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ABSTRACT

This document reports the findings of the National Study of Local Operations under Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981, the federal education block grant, regarding the involvement of parents and other citizens in the making of local district decisions concerning the use of the block grant funds. Data for the study came from a national mail and telephone survey and from site visits to 24 school districts in 8 states. The report's introductory chapter describes the history and intentions of Chapter 2, reviews previous research, lists the research questions underlying the parent and citizen involvement aspect of the larger study, and briefly describes the study methodology. The second chapter presents general findings about district Chapter 2 decision-making processes. The third chapter covers district efforts to involve parents and other citizens, the mechanisms created to facilitate involvement, and the relationships between district efforts and actual citizen involvement patterns. The fourth chapter looks at the degree of involvement citizens have in decision-making, the influence they exert, and the reasons for the involvement patterns found. The fifth chapter summarizes highlights of the findings and interprets their significance. Appendixes present error values for the tables accompanying the text and list the antecedent programs consolidated into the Chapter 2 block grants. (PGD)

INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS AND CITIZENS IN LOCAL DECISIONMAKING UNDER THE EDUCATION BLOCK GRANT

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January 1986

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Prepared for.

U.S. Department of Education,
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Washington, D C 20202

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Reports from the

National Study of Local Operations under Chapter 2

Michael S. Knapp Craig H. Blakely	The Education Block Grant at the Local Level: The Implementation of Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act in Districts and Schools
Michael S. Knapp	Legislative Goals for the Education Block Grant: Have they been Achieved at the Local Level
Richard Apling Christine L. Padilla	Funds Allocation and Expenditures under the Education Block Grant
Rhonda Ann Cooperstein	Participation of Private School Students in Services Supported by the Education Block Grant
Craig H. Blakely Marian S. Stearns	Involvement of Parents and Citizens in Local Decisionmaking Under the Education Block Grant
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PREFACE

This document is one of a series of reports resulting from SRI's National Study of Local Operations Under Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA). Chapter 2--the first federally supported education block grant--consolidated 28 former categorical programs into a grant of funds to all school districts, to be used for any of the purposes in the preceding programs. The block grant was implemented in school districts across the nation in the 1982-83 school year, following passage of ECIA in 1981.

In response to numerous demands for information about the block grant's implementation and effects from the U.S. Congress, other federal agencies, and interest groups, and in anticipation of its own need to inform debate on reauthorization and appropriations, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) commissioned SRI International, in collaboration with Policy Studies Associates (PSA), in 1983, to study Chapter 2. The two-year inventigation was to focus its data collection on the third year of implementation, the 1984-85 school year, although information was also gathered to examine the first two years of Chapter 2 and the year preceding it, the last in which programs consolidated into the block grant were operating.

The SRI study did not take place in a vacuum. For various reasons--among them, the newness of the block grant mechanism in federal education aid, the lack of a formal reporting route from the local to federal levels, the fact that shifting to a block grant format significantly redistributed funds among districts--numerous smaller investigations were mounted by federal agencies (including ED), independent research, which we review in Section I and in other reports, documented various effects in, but also left many questions unanswered about the effects of the block grant at the local level over the longer term.

Building on the foundation built by these earlier studies, the SRI investigation had the following purposes:

(1) Describe local activities and operations under Chapter 2 in the program's third year, noting changes over the first three years of the program and changes from antecedent programs.

(2) Assess the achievement of federal legislative goals, in particular, educational improvement, reduction in administrative burden, and an increase in programmatic discretion at the local level.

(3) Describe how the federal block grant mechanism (Chapter 2 funding or guidelines and state actions or interpretations) influences LEA activities.

(4) Determine how state and local education agencies evaluate their Chapter 2 programs and develope options so that the Department of Education (ED) can offer technical assistance.

(5) Draw lessons from Chapter 2 implementation and effects for future federal policies.

To fulfill these purposes and obtain a comprehensive description of local activities and operations under Chapter 2, the study is organized around five major topics. Each of these represents a purpose of the law or a set of issues regarding the block grant mechanism.

- Education service delivery (concerning the nature of education services supported by Chapter 2 and their contribution to education improvement).
- Funds allocation and expenditure (concerning the types of expenditures under Chapter 2 and the influences on local spending).
- Local program administration and decisionmaking (concerning the way in which programs are administered and the effect on administration/paperwork burden; the nature of the decision process, the participation of parents/citizens, and implications for the exercise of local discretion; local evaluation activities).
- Services for private school students (concerning expenditures for services to private school students and the administration of these services).
- Intergovernmental relations (concerning the roles and interaction of local, state, and federal levels under Chapter 2).

The results of the study have been reported in three ways:

(1) A comprehensive report, emphasizing descriptive findings in all topic areas and summarizing the analyses in special issue reports.

(2) A series of shorter reports addressing five special issues: the participation of parents and citizens in decisionmaking (the topic of this report), the achievement of legislative goals, the allocation and expenditure of funds, services to private school students, and intergovernmental relations.

(3) An options paper for state and local audiences regarding ways to evaluate activities supported by the block grant.

Titles and authors of all these reports are listed on the back of the title page of this document.

Michael S. Knapp,
Project Director

December 1985

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research presented in this report drew on the ideas, energy, and perseverance of many people who advised the National Study of Local Operations under Chapter 2. We wish to acknowledge their contributions and thank them for their willingness to help the study toward successful completion.

We owe much to the patience and support of various state Chapter 2 coordinators, who listened to plans for the study, made suggestions, and encouraged their districts to participate. Those who sat on the Study's Advisory Panel--Weaver Rogers, Darrell Arnold, and Carolyn Skidmore--and the members of the State Chapter 2 Coordinator's Steering Committee deserve special mention.

The findings of our research synthesize the responses of many school and district staff, school board members, parents, and others at the local level. To all who took the time to respond to our questionnaires or answer interview questions, we owe the deepest gratitude--for taking the time to provide information that helps those at a greater distance understand what the block grant contributes to their schools or school districts. Particular school district staff, who advised us during the course of the study, deserve special mention: Todd Endo, Gerald King, Tom Rosica, Ken Tyson, and Alan Osterndorf.

Numerous national associations and interest groups have helped shape the plans for the study, critiqued draft reports, or both. We would like to thank Susan Hennessy, Council of Chief State School Officers (also members of its Committee for Evaluation and Information Systems); Claudia Mansfield, American Association of School Administrators; Marilyn Rauth, American Federation of Teachers; Robert Smith, American Council on Private Education; Joseph McElligott, California Catholic Conference; Michael Casserly, Council of the Great City Schools; Arnold Fege, National Parent Teachers Association; James Jess, Rural Education Association; Anne Henderson, National Committee for Citizens in Education.

In the U.S. Department of Education, individuals in many parts of the agency took an interest in the study and helped focus its questions and approach to research. The Project Officer, Carol Chelemer, of the Planning and Evaluation Service in the Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation, shepherded the investigation through its various stages with humor, insight, and unwavering support. Gary Hanna reviewed study plans and an earlier version of this report with a helpful and critical eye. We much appreciated the contributions of others in the Department, among them: Janice Anderson, Charles Blum, Lois Bowman, Cecil Brown, Lawrence Davenport, Fred Graves, Linda Hall, Patricia Jones, Allen King, Stanley Kruger, Patsy Matthews, David Morgan, Kay Rigling, Robert Stonehill, Kenneth Terrell, and Zulla Toney.

In other federal agencies and the U.S Congress, we found individuals who were insightful about what needed to be studied, how to gather the information, and the ways to present our findings. We wish especially to thank: Mary Kennedy, National Institute of Education; Paul Grishkat, David Bellis, and Frederick Mulhauser, U.S. General Accounting Office; Kathy Burchard, Barry White, Richard O'Brien, and Barbara Young, U.S. Office of Management and Budget; Dan Koretz, Congressional Budget Office; Jack Jennings, Marc Smolonsky, and Richard DiEugenio, congressional staff in the U.S. House of Representatives; Bruce Post and Ann Young, congressional staff in the U.S. Senate.

Colleagues in universities, research firms, and elsewhere contributed wide-ranging technical expertise to the various design and analysis issues confronting the study.

Finally, the dedication and professionalism of the entire study team was the key to making this research successful. Marian Stearns, Director of SRI's Social Sciences Department and Project Director during the study's design phase, deserves special mention for her unflagging enthusiasm and good sense about research on federal aid to education. The authors would also like to thank Michael Knapp for his guidance and support in completing this report. Others on the study team, besides the authors of other reports (see inside cover), include these SRI staff: Linda Burr, Marion Collins, Carolyn Estey, Elaine Guagliardo, Mary Hancock, Shirley Hentzell, Deborah Jay, Ruth Krasnow, Klaus Krause, Lynn Newman, Ellen Renneker, Debra Richards, Suzanne Andrick, Tim Stolese and Kathy Valdes. Other individuals who worked as field staff helped us gather useful interview information on numerous field visits: Brian Delaney, Peggy Estrada, Gene Franks, Susan Peters, and Stephen Thornton.

To all these people, we wish to say that your contributions were much appreciated.

NOTES FOR READING TABLES

Tables in this report are generally broken out by district size category, because the enormously skewed distribution of districts nationwide may distort the reader's understanding of national estimates (the large number of very small districts, for example, means that most overall estimates are largely a reflection of these). The breakout also enables the reader to appreciate the considerable differences in block grant impact and implementation in districts of different size.

Size categories also comprise differing proportions of the nation's student population. We indicate below the number and percentage of districts falling in each size category, as well as the proportion of the nation's students represented.

Where relevant, the "very large" category has been further subdivided into urban districts and suburban county systems (which may include a moderate-sized city as well) because the characteristics and responses of these two types differ substantially.

District Size (Enrollment)	Number (and percentage) of districts within range	Proportion of nation's students
Very large (25,000 or greater)	163 (1.0%)	25.8%
Urban	92 (0.6%)	15.8
Suburban	71 (0.5%)	10.0
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	466 (3.0%)	17.3
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	3,027 (19.5%)	35.1
Small (600 to 2,499)	5,369 (34.6%)	17.9
Very small (Less than 600)	6,508 (41.9%)	3.8
TOTAL	15,533 (100%)	100.0%

Wherever tables are presented without subdivision into these categories, the reader may assume that the differences among categories are statistically insignificant or irrelevant to the analysis in question.

