Range Planning for School Improvement: LRPSI
Resource Guide 5: Special Education Planning for
School Improvement, 1982.

Long-Range Planning for School Improvement: LRPSI
Resource Guide 7: School Improvement and Vocational
Planning, 1982.

<u>Long-Range Planning for School Improvement:</u> <u>LRPSI</u>
<u>Resource Guide 8:</u> <u>Implementation-Managing and</u>
<u>Maintaining Change</u>, 1983.

"A Guide to School Improvement."

<u>Best Practices in Pennsylvania Education:</u> <u>A Report</u>
<u>from the Schools</u>, 1983.

Brochures discussing publications of the Network, Inc., were also
distributed.

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