To simplify presentation, tables do not include standard errors. These and accompanying technical notes may be found in Appendix A.

I INTRODUCTION

This report examines the involvement of parents and other citizens in local decisionmaking under Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA), the federal education block grant. The block grant consolidated 32 former federal programs, hereafter referred to as the "antecedent" programs, most of which had made funds available on a competitive basis for specified purposes, such as the development of innovative practices, desegregation assistance, or library support.* Under ECIA, federal aid is distributed to state education agencies which, in turn, distribute the funds to local school districts through state-established formulas. States may reserve 20% of the funds for their use. Some choose to distribute an additional proportion of this 20% set-aside to the districts through the state formula or minigrants programs.

One intent of the ECIA block grant was to move the decisionmaking base for federally supported educational programs closer to the local level. Under the categorical programs consolidated into the block grant, federal regulations or state agencies administering the funds were more specific about what constituted "appropriate" uses of the funds. By contrast, the Chapter 2 block grant gives local educational agencies (LEAs) considerable discretion in deciding how to use the funds. As in many federal programs, including some of those consolidated into Chapter 2, the law requires school districts to consult systematically with parents and other citizens in the decisionmaking process and to involve them in the design and implementation

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* The exact number of programs consolidated into Chapter 2 depends on whether one counts individual authorizations as programs; see Appendix B.

of activities supported by Chapter 2 funds. This was partly an expression of the intent to ensure that programs would reflect local educational needs.

The legislation poses a difficult challenge for district administrators, similar to one they have faced before with other federal education programs, including some of the ones folded into Chapter 2, but with two important differences. First, the breadth of allowable purposes under the block grant means that there is not a natural constituency for the services that might be provided. Presumably, the whole community is to be represented in decisionmaking, if any part of it is. Second, while block grant legislation expresses the intention to have parents involved, it is not specific about the mechanisms that districts might employ to involve them. In keeping with the spirit of the block grant, districts are left to devise whatever mechanisms they deem to be most appropriate.

As with all federal programs, involvement of parents takes place in the context of the existing relationship between schools and the community. Some state-level surveys and case studies of local activities have investigated this topic (e.g., Henderson, 1985, Kyle, 1985; Perilla and Orum, 1984; Rossman, Corbett, and Dawson, 1984), but they have not produced nationally representative data on the ways districts have tried to consult with parents nor on the extent of parental involvement in school district decisionmaking about the uses of Chapter 2 funds. In this special-issue report, we address that need, basing our findings on a nationally representative survey collected as part of the National Study of Local Operations Under Chapter 2. We supplement and interpret the survey findings with data from case study visits in a variety of districts across the nation.

Background

During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, active parent advocacy groups formed around programs targeted to the disadvantaged, handicapped, and limited-English-proficient (LEP) populations. To some extent, these

"categorical" programs were shaped in response to pressure from these advocacy groups. During this period, the federal government formalized the role of parents and advocates for targeted student populations by increasing the requirements for advisory councils, compliance monitoring, and due-process procedures. The progression was most noticeable in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now Chapter 1 of ECIA:

- In 1968, the U.S. Office of Education recommended that districts establish parent advisory councils as a formal mechanism to involve parents in local Title I operations.
- In 1970, the federal law required the establishment of district-level parent advisory councils.
- In 1974, ESEA amendments required the establishment of school-level parent advisory councils.
- In 1978, federal amendments and regulations detailed the requirements on the formation and role of parent advisory councils.

Some of the programs folded into the block grant resembled Title I in that they prescribed mechanisms for consulting with parents, who represented defined constituencies to which program services were targeted. Others lacked significant provisions for bringing parents or community members into the program, as Table I-1 shows. Still others, not shown in the table, made no reference whatever to parents or the community. A few examples capture the range of parent involvement patterns for the largest of these antecedent programs:

- The Teacher Corps Program, a training program for teachers in schools serving disadvantaged children, required cooperation among school districts, colleges of education, and the local community. Members of local disadvantaged groups were included as trainees; an elected community council represented the interests of the community in program policymaking.
- Title IV-B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which provided funds for libraries and learning materials in nearly every district nationwide, had few requirements for parent involvement.

Table I-1

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SELECTED FEDERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS CONSOLIDATED INTO CHAPTER 2*

A Comparison of Antecedent Program Provisions with Those Required by the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA)

Programs	National Advisory Council	State Advisory Council	District Advisory Council	Project Advisory Council	Complaint procedures	Individual parent involvement	Parent involvement incentives	Public hearings on plans	Grants to local groups	Services to parents
Programs consolidated into Chapter 2:										
Emergency School Aid	—	—	—	X	—	—	—	X (local)	X	X
Basic Skills	—	—	—	—	—	X	—	—	—	X
School Resources	—	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
School Improvement	—	X	—	X	—	—	—	—	—	X
Innovative Practices	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gifted and Talented	—	—	—	—	—	—	X	X (local)	X	—
Community Schools	X	—	—	—	—	Y	—	—	X	X
Consumer's Education	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	X	X
Ethnic Heritage Studies	X	—	—	X	—	—	—	—	X	—
Teacher Corps	—	—	—	X	X	X	—	X	—	X (opt.)
Education Consolidation and Improvement Act										
Chapter 2	—	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	X (opt.)

*Only those programs with parent or public involvement requirements are included.

Adapted from: Network: A National School-year Newspaper for Parents, Sept. 1981.

- Title IV-C of ESEA funds were for developing, adopting, and disseminating exemplary instructional programs. The regulations required a planning process and local school board approvals. Some of the programs that school districts developed with this federal aid had an important parent-involvement component; others did not.

- The Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) required parent advisory councils. Funds were targeted to districts that were undergoing desegregation or trying to remedy problems of racial isolation. Parents of students in districts receiving ESAA funds were often involved in groups representing different positions on desegregation.

- Title II of ESEA, the basic-skills improvement program, required involvement of parents in a detailed, district-level program-planning process and in school and classroom activities within the instructional program--often as volunteer teaching aides.

Other programs, such as Title III, Part B, of ESEA (metric education) which originated from private-sector employer interests, had no requirements for parental involvement. Parental involvement was fairly heavy in local programs for gifted and talented students, although federal requirements were not the impetus for this involvement.

Intent of the 1981 ECIA Block Grant Legislation

By contrast with the antecedent programs (and many other federal programs still existing), the block grant legislation brought a different philosophy to bear on the federal role in school district affairs and a different rationale for consultation between school districts and parents. Rather than telling districts what kinds of services to provide for their students (and sometimes, for which students), the law merely suggests that, in making decisions, districts be sensitive to the needs of local students and responsive to parental interests in education and those of other citizens. In line with a mood shift in the general society, the legislation reflects a conviction that the federal role in program administration has become much too complex, too top-heavy, and overly specified and intrusive (McLaughlin, 1982).

In aggregate, these antecedent programs established a variety of local traditions that represent the baseline for patterns of involvement under the block grant.

The different types of provisions in Table I-1 imply three distinct meanings for "involvement." The first could be classified as advice or consultation, typically accomplished through advisory groups that meet periodically to comment on plans or the program's progress. The second has more to do with accountability to the community: public hearings and grievance procedures fall into this category as might other kinds of requirements not shown in Table I-1, such as periodic reporting or required comment (or even sign-offs) on applications. A third meaning of involvement refers to the provision of services, either to parents (e.g., community education) or with their assistance (e.g., as volunteers or paid aides providing services to others).

As we show below, the legislation places the locus of control closer to local voters and parents and simultaneously reduces the federal role in decisionmaking. The law suggests that the district look to the parents of the children they serve and their community's needs (as well as to the teachers and school building administrators) to determine the direction of their educational program and uses of the Chapter 2 grant funds.

The consolidation of antecedent programs under Chapter 2 not only allows districts substantially increased discretion in determining the use of these funds but also requires simpler applications and fewer reports. This change implies a belief, among other things, that responsiveness to local needs would be increased if "reporting up" obligations could be reduced--that the time and attention of school boards and administrators could be focused locally if federal-level agencies would not demand, so much documentation and reporting. The law states:

> It is the intent of Congress that this responsibility be carried out with a minimum of paperwork and that the responsibility for the design and implementation of programs assisted under the chapter shall be

> mainly that of local educational agencies, school superintendents and principals, and classroom teachers and supporting personnel, because they have the most direct contact with students and are most directly responsible to parents and because they are the most likely to be able to design programs to meet the educational needs of the students in their own districts (ECIA, Section 561(b) as amended December 1983).

Further, the law states an actual requirement for "systematic parental consultation." One condition of receiving funding under the block grant is that in the allocation of funds for programs authorized by this chapter, and in the design, planning, and implementation of such programs, [the district's application] provides for systematic consultation with parents of children attending elementary and secondary schools in the area served by the local agency, with teachers and administrative personnel in such schools, and with other groups as may be deemed appropriate by the local educational agency (ECIA, Section 566(a)).

Unlike legislation governing many of the antecedent programs, the law does not suggest or require specific mechanisms, such as advisory councils, needs assessments, or community elections by which districts should carry out this "systematic consultation" requirement. The particular way in which parents are to be involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking is not spelled out in federal regulations either. However, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has offered some advice on the matter, in the form of "nonregulatory guidance," that helps to interpret the intent of the law, while leaving the burden of decisions at the local level. ED's Nonregulatory Guidance (NRG) states that:

> It is the responsibility of each LEA to define, based on local needs and circumstances, what standards constitute "systematic consultation with parents." However, "systematic consultation" normally would be an ongoing process that is open to all interested persons and is calculated to provide advice within a time frame that can affect the ultimate decision.

and

> Consultation involves the allocation of funds and the design, planning, and implementation of Chapter 2 programs. Although the form of consultation is a matter for local decision, Congress appears to have

> contemplated additional consultation beyond, or supplemental to, standard local practice exemplified by school board meetings. If an LEA does choose to make the local school board the vehicle for such consultation, Chapter 2 should be a standing item on the board's agenda for all public meetings.

As for accountability to the public, federal regulations or law are mute: provisions such as public comment on applications, reports, or public hearings are not mentioned (GAO, 1982). As can be seen in Table I-1, the only specific mandate requires states to establish, at the state level, an advisory council that includes a parent representative. Although influential in the construction of state formulas for the distribution of funds to LEAs, these councils did not have impact on local decisions. We are left to assume that the legislation intends or assumes that accountability to parents or other community members will happen naturally, as a by-product of systematic consultation, or else that this is not the concern of federal legislation. However, federal nonregulatory guidance addresses this issue by indicating that:

> Meaningful parent involvement requires adequate information upon which to base that involvement. LEAs may wish to consider providing parents, or making available to parents--in an ongoing, timely, and adequate manner--proposed and final project applications, needs assessment documents, project plans, budgetary information, evaluation data, local, State, and Federal laws, regulations, and guidelines, and any other Chapter 2 information needed for full, effective parent participation.

Previous Research and Study Questions

Previous research and the position statements of several advocacy groups have guided some of the research questions and policy issues addressed by this research effort. For example, research on local planning processes under Chapter 2 has noted the existence of strong ongoing planning mechanisms--mostly district committees that had parent members--in five of the nine states from which case study information was collected (Kyle, 1985). Although not dealing directly with parent involvement in decisionmaking, this study presented a positive picture of community

awareness and involvement in Chapter 2 planning by suggesting that parents were aware of and involved in Chapter 2 decisions. Other researchers who investigated the coping strategies of five school districts as Chapter 2 replaced the antecedent programs also drew similar conclusions regarding parent involvement, indicating that the districts were operating in a supportive community environment (Corbett, Rossman, and Dawson, 1983).

Research and commentary by others, particularly groups seeking to encourage more active participation of the public in educational affairs, strikes a more pessimistic note. In one view (not tested with data), the lack of required mechanisms for parent involvement in Chapter 2 sends a message to district administrators that they need not be too concerned about soliciting parental input--in short, "minimum requirements will become maximum activities" (Henderson, 1983, 1985). A similar view concerns the information made available to the public: because districts are required to submit fewer reports about their activities under Chapter 2 than under other programs, it will be harder for the public to hold the districts accountable (Henderson, 1983). Research by a national organization representing one minority group provides some evidence for this assertion. In response to attempts by the organization's local affiliates (in 35 cities) to obtain reports or other information about Chapter 2 funds use or programmatic activities, most districts said they had no Chapter 2 "plan" for parents to see. These refusals or "stonewalling" from a number of the district administrators approached stimulated the researchers' concern about district accountability to the public (Perilla and Orum, 1984).

These differing reports and positions on parent involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking helped shape the questions in our investigation. In particular, we were eager to determine, from both survey work in large samples of districts and more focused case study investigation, how districts responded to the lack of specificity in the law and to document district response to the suggestions in federal nonregulatory guidance. To put findings about parent involvement in context, we also sought to describe the basic patterns of district decisionmaking under the block grant.

Finally, we wished to document and explain the extent of parent involvement in, and influence (either direct or indirect) on, decisions about Chapter 2 funds and the implementation of Chapter 2-supported activities. Ultimately, we were concerned about whether the intent of Chapter 2--to make local education responsive to local needs--was reflected in district actions, parent or citizen participation, and the influence of local citizens on program-related decisionmaking.

The specific research questions we addressed are as follows:

Local Decisionmaking Patterns

1. Who is involved in decisionmaking and what are their relative roles in the decisionmaking process?

2. Do decisionmaking patterns differ for allocation or implementation decisions? Do they differ at the district and school level?

District Actions to Involve Parents

3. How do districts implement the "systematic consultation" requirements in the law?

4. What mechanisms are used to involve parents or other citizens?

5. What information is made available to the public?

Extent of Involvement in Chapter 2 Decisionmaking

6. To what extent is the public directly involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking?

7. How actively do parents seek involvement?

8. What segments of the public are involved?

9. Is it different from public influence in other district decisionmaking?

Direct and Indirect Influences on Decisions

10. How much direct influence do parents or citizens have on decisions about the uses of Chapter 2 funds?

11. Do parents or citizens exert any indirect influences on these decisions?

Methods and Data Sources

We have assembled evidence to answer these questions from two data sources:

- A nationally representative mail survey of 1,600 districts during the middle of the 1984-85 school year, the third year of Chapter 2's implementation at the local level. Districts were selected randomly within a stratification grid defined by three variables: district size, regional location, and level of antecedent funding per pupil. District Chapter 2 coordinators filled out the questionnaire. Response to the survey was high: overall, 78.2% of the districts that were sent questionnaires returned them.

- Site visits to 24 school districts in 8 states. A subset of the mail survey sample districts was chosen to reflect the principal variations in district size, regional location, and antecedent funding levels represented in the mail survey stratification grid. The choice of sites balanced a number of other selection criteria: metropolitan status, presence of a desegregation plan, fiscal condition, proportion of students educated in nonpublic schools, nature and level of interest group activity, types of activities supported by block grant funds, and relationships with intermediate units. These site visits took place in the fall of the 1984-85 school year. During site visits, which lasted between 2 and 5 days depending on the size of the district, we interviewed a variety of district administrators, school staff, school board members, and parents. Some examples have also been drawn from a second site visit sample of 24 sites in 13 states.

The types of data collected from these sources were coordinated so that what we learned from one could be related to findings from another. Mail survey items, for example, were asked as part of the interviews done during case studies. Other interview questions probed more deeply the information gained from the mail survey.

Further information on the study's research methods appears in an appendix to the main descriptive report of the National Study (Knapp and Blakely, 1986).

Organization of the Report

In the remaining sections of this report, we present findings (Sections II, III, and IV) and conclusions (Section V). The findings are separated into three parts. First, in Section II, we provide context for later sections by detailing general findings about the district Chapter 2 decisionmaking processes. Section III describes findings pertaining to district efforts to involve parents or other citizens, the mechanisms established to facilitate parent and citizen involvement in district Chapter 2 decisions, and the relationship between those actions and parent and citizen involvement patterns. Section IV addresses the degree to which parents and citizens are involved in district decisionmaking, the amount of influence (direct or indirect) they exert on district decisions, and reasons for involvement patterns. In essence, this section provides a picture of parent and citizen actions directed at influencing district Chapter 2 decisions and the impact they demonstrated. In Section V, we summarize the highlights of our findings and interpret their meaning.

II THE LOCAL DECISIONMAKING PROCESS UNDER CHAPTER 2*

Local decisionmaking processes under Chapter 2 provide context for the discussion of parent involvement. We first differentiate the types of decisions involved in Chapter 2 and examine the relative importance of the different types of participants that could take part in these decisions. We then describe the basic patterns of decisionmaking involved in allocating block grants funds to different uses, which takes place primarily at the district level, and in implementing the activities supported by the block grant. We close the section with an examination of school staff roles and their relationship to the district.

Allocation and Implementation Decisions

When one examines local operations under the block grant firsthand, it quickly becomes apparent that two types of decisions are implied: overall allocation decisions that direct funds to certain uses (e.g., computers rather than elementary guidance) and decisions about implementing the activities that receive block grant support (e.g., which computers do we buy? where will the computers be located?). The cast of characters and the kinds of influence they wield differ by type. A Chapter 2 coordinator in a small midwestern city described the process in a way that captures a widespread pattern among districts of all sizes:

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* This section is adapted from analyses reported in other reports from this study (See Knapp and Blakely, 1986; Knapp, 1986).

> When we received notice of the amount of Chapter 2 money, we started a process with several steps. First, the executive cabinet [superintendent, assistant superintendent for instruction, business officer, and several other high-level administrators] looked at it and we made general decisions...We talked about educational TV but saw the computer education need. Second, we brought in the special projects coordinator, who set up a planning committee to develop a plan...We thought this was the new thing, the wave of the future. We didn't know for sure until the committee studied it and developed a plan. Third, we put it to the Curriculum Committee of the Board, and through them to the whole Board.

Allocation decisions tend to be made at the district office level, involving at least nominal consultation with various parties. Implementation decisions are more often made by school staff, or by a combination of district and school staff, as they design and conduct the activities to which Chapter 2 funds contribute, although some of the planning for implementation may happen in districtwide committees.

Chapter 2-related decisions of either type are likely to be part of a larger, ongoing process of making decisions about special programs or the district's educational program as a whole. For example, district officials tend not to establish distinct Chapter 2 decisionmaking bodies, but prefer to use existing mechanisms such as a Chapter 1 program advisory committee, a district curriculum planning group, or the Superintendent's cabinet. This has an important implication for the block grant's effects on parent involvement: it is likely to support existing patterns of influence and participation rather than create new ones.

It is not unusual for the most important allocation decisions to have been made early in the implementation of Chapter 2 (e.g., the 1982-83 school year) and not changed since, even though some adjustments in the use of funds may have happened each year. This pattern was especially common in the case of computer applications, which often spanned the three years of the block grant, as districts gradually acquired a number of computers and related software and implemented training programs. Some districts put in place elaborate plans to implement computer-assisted instruction in the secondary schools during the first year of a multiyear plan, in the middle

schools during the second year, and in the elementary schools during the third year. The fact that many states operate on a three-year application cycle (allowing districts to update the first year's application) also contributes to the pattern. The fact that allocation decisions often apply to a span of several years may reduce the frequency with which parents might be asked for advice (and also their interest in such decisions).

Mail survey responses, corroborated by on-site observations, allowed us to assess the relative influence of different categories of participants in local decisionmaking. Overall, Chapter 2 coordinators indicated that parents have "a very important influence" on Chapter 2-related decisions in approximately a third of all districts. Overall, parents ranked sixth--ahead of board members and other community members, but behind all other categories--in terms of the frequency with which they are perceived this way. The Superintendent, teachers, the Chapter 2 coordinators, principals, and other district administrators are more frequently cited as having a "very important influence" on decisions, in that order. Responses probably refer to decisionmaking about both allocation of funds and implementation of the resulting activities. Thus, although teachers and principals appeared to be heavily involved in decisionmaking, their role in overall allocation decisions is not great in most cases, whereas their role in school-level implementation decisions is substantial, especially in smaller districts.

On the basis of the following analyses, it will be apparent that a few participant types exercise considerable influence over allocation decisions, while most others (including parents) participate in a more peripheral way. Implementation decisions are generally the province of school staff, with considerable input from the district office, depending on the general locus of control within the district.

Making Decisions About the Allocation of Chapter 2 Funds

Almost by definition, the federal programs coordinator or Chapter 2 coordinator is at the center of allocation decisions. Frequently, one or

two others join the Chapter 2 coordinator as central players in allocation decisions--the superintendent (or relevant assistant superintendent), the Chapter 2 coordinator's immediate superior (e.g., the federal programs manager in larger districts), or other district staff with a particular interest in block grant funding. It is usual for these individuals to use a high-level group such as the superintendent's cabinet as the principal forum for batting around possibilities. Some examples illustrate three common patterns of district-level participation in Chapter 2 decisions.

- One-person show. In many districts, especially in smaller or medium-sized ones, a single individual is the driving force behind allocation decisions. In some cases it is the Superintendent (or Assistant Superintendent) who sees Chapter 2 dollars as an opportunity to set a particular program in motion or otherwise contribute to a high-priority activity. More often, the Chapter 2 coordinator, by virtue of position and administrative assignment (which may derive from an antecedent program responsibility), exerts primary control over these decisions and other aspects of the decisionmaking process--for example, who is kept informed about the availability or amount block grant funds.

- District-level insiders' group. Typically through informal consultation, the Chapter 2 coordinator and several other key administrators, some with responsibility for federal/state programs, others from line administration (perhaps including the Superintendent) discuss possibilities for the use of the funds and arrive at some consensus among themselves; they subsequently "sell" the idea to others, whose acquiescence is necessary for the idea to be realized.

- Districtwide committee. In some instances, a powerful districtwide committee speaks for Chapter 2 funds and effectively gains control over them. We saw this most dramatically illustrated in the case of committees set up under one or another antecedent program, as in the case of a districtwide librarians' committee in a suburban midwestern district described as follows: "The librarians are very possessive about their Chapter 2 money in this district. They would be extremely agitated if the district would choose to put the funds into other areas. The district would have a mutiny on its hands." (The Chapter 2 coordinator had suggested other uses but gave in to the librarians' pressure.)

This nucleus of district-level decisionmakers might or might not involve others, depending on existing traditions and mechanisms of decisionmaking or the internal politics of the district. As often as not,

we found evidence that the core group attempts to limit participation in these decisions, for fear of losing control of the process. These decisionmakers are typically well aware of the wide range of potential uses for block grant funds but do not wish to go through a protracted process of considering all possibilities, preferring instead to focus more quickly on a few options they believe are most important. Centralized control of decisionmaking (at least for allocation decisions) also seems to be associated with those districts that used block grant funds to stimulate innovations. A superintendent described his interest in the block grant in these terms: "I can use these funds to get things going. I put out the original idea, but leave the implementation to district administrators."

We found relatively little evidence of extensive consultation with school staff about how to allocate the block grant funds, even though a teacher or principal was often a member of the relevant district planning committee. There was, however, considerable difference by size category: in smaller districts with only a few schools, school staff tended to play a more significant role. The more usual scenarios resembled the following situation described by a principal in a large district located in a small midwestern city:

> You know, I have this question. Why did the district decide on computers versus staff development? Probably, what happens: someone is in the right place at the right time. I'm not complaining, but we don't always look at all options. [With this decision] I got the feeling the decision had been made. No one asked me: hey, what do you want done with this block grant money?

Typically, school board members were not active participants in the district-level decisionmaking just described. Few of the school board members we interviewed, for example, had detailed knowledge of what Chapter 2 funds supported; some were not sure what Chapter 2 was (it was not unusual for interviewees to have been briefed on Chapter 2 by district office staff prior to our site visit). As the mail survey findings presented in Table II-1 suggest, the board's role was generally to approve recommendations brought to it by district administrators. In only a small proportion of districts did board members debate the uses of funds.

Table TI-1

SCHOOL BOARD'S ROLE IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING

District Size (Enrollment)	Percentage of districts in which school board... Debated the uses of Chapter 2 funds	Approved budgets for Chapter 2 programs/ purchases	Received information about Chapter 2 programs/ purchases
Very large (25,000 or more)	18%	91%	85%
Urban	18	91	86
Suburban	18	92	82
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	13	79	94
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	14	76	86
Small (600 to 2,499)	10	64	82
Very small (less than 600)	18	63	77
All districts	14%	67%	81%

Comments from the district officials and board members we interviewed explain the pattern. A Board President in a suburban district spoke for many districts as she described her Board's relationship to Chapter 2.

> As for our involvement with Chapter 2, the only thing is the application each year. It comes as a recommendation to us to approve. There was never an instance to say what should go into the program....the Board does not really have much input. We think that's why we hire our top administrators....People are not much concerned with little pots of money.

These patterns make it unlikely that parents would be actively represented or would involve themselves in allocation decisions. The inner circle of key district-level decisionmakers tends to be small and somewhat exclusive. Two of the most natural routes for parents to become aware of Chapter 2--through staff at the schools attended by their children and via school board members who represented them--were likely to be remote from allocation decisions.

Making Decisions About the Implementation of Chapter 2-Supported Activities

Implementation patterns under the block grant are far more varied than allocations decisions, affording many more opportunities for some kind of input from parents. The manner of implementing Chapter 2 depends on the activities supported by the block grant. The diversity of these activities and the profound differences in district context (reflecting size of district, setting, student context) mean that the arrangements for carrying out Chapter 2 takes many forms, often within the same district. Some typical examples capture the range of implementation arrangements and the ways in which parents might participate:

- Support for libraries and media centers. Chapter 2 funds typically provide an additional amount to the budget for materials and equipment of each school library or for district-level library or media center acquisitions. Librarians or media center directors are the key participants in the implementation of this kind of

activity. Parents can volunteer to work in libraries and, by so doing, have the opportunity to influence the way Chapter 2 funds contribute to the library's collection.

- Computer applications. Computer hardware or software purchases made with Chapter 2 funds and their subsequent use are typically guided by district and school-level committees composed of interested teachers and administrators. Parents can play various roles in the implementation of these programs, among them, advising on computer purchases (if they are knowledgeable) or tutoring students in computer labs.

- Curriculum development. Chapter 2 funds support various kinds of curriculum improvement efforts, typically carried out by small writing teams composed of selected teachers and district curriculum supervisors. Parents' advice might be sought in the design of curricula, for example, as draft curricula are being reviewed and revised.

As these examples show, school staff (and sometimes staff from the district level) tend to have more significant input than other types of participants into implementation decisions, principally because most activities supported by the block grant are carried out in the school.

Community Setting

These basic decisionmaking patterns reflect important features of the community setting. The differences among these settings can make enormous differences in the likelihood that parents and other citizens will become involved in the decisions surrounding a federal program. Such characteristics of the school districts as size (defined by geography as well as enrollment), population diversity (in terms of mobility, socioeconomic status, ethnic/language differences), metropolitan status (rural, urban, suburban), and employment patterns (agricultural, industrial, technical) may have much to do with parents' availability, awareness, interest, or access to decisionmaking events. The situation confronting the Chapter 2 coordinator in a large county school district encompassing highly politicized, multiethnic cities differs from that facing the district in a farm community where school teachers and administrators are among the most

steadily employed and highly educated members of the community. In the former case, it is difficult to determine how one gets representation for the parents of students in the several hundred schools.

In either case, it is difficult for Chapter 2 coordinators to know which "community" to consider and what members of that community should be consulted. It is easier to identify parent and community representatives after deciding what kind of program Chapter 2 funds will support.

Summary

The analyses reported in this section support the following findings. With regard to decisions about the allocation of funds to particular activities, we found that:

(1) One or a few district-level administrators (e.g., the Chapter 2 coordinator, the superintendent, or extant committee of some kind) typically control decisions about the uses of funds; school staff, school board members, and parents or other community members tend to have relatively little role in these decisions.

(2) The core decisionmaking group in the district office may involve others in more of an advisory capacity, but their influence is generally weak. Key decisionmakers may, in fact, take steps to limit the potential involvement of others in the decisionmaking process.

(3) With regard to decisions about the implementation of Chapter 2-supported activities, we found that decisions about the implementation of Chapter 2-supported activities are more typically the province of school staff, although district staff may play an important role in planning, design, or supervision. A few parents may be included in these kinds of implementation decisions.

(4) At the level of implementation, participation and influence patterns are as varied as the activities Chapter 2 supports and the local arrangements for carrying out instructional programs, thus affording more opportunities for parents to become involved.

Regarding the implications of the community setting for decisionmaking and parent involvement, we found that:

(5) Differences among districts in terms of size, population diversity, metropolitan status, and employment patterns have a great deal of influence on parents' availability, awareness, interest, or access to decisionmaking events.

III DISTRICT ACTIONS TO INVOLVE PARENTS

This section addresses what districts do to involve parents and other citizens in Chapter 2 decisions and how district administrators have responded to the law's "systematic consultation" requirement. We first look at the kind of decisionmaking that parents get brought into and the mechanisms by which districts involve parents. Next we examine the kinds of Chapter 2 information that districts make available to the public. Finally, we look at how district actions link to the amount of parent involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking.

Most of these data have been collected from school district personnel, especially the questionnaire results reported in tables. Interviews with school board members, advisory committee members (typically parents), and a few other parents during site visits helped us interpret these results, as the discussion indicates. Nonetheless, the findings presented here for the most part reflect the perspective of local Chapter 2 administrators.

Mechanisms for Involving Parents and Citizens

As described in Section II, districts can involve parents or other community members in the original decisions about the use of Chapter 2 funds (typically made at district level) or in the decisions about the details of program implementation (typically made at school level). Our data suggest that districts are more likely to involve parents in implementation than allocation decisions. For instance, districts use parents as consultants in computer purchasing decisions, or on book selection committees in the library/media center. To the extent that parents are involved at all, it is in details and school-level decisions rather than in decisions regarding overall plans at the district level.

To get the advice of parents or others on these matters, district administrators report using a variety of mechanisms. Table III-1 shows the percentages of districts reporting the use of committee structures, needs surveys, and other mechanisms to involve parents in the decisionmaking process.

Table III-1

METHODS OF DISTRICT CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS AND CITIZENS

Method of Consultation	Percentage of districts
School board meetings	62
Existing advisory committee	37
Consultation with individuals	26
PTA meetings	22
Chapter 2 committee	21
Parent survey	9
Other parent consultation	6
No consultation	11

We shall describe below the categories noted in Table III-1 and present examples of each from our site visits.

School Board Meetings

The primary mechanism through which districts have encouraged "parents and other citizens" to participate in Chapter 2 decisionmaking has been school board meetings. Of the districts queried, 62% cited school board meetings as a method they used for consultation with "parents and other

citizens." As can be seen in Table III-2, use of this mechanism does not vary much by district size. It is the vehicle most cited by districts, regardless of size, for satisfying the parent consultation requirements in the law.

Although federal nonregulatory guidance clearly states that consultations should occur in time to influence decisions, case study evidence from district administrators, parents, and school board members alike suggests that Chapter 2 plans and decisions are already made before presentation at a school board meeting. For example, one school board chairperson from a large school district in a northwestern city stated that the board could undoubtedly overturn a proposed Chapter 2 plan at a board meeting if it really wanted to do so. However, the board had not done so during the first 3 years of Chapter 2. It was considered appropriate for the board to serve primarily as a vehicle to ratify the administration's plans. Parental input at board meetings was always possible as well but had not occurred. This was a fairly typical pattern, as suggested by some other evidence from our site visits:

- In a small, rural district in a central state and in a very large district in the Southeast, the board chairperson had to be briefed about the specifics of Chapter 2 before our meetings.
- In a large district in the Northwest, the board chairperson was well aware of the specifics for which Chapter 2 funds were used in the district, but stated that the board was much more heavily involved in other issues. It merely approved the district's Chapter 2 plan.
- In a midwestern state, the state educational agency (SEA) formally required the local school board to pass a resolution accepting Chapter 2 funds, but that was the extent of the board's involvement. In this case, the board was not even provided the opportunity for sign-off on the LEA Chapter 2 implementation plan.

In short, the school board in most districts seems to go through some pro forma approval process. The district typically views this exercise as compliance with the legislative requirements for parent consultation.

Table III-2

METHODS OF DISTRICT CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS AND CITIZENS REGARDING CHAPTER 2 DECISIONS, BY DISTRICT SIZE

District Size (Enrollment)	Percent of districts using method of parent/citizen consultation:							
	No consultation	School board meetings	Existing* advisory committee	Chapter 2 committee	PTA meetings	Consultation with individuals	Community survey	Other consultation
Very large (25,000 or more)	0	69	47	31	24	23	13	11
Urban	0	73	54	27	24	16	17	10
Suburban	0	64	37	37	24	33	8	13
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	1	59	52	25	25	18	6	16
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	5	66	47	23	28	23	7	6
Small (600 to 2,499)	14	60	38	19	22	22	10	8
Very small (less than 600)	13	62	29	20	19	31	7	4
All districts	11	62	37	21	22	26	9	6

*E.g., Chapter 1 Parent Advisory Council, general district advisory group, committee formed under anteceden programs.

Existing Advisory Committees

The use of an existing committee focusing on specific program issues is the second most prevalent mechanism used by districts to obtain parent or citizen input. In many cases, an "existing committee" was formed to advise the Chapter 1 program (serving disadvantaged students). In other cases, a school improvement or curriculum committee, a library/media committee, or a committee formed around another educational issue (e.g., computers in the schools) considers Chapter 2-related issues. Sometimes, advisory groups set up under antecedent programs have been retained and are used to advise on matters pertaining to Chapter 2.

Chapter 1 Parent Advisory Councils--Although Chapter 1 advisory groups are frequently used in all but the smaller districts as a mechanism for soliciting advice on Chapter 2, on-site observations during our visits to districts suggest that these school committees address Chapter 2 issues in name more than in function. For example,

- The member of the local Chapter 1/Chapter 2 parent advisory committee we interviewed in one large district (approximately 20,000 students) in a northwestern state was relatively well versed in the workings of the district's Chapter 1 program but not those of Chapter 2. He was aware of the major uses of Chapter 2 funds but admitted that the committee did not deliberate on Chapter 2. He suggested that the committee could probably have some impact if it seriously opposed a Chapter 2 plan, but that had not occurred during his 2-year tenure, and he did not foresee such an event.
- In a central state, a medium-sized district had a formal Chapter 2 advisory committee at the outset of the first year. However, no one attended the initial meeting. Consequently, the committee was disbanded and the existing Chapter 1 committee handled subsequent Chapter 2 issues as well.

When these Chapter 1 committees act on Chapter 2 matters, the process appears to be very similar to that described above for school boards. That is, Chapter 2 is seen not as a primary but as an add-on responsibility, and actions on Chapter 2 tend to support district administrators' plans

without much deliberation. Specific alternative uses of Chapter 2 funds were rarely discussed. The parents on joint Chapter 1/Chapter 2 committees tend to be parents of Chapter 1 students, and their interests clearly are more closely linked to the Chapter 1 program. On the other hand, because their input is solicited on decisions, parents on a joint Chapter 1/ Chapter 2 district advisory committee are more likely to have some impact on decisionmaking than parents who attend a school board meeting where Chapter 2 issues tend to be presented in a manner that allows little opportunity for discussion. However, Chapter 1/Chapter 2 committee chairpersons occasionally spoke as if the committees were more of a support group that got actively involved in program activities funded by Chapters 1 and 2 (e.g., additional fund raising for computers or supplies). They did not claim to have an important influence on program decisionmaking; rather, they were supporters and "helping hands."

General District Advisory Committees--Another mechanism frequently observed was that of a general district advisory committee that handled Chapter 2 parent/citizen input along with other issues. For example,

- One very large central-state district had a formal Chapter 2 committee the first year because of an internal misreading of the rules and regulations. The second year, these responsibilities were subsumed within a larger district advisory committee.

- A superintendent in a large city in the Southwest required principals to use their school PTAs for exchange of information (including information on expenditures under Chapter 2) on a monthly basis--"not just a tea and cookies affair." Parent involvement runs "from high to moderate," according to board members.

- In several small- and medium-sized districts, districtwide special-purpose committees had been formed (e.g., a committee to oversee the development of computer-related purchases and programming in the district). These committees often had considerable indirect influence on the use of the district's Chapter 2 funds since they shaped the course of computer-related expenditures where it had been determined that Chapter 2 funds were to be used to support a substantial portion of hardware and software purchases.

Antecedent Program Advisory Groups--We were interested in the continued use of parent advisory groups established under any of the antecedent programs. Both site visit and survey data suggest that the coming of the block grant reduced the role that most of the previously established groups play. For example, in one very large district, in which the Chapter 2 funds were seen as a continuation of ESAA funding (although the amount was greatly reduced from the previous years' grants), the former desegregation program advisory committee was renamed the magnet schools advisory committee to correspond to the major thrust of the desegregation effort under Chapter 2. Because decisions to use the funds for combining certain of the ESAA-funded activities had been made by district personnel and because the committee members were accustomed to not being involved in the details of implementation, the advisory committee members turned their attention toward getting a larger share of Chapter 2 funds from the state. Some districts used the shift to the block grant to "defuse" existing advisory groups. For example, a district administrator in a very large district suggested that there were too many potential constituency groups for such a small amount of money. This respondent viewed the transition to Chapter 2 as an opportunity to weaken the power base enjoyed by several preexisting constituency groups.

Although the effort may have been made to deemphasize an antecedent program advisory group, experience under certain antecedent programs may have made district personnel more likely to seek parent involvement in a variety of ways under Chapter 2. As can be seen in Table III-3, districts that had ESAA programs prior to the block grant tend to solicit parent input in the Chapter 2 decisionmaking process through a combination of mechanisms. These districts are more likely to conduct community surveys and establish formal Chapter 2 advisory committees, in addition to eliciting input at school board meetings. Although former ESAA districts represent a small number of districts, they do serve a large proportion of the country's students.

Table III-3

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MECHANISMS USED TO SEEK PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISTRICTS THAT DID AND DID NOT HAVE ESAA PROGRAMS BEFORE CHAPTER 2

Number of different mechanisms used to obtain parent input	Percentage of districts that had, in the 1981-82 school year: No ESAA program	ESAA program
0	11%	3%
1-2	63	33
3 or more	26	64
	100%	100%

Other Advisory Mechanisms

We encountered other mechanisms for consulting with parents or citizens less frequently than meetings of the school board or existing advisory groups. Examples include the use of PTA meetings, consultation with individuals, and community surveys:

- PTA meetings. We visited several districts in which parents were involved in Chapter 2 through school PTA meetings. As might be expected, the focus of parent input was on specific implementation efforts and did not influence decisions about where to invest resources. Also, as with involvement at school board meetings, PTA discussions of Chapter 2 matters tend to focus on after-the-fact presentations of school activities.

- Consultation with individuals. We observed several examples of districts consulting with individuals regarding the use of Chapter 2 funds. The clearest example of this kind of consultation was the use of parents who happened to have specific expertise related to computers. For instance, one large central state district had a parent member on a Chapter 2-related computer planning committee for two years. The parent ultimately resigned his position citing conflict of interest (he ran a local computer store). However, he was an interested parent who provided the district access to much needed knowledge. Similar situations existed in several other districts.

- Community survey. Several of the sites we visited had employed one method or another of surveying community members about appropriate uses of Chapter 2 funds. One small southern district surveyed district parents about the uses of Chapter 2 and Chapter 2-supported programs as part of an annual community needs assessment done in conjunction with the Chapter 1 program. Most districts that conducted parent surveys did them periodically (e.g., once every 3 to 5 years) and the focus was on general district policies. Occasionally they included specific sections that addressed Chapter 2 per se. However, more often, Chapter 2 was not an identifiable issue on the questionnaires, although the results may have influenced block grant uses.

Information Made Available on Chapter 2

There are a number of types of district-level information related to Chapter 2 that may or may not be "available for parental review" or "accessible to the public." Chapter 2 applications and records for fiscal audit and program evaluation are the only documentation required of the district under federal law, although some state education agencies require additional evaluation information to be maintained or reported to the state. In addition to these forms of documentation, districts can generate materials describing the programs or purchases supported or aided by Chapter 2 funds. These may be used for communicating internally within the school system or for communicating with the public about the services offered in the district.

As can be seen in Table III-4, the types of information district administrators make available vary by district size. It should be noted that the survey item upon which this table was based was worded somewhat vaguely. That is, "made available" does not imply any proactive efforts on the part of the district; rather it refers to information that the public was given or could request and review on-site. Although the pattern is not perfectly consistent, the amount of information made available increases with district size. There are several explanations for this pattern. Because they receive more money under the block grant, larger districts are more likely to be spending Chapter 2 funds in several program areas. Larger

districts also tend to have staff conducting evaluations, compiling data on the types of students in programs or activities supported by Chapter 2, and the like. In addition, large districts are likely to have more administrators, more program activities to document, and more layers of staff--all of which increase the need for internal reporting and information that can be made available to interested audiences, including parents or community members. Several examples from our site visits illustrate the pattern in large and small districts:

- At one extreme, in a large midwestern city, the salaries of two evaluators in the district office were partially paid for by Chapter 2 funds. These evaluators' primary responsibility was studying and reporting on activities supported fully or in part by Chapter 2. Their reports were sent to the superintendent and school board, as well as to curriculum coordinators, staff development personnel, others whose activities were the object of evaluation, and the district's Block Grant Advisory Committee.

- At the other extreme, in several smaller districts, written records of program expenditures were considered unnecessary, except for purchase orders, invoices, and Chapter 2 labels on equipment and books.

The exception to the trend in Table III-4 is the reported use of newsletters to make information available. A small district we visited illustrates this finding: the district puts out a regular newsletter describing the federal block grant law, state regulations, and local decisions about what funds are being used for. The new superintendent, whose term began soon after Chapter 2 funds began paying for instructional equipment (formerly purchased with Title IV-B funds), wanted to tell parents in the community how well their public schools were serving them.

We found some evidence that, while they generate more Chapter 2-related paperwork, larger districts may be reluctant to make this information available to the public. Administrators in these districts are not necessarily trying to hide their actions from the public; requests for information from parent or citizen groups cost more money and demand more time and effort on the part of administrative staff than in smaller

Table III-4

CHAPTER 2-RELATED MATERIALS AVAILABLE
TO THE PUBLIC, BY DISTRICT SIZE

District Size (Enrollment)	Percentage of districts making these types of Chapter 2 information available: Chapter 2 application	Budget information	Evaluation* information	Newsletters	Information on students served through Chapter 2	Information* about participation by private schools	Other materials
Very large (25,000 or more)	60	69	53	21	45	50	13
Urban	69	72	51	24	43	48	12
Suburban	48	65	55	16	47	53	15
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	68	60	39	30	48	34	11
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	54	58	35	30	38	26	7
Small (600 to 2,499)	36	51	29	34	32	12	4
Very small (less than 600)	40	47	20	33	28	5	5
All districts	47	51	27	33	32	15	5

*The trends in these columns are heavily influenced by the fact that smaller districts tend not to have conducted evaluations of their Chapter 2 program and often do not have eligible private schools within their boundaries.

districts. Several administrators explained to us that they avoided doing much to inform the public about Chapter 2 to minimize the burden that such information sharing engenders. There may have been other reasons for their reluctance.

Relationship of District Actions to Parent and Citizen Participation

We tried to determine whether the degree or kind of district efforts influence the extent of parent involvement. Although we cannot be certain of the cause and effect relationship, findings from the survey and site visits suggest that when districts establish a formal Chapter 2 advisory committee or use community surveys, they are most likely to have active parent participation in Chapter 2 decisionmaking (see Table III-5). An alternative interpretation might suggest that parents who actively seek involvement in Chapter 2 decisions stimulate districts to create mechanisms to process that input.

Survey results also suggest a positive relationship between the number of different mechanisms used by a district to encourage parent input and the amount of active parental involvement in decisionmaking related to Chapter 2. Table III-6 shows the relationship between the number of mechanisms a district uses to consult with parents and citizens and the report of active parental involvement in decisionmaking. As we noted earlier, the greater the number of participants with input in district Chapter 2 decisionmaking, the more likely parents or citizens were to be seen as influential.

The availability of information is also associated with parent and citizen involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking. As can be seen in Table III-7, the availability of Chapter 2-related information to the public is associated with greater proportions of districts reporting that parents are actively involved in district decisionmaking. Only 2% of the districts that made no Chapter 2 information available to the public reported that parents were actively involved.

Table III-5

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METHOD OF CONSULTATION
AND THE DEGREE OF ACTIVE PARENT AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING

Method of Consultation	Percentage of districts reporting... Parents not actively involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking*	Parents actively involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking*
Community survey	70	30
Chapter 2 committee	74	26
PTA meetings	81	19
Existing advisory committee	82	18
Consultation with individuals	82	18
School board meetings	82	18
Other consultation	90	10
No consultation	100	0

* In this table and in the similar tables that follow, we distinguish districts in which parents were "actually involved" from those in which they were not, based on a four-point scale divided at the midpoint ("not at all" and "not very involved" versus "somewhat" and "very actively involved"). "Active involvement," by this definition, includes a range of parent behavior from "some active participants but most uninvolved" to "a large proportion of the community participating in Chapter 2 decisions." The questionnaire item thus provides only a crude measure of involvement, but it is sufficient to demonstrate a general pattern confirmed by our site visits.

Table III-6

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF MECHANISMS USED TO INVOLVE PARENTS (OR OTHERS) AND THE DEGREE OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Number of different mechanisms districts used to involve community	Percentage of districts reporting... Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
0	100	0
1-2	88	12
3 or more	75	25

* See Table III-5 for the list of mechanisms districts used to involve the community.

Table III-7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METHOD OF INFORMING THE PUBLIC ABOUT CHAPTER 2 AND DEGREE OF ACTIVE PARENT PARTICIPATION

Kinds of materials made available	Percentage of districts reporting: Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
No materials available	98	2
Chapter 2 application	79	21
Chapter 2 budget	80	20
Chapter 2 evaluation	75	25
Newsletters	82	18
Information about students served	77	23
Information about private school participation	75	25

We found little evidence of district administrators trying to block parents or community members from finding out about Chapter 2 activities. In fact, we saw several examples of attempts by administrators to call attention to Chapter 2:

- In one very small site, a new superintendent who needed to establish his leadership played up the success of the local Chapter 2 program at every opportunity.
- In another small district, officials took advantage of the "nationally prominent research team" visiting the district and arranged for a front page headline in a local paper to praise the local Chapter 2 program.

Information about Chapter 2 and what it supports is often part of communication to the public about larger programs to which the block grant contributes. One mid-sized western district that has a bimonthly community newsletter included "program-related information" because Chapter 2 funds contributed to parts of several programs. This meant, in the words of the Chapter 2 coordinator, that "information about Chapter 2 is integrated with everything else." This is the most typical pattern of information distribution regarding Chapter 2-supported activities. Chapter 2 is often more difficult to view as a separate entity than other federal or local programs because block grant funds are so often integrated with other programs (e.g., Chapter 1, library media center).

As with the number of methods used by districts to solicit parent input, the more information made available to the public, the greater the likelihood of parental involvement in the Chapter 2 decisionmaking process. Table III-8 shows that districts making more than two sources of program-related information available to the public are much more likely to have active parent participation in Chapter 2 decisions than districts with fewer sources of information available.

Special enticements could help the district draw in parents or other community members. For example, in one very large district, program staff provided coffee and doughnuts at meetings and went out of their way to

Table III-8

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIETY OF CHAPTER 2 INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN DECISIONMAKING

Number of types of Chapter 2 information available to the public*	Percentage of districts reporting: Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
0-2	93	7
3-6	73	27

* See Table III-7 for the list of Chapter 2 materials available.

facilitate parental involvement. One superintendent commented about his Chapter 2 coordinator, "I don't know what she's doing to get them in there...." Several districts that used the Chapter 1 parent advisory committee to deal with Chapter 2 enticed the parents (of Chapter 1 students) to participate by holding "make and take" workshops in conjunction with meetings. Although it appears that these committees have little to do with decisionmaking, at least some parents have a chance to learn about Chapter 2.

Factors Influencing District Actions to Involve Parents

The generally low level of activity on the part of districts to involve community members is due to several underlying factors:

- Size of the program. Chapter 2 represents a small amount of funding relative to the district's general education budget. The Chapter 2 "program" often is not an instructional program at all, but aid to continue purchasing books or pay for items (e.g., computers) that districts were unable to purchase with their regular funds.

- History of antecedent programs. With the exception of ESAA programs and a rare local program under one of the other federal aid categories, parent and citizen involvement was not an important aspect of Chapter 2's predecessors. Only in districts formerly receiving ESAA funds was the change to a block grant noticeable enough in purpose and in dollar amount for the districts to take such actions as informing the public and converting committees under ESAA to Chapter 2 committees.

- District administrative philosophy. If the school district seeks direct input from parents and other community members on the best way to spend its federal aid, it has to be prepared (1) to educate the public about salaries, purchasing practices, continuing obligations, and whatever else is necessary to make reasonable decisions; (2) to resolve disagreements among contending parties' interests and positions on the appropriate use of the funds; and (3) to spend administrator time and effort in dealing with the public input and requests for information. From the point of view of a district, the payoff for making such an investment in Chapter 2 is unlikely to be worth the effort.

- Lack of explicit regulations. Although the state application process made district administrators in many states aware of the law's requirement for "systematic consultation" with parents of the students they serve, the legal language did not impel them to develop a specific mechanism to comply. For the most part, they relied on an existing mechanism, particularly school board meetings, to fulfill the requirement.

In addition to the relatively weak federal signals in the law, few states have brought sufficient pressure to bear to make parental involvement a priority for district attention. There were exceptions, but most state education agencies had not monitored districts on the systematic consultation provision nor administered any sanctions by the 1984-85 school year, when we were in the districts.

In addition, it is often difficult to identify the appropriate constituency groups in a very large school district. For example, in a very large district in the West, interest in decisionmaking came from a broad spectrum (e.g., PTA, ethnic groups, local advisory councils, civil rights groups), but district officials felt that: "If you had a mandatory advisory board for Chapter 2 you'd have more community involvement...but that might not help in getting the best use of the money." They went on to say that it

would also be extremely difficult to identify the appropriate constituency groups that should be represented on an advisory committee for such a potentially diverse set of program possibilities as those posed by Chapter 2.

Summary

The analyses reported in this section support the following findings. First, with regard to the mechanisms districts use to consult with parents or other citizens, we found that:

(1) Presentation of Chapter 2 plans at a school board meeting is the most commonly reported form of "consultation" with parents and the community (used in approximately two-thirds of all districts). Using an existing advisory committee is also common (in nearly two-fifths of all districts), as are PTA meetings (in approximately one-quarter of districts) and "consultation with individuals" (in approximately one-fifth).

(2) Setting up a committee or advisory group specifically for Chapter 2 is less frequent; approximately one-fifth of all districts have done so.

(3) In meetings of the school board, PTA, or existing advisory committees, Chapter 2-related issues are typically a minor part of the agenda for one meeting. This form of consultation typically elicits relatively little, if any, input to Chapter 2 decisions.

(4) A range of existing advisory groups--including Chapter 1 advisory groups, general district advisory committees, and groups set up under antecedent programs--are used to satisfy Chapter 2 consultation requirements. Districts that had certain antecedent programs such as ESAA are more likely to actively seek parent input in a variety of ways.

(5) Community surveys, the most systematic "consultation" method employed, are infrequently done; only 9% of all districts use them.

(6) The use of existing mechanisms means that input from parents or community members into decisions about the uses of funds tends to be pro forma, if the community is consulted at all; during consultation about the specifics of implementing Chapter 2-supported activities, districts are more likely to seek helpful advice.

Second, regarding district efforts to make information available to the public about Chapter 2, we found that:

(7) Approximately half of all districts make Chapter 2 applications or budget information available to the public. A smaller proportion--between one-quarter and one-third--provide evaluations, newsletters, or information on students to interested parents or community members.

(8) Larger districts are more likely to make available some kinds of information about Chapter 2 and what it supports (this pattern did not hold for newsletters).

(9) Information about Chapter 2 and what it supports is often part of communication to the public about larger programs to which the block grant contributes.

Third, with regard to the relationship between district actions and parent or citizen participation in decisionmaking, we found that:

(10) Certain types of consultation methods--in particular, community surveys and Chapter 2-specific advisory committees--are weakly associated with greater participation by parents or other citizens.

(11) In districts where a greater number of consultation mechanisms are used, parents and citizens are more likely to be actively involved.

(12) Districts that make information available to the public about Chapter 2 and what it supports are more likely to have parents actively involved in decisionmaking. A similar pattern applies to districts that make more types of information available to the public.

Fourth, with regard to the factors that had the greatest influence on district actions to involve parents, we found that:

(13) Four factors were especially important in explaining the generally low level of effort made by districts to involve parents:

- Relatively small amount of funding.
- Lack of established parent-involvement mechanisms under antecedent programs.
- District philosophy about the proper relationship between school district and community.
- Lack of explicit regulations.

(14) Typically, state education agencies have not encouraged districts, through monitoring or other means, to consult more extensively with parents or citizens.

IV THE EXTENT OF PARENT AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND INFLUENCE

Chapter 2 decisionmaking includes allocation decisions as well as design and planning efforts. This section details district views of the amount of parental involvement in the decisionmaking process and the amount of influence parents have as a result. (Involvement does not necessarily imply impact.)

We begin by providing a brief overview of the extent to which parents or citizens are directly involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking processes. We then detail the degree to which parents and citizens actively seek to participate in the decisionmaking process, examine the level of involvement compared to other baselines (e.g., participation in district decisions regarding the use of regular district funds), and identify what types of parents and citizens are actively involved. Next we discuss the influence, direct or indirect, that parents exert on district Chapter 2 decisions. Finally, we discuss reasons for patterns of parent and citizen involvement and influence in local Chapter 2 decisionmaking.

Level of Parent and Citizen Involvement in Chapter 2 Decisionmaking

The level of parent or citizen involvement in formal district decisionmaking about the use of Chapter 2 funds is generally low. Survey results on parents seeking involvement, on the kinds of people involved in Chapter 2 decisions, and on groups influencing decisions do not show high levels of involvement by parents or other citizens, although there is some variation by size of district. We distinguished districts in which parents were "actively involved" from those in which they were not, based on a

four-point scale divided at the midpoint ("not at all" and "not very" involved versus "somewhat" and "very actively" involved). "Active involvement" by this definition includes a range of parent behavior from "some active participants but most uninvolved" to "a large proportion of the community participating in the Chapter 2 decisionmaking process." The questionnaire item thus provides only a crude measure of involvement, but it is sufficient to demonstrate a general pattern confirmed by our on-site visits in most districts.

No matter what the district size, parents tend not to play much of a role in matters related to Chapter 2. Thus, 67% of the nation's school districts reported that either no particular group of parents or no parents at all were consulted in district Chapter 2 decisionmaking. This finding is directly related to the results indicating that only about one-third of districts nationwide report that parents play a "very important role" in the Chapter 2 decisionmaking process. Observations in 48 sites give the same general impression, although the contrasts among districts are more distinct. It may be more realistic to say that parents play "a role" in the decisionmaking process in approximately one-third of the nation's districts. District administrators typically described parents as uninterested, hard to identify, unwilling, and even "put upon" where efforts were made to obtain their input. The exception typically took the form of specific individuals who were knowledgeable in some area of purchase. Surely parents could be described as unaware of Chapter 2.

We created an index of involvement that is a composite of nine survey items addressing different aspects of parent involvement in the Chapter 2 decisionmaking process, or of amount of consultation in the community. The composite index included survey items such as these: community preference was a major influential factor; parents played a very important role in decisionmaking; district established a formal Chapter 2 advisory committee; district conducted a community survey. As can be seen from the composite index reported in Table IV-1, parents have not been heavily involved in this

Table IV-1

INDEX OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DISTRICT CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING PROCESS,* BY DISTRICT SIZE

District Size (Enrollment)	Median index value (values range from 0 to 9)
Very Large (25,000 or more)	1.9
Urban	2.0
Suburban	1.9
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	1.5
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	1.6
Small (600 to 2,499)	1.3
Very small (less than 600)	1.0
All districts	1.3

*Values range from 0-9. The index is a composite of nine items including: community preference was a major influential factor, parents played a very important role in decisionmaking, district established a formal Chapter 2 advisory committee, district conducted a community survey, community preferences were a major decisionmaking factor, district used an existing advisory committee to obtain parent input, district consulted with individual parents, advocacy groups related to antecedent programs were involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking, other advocacy groups were involved in decisions, and parents actively sought to influence Chapter 2 decisions.

process. The index provides an excellent summary of the current state of parental involvement. The mean composite score across all districts on a scale of 0 to 9 was 1.3. In short, there appears to be very little parental involvement.

Degree to Which Parents and Citizens Actively Seek Involvement in Chapter 2-Related Decisionmaking

As district administrators perceive it, parents and other citizen groups tend not to seek direct involvement in district Chapter 2 decisions. In only 14% of all districts did respondents report that parents or other groups actively sought to participate in the Chapter 2 decisionmaking process.

The pattern of active efforts to become involved increases by district enrollment size, just as the involvement patterns themselves increase by district size. As can be seen in Table IV-2, compared with all smaller districts, nearly twice as high a percentage of districts in the "very large" category reported that parents were either somewhat or very actively involved in the local Chapter 2 decisionmaking process. Several factors might be related to this variation. Larger districts are more likely to have been participants in antecedent programs that required formal parental involvement (e.g., ESAA). Consequently, the larger districts more often have individual parents and advocacy groups who have sought to remain active in the local decisionmaking process. Two very large urban districts we visited seem typical of many large districts where parents who had participated in the ESAA program remained involved in the block grant. The degree to which their actions had been institutionalized almost forced continued involvement, given that Chapter 2 "replaced" the desegregation-related programs. In another very large district in the West, ESAA was not the driving force that stimulated community involvement, but the school board president stated: "We get more coverage than the city council and the issues are judged as more important...Over the last few years [due to reform movements] the public has been curious about what goes on in the classroom."

Table IV-2

DEGREE TO WHICH PARENTS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED
IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING, BY DISTRICT SIZE

	Percentage of districts reporting:	
District Size	Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
Very large (25,000 or more)	69	31
Urban	75	25
Suburban	60	40
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	84	16
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	82	18
Small (600 to 2,499)	85	15
Very small (less than 600)	89	11
All districts	86	14

However, the relationship with the community was often adversarial, frequently taking the form of lawsuits filed against the district. In a very large district in the Midwest, district administrators viewed the parent advisory committee as a method of providing structure to the many voices of input that would otherwise exist. These concerns occur much less frequently in smaller districts.

The very large districts are much more likely to have had ESAA grants and to experience larger funding losses in the changeover to Chapter 2. Like school closings, major changes in funding (and the potential for program changes they imply) can get the attention of parents and other citizens and bring their interests to bear on the decisionmaking process. One very large midwestern site experienced a reduction of several million dollars in the 1981-82 school year--a typical scenario in very large districts. The PTA and other parent and civic/business groups rallied on behalf of their district to petition the state to increase the city's share of Chapter 2 funds. On the other hand, the most active involvement taken by parents occurs in very large suburban districts. Another factor that seems to be associated with more active parent involvement is that the district includes suburban areas. Other studies have confirmed that districts in suburban areas--including those with higher average SES--tend to have more involved parents.

Not surprisingly, parents in the smallest districts tend to make less effort to involve themselves in Chapter 2 decisions. This pattern is not difficult to understand. The amounts of Chapter 2 money are small in these districts. Despite the fact that schools are often a central, integral part of smaller communities, the population is frequently too dispersed to facilitate organized parental involvement. For example, we visited one district that had a student population of 550 and served a community of approximately 2,000 people dispersed across 81 square miles of farm country; only 200 people lived within the city limits. The district was unable to get parents to travel the distances required to attend many school functions. Although parents in such communities are likely to be very

supportive of fund raisers and sporting events, they are less likely to get involved in educational activities. n addition, parents in these communities seem more willing to defer to the professional judgment of educators. Respondents at several smaller sites suggested that they were very pleased with administration decisions. One community member told us: "They're the professionals; after all, that's what they were hired to do." One district administrator went so far as to say of the parents in his district: "They're intimidated by school district staff."

Parent Involvement in Chapter 2 Decisionmaking Compared to Decisionmaking in Other Programs

Without explicit guidelines for parental involvement under Chapter 2, district staff might be tempted to follow the pattern in decisionmaking about local district funds, imitate the Title I tradition of formal parent advisory committees (often carried on under Chapter 1), or continue in the same vein as the antecedent programs. We investigated these possibilities by asking respondents to indicate the extent of parent or citizen involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking compared to these three alternatives. Table IV-3 shows that the vast majority of districts reported levels of parental involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking that were similar to those in the alternative decisionmaking processes. This finding did not vary substantially by district size, lending credence to the notion that the pattern of parental involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking tends to mirror the pattern already in place regarding general district decisions.

The patterns that appear in the table differ somewhat by the type of decisionmaking used for comparison. First, compared with other current federal programs, very few districts (5%) report greater public involvement in decisionmaking about Chapter 2. It is likely that respondents made this comparison with the Chapter 1 program in mind; Chapter 1, although no longer requiring a parent advisory council, still targets an identifiable special-needs group (disadvantaged children) and often has active parent

Table IV-3

PARENT AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING RELATIVE TO OTHER DISTRICT DECISIONMAKING PROCESSES

Compared with involvement in decisionmaking for:	Percentage of districts reporting involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking is... Lesser	About the same	Greater
Regular district educational funds	21	62	17
Current federal programs other than Chapter 2	21	74	5
Antecedent programs consolidated into Chapter 2	10	76	14

advisory groups at district and school level. Because of the strong parent consultation tradition established by Title I programs, it is not surprising that Chapter 2, with no requirements for specific involvement mechanisms, would often have less formal parent and citizen involvement in decisionmaking. At the same time, the relaxation of consultation requirements under Chapter 1 probably means that many districts do as little to consult with parents for this program as for Chapter 2.

The fact that three-quarters of all districts report that parent involvement under Chapter 2 resembles antecedent programs is no surprise, either. In both cases, little was done; the most widespread antecedent program, ESEA Title IV-B, for example, did little to encourage an advisory role for parents. Evidence from our site visits suggests that in those districts that had developed active parent advisory groups, the coming of the block grant provided an opportunity to diminish the parents' role. Many sites we visited reported having dropped formal mechanisms for involving parents and citizens that had been in place during the implementation of the antecedent programs (see the discussion of mechanisms of involvement in Section III). In several districts, administrators reported disbanding

existing committees when it became clear that doing so would have few consequences. In one very large district, the Chapter 2 coordinator mistakenly believed that there were regulations requiring the involvement of parents in the decisionmaking process. Fearing unwritten consequences for failure to comply, the coordinator created a formal Chapter 2 advisory group during the first year of the block grant's implementation, then disbanded the committee before the next year upon discovering that such a group was neither necessary for compliance nor important for running their program. This district, like many others, now operates with no formal mechanism to carry out parental consultation.

Types of Community Groups Whose Members Participate in Chapter 2 Decisionmaking

District administrators were asked to identify the types of parents and citizens who were actively involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking. The two most prevalent responses indicated either that no involvement is occurring or that no particular group is involved in decisionmaking (see Table IV-4). Instead, in most districts where parents do take part in decisionmaking, interested individuals who participate are not perceived as representing an identifiable segment of the community. When groups do represent a particular part of the community, no particular group predominates.

Parents or citizens from poor neighborhoods, for example, participate as frequently as those from more affluent parts of town. The affluent, poor, and "others" are involved in an increasing proportion of districts as the district enrollment size increases (Figure IV-1). However, this trend is not so clear for ethnic groups (e.g., representing Hispanic or Asian neighborhoods). Little ethnic group involvement was reported by any except the very large school districts. The pattern reflects the demographics of school districts in general: significant ethnic subpopulations typically exist in the larger cities, where the very large districts are located. These districts also contain the most significant concentrations of poor students, but also in many cases substantial populations of students from

Table IV-4

SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY REPRESENTED
BY ACTIVE PARENT AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Segments of community represented by parents and citizens actively involved	Percentage of districts
Affluent	8
Poor	8
Ethnic	3
Others	9
None in particular	48
No involvement	34

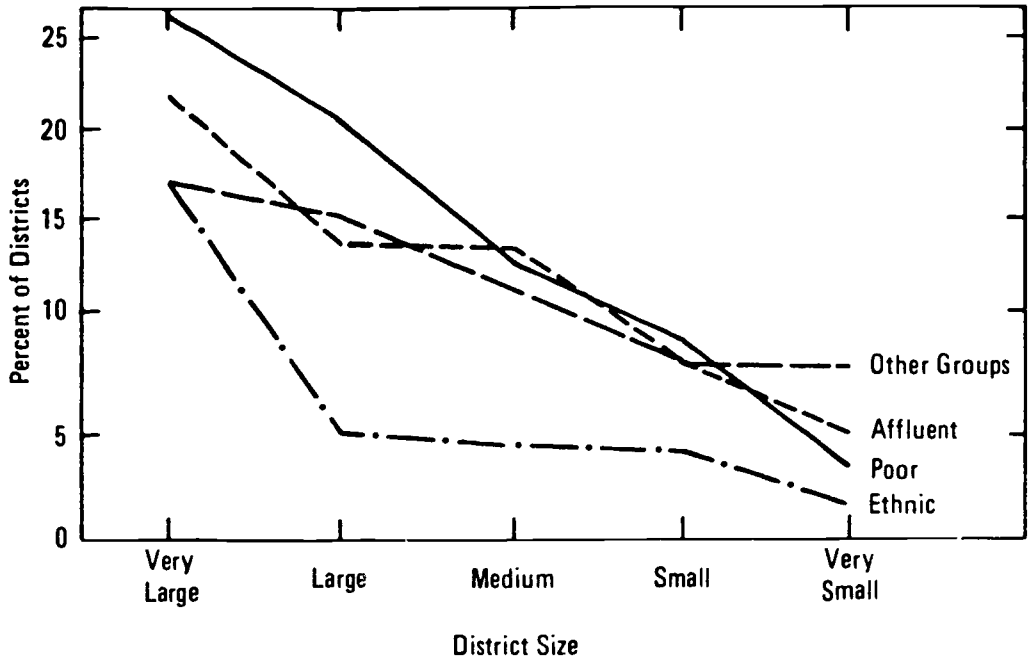

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FIGURE IV-1 SEGMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING, BY DISTRICT SIZE

higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Large urban and suburban districts tend to have smaller clusters of these groups that apparently are less likely to be involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking at the district level than are their counterparts in very large districts.

Influence of Parents on Decisions Regarding Chapter 2

The amount of influence parents have on district Chapter 2 program decisions varies by whether the source of the influence is direct or indirect.

Direct Influence on District Chapter 2 Decisions

District respondents were asked whether parents or other citizens were an influential factor in the district's Chapter 2 decisions. Findings mirror the trends observed above. Parents were identified as a very important decisionmaking factor by only 32% of the districts. This percentage varies considerably by district size (see Table IV-5). In general, respondents in larger, particularly suburban districts were more likely to report that parents play a very important role in Chapter 2 program decisionmaking.

The figures in Table IV-5 must be interpreted conservatively. Our site visits suggest that, more often than not, respondents overestimated the importance of parents in the decisionmaking process. We did encounter examples where districts faced with difficult decisions under the block grant turned to advisory committees for help, as the following instances illustrate:

- In a very large district in the Northeast, parent advisory groups from general antecedent programs collectively defined new priorities for the district during the transition to Chapter 2. Each advisory committee was asked to rank order previously supported antecedent programs in order of greatest need to retain. Although each group

- tended to place its own program first on the list, ESAA was consistently the next choice. A high-level district administrator noted that "Nothing could compete with the pressure felt to continue ESAA; we went through the [decisionmaking] exercise" but the outcome seemed certain from the start. A parent advisory committee member echoed this sentiment when he said the loss of the ESAA programs would represent "a serious retrenchment."

- Another district, in which Chapter 2 funds were used to support teacher minigrants, established a selection committee to review all proposals for these funds. Parent representatives sat on this board and had a role in determining which proposals would be supported.

Most of the evidence from our site visits suggests that parents or citizens did not have so clear a role, nor did they directly affect the course of events related to Chapter 2 program decisions. Apparently, districts have

Table IV-5

DISTRICT REPORTS OF PARENTS AS PLAYING A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN SELECTING PURPOSES FOR CHAPTER 2 FUNDS, BY DISTRICT SIZE

District Size	Percentage of districts reporting that parents play a very important role in decisionmaking
Very large (25,000 or more)	54
Urban	48
Suburban	63
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	38
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	45
Small (600 to 2,499)	36
Very small (less than 600)	20
All districts	32

often tried to reduce the potential impact that these groups have on district actions. For example:

- In one very large district in the Southeast, committees from desegregation programs were retained under Chapter 2 as district advisory groups, but the intent was to defuse any problems that might arise, not to ensure a continuing community voice in district decisions.

- Another large site had numerous groups of community members that were a carryover from antecedent Teacher Corps programs. An umbrella group had formed to serve as a vehicle for all community involvement efforts in the district but was not involved in decisionmaking about the use of Chapter 2 funds per se; members did not actively seek involvement so much as consent to the districts' invitation to "serve on a general advisory committee."

- In a medium-sized district in the Midwest, the district had put in place a Superintendent's Advisory Committee that discussed Chapter 2-related issues, among other things. However, the superintendent was quick to point out that the committee was not a working committee. It served as a sounding board, and the district administration retained all the decisionmaking power.

Unlike the examples just cited, the smallest districts tended to have little tradition of parent involvement from antecedent programs. Not surprisingly, parents and citizens in these districts exhibited little direct influence on district decisions about the uses of Chapter 2 funds. However, while we did not talk directly with many parents who were not selected by district administrators, the ones we did speak with did not report being overlooked. They typically believed that the school officials were professionals hired to make the necessary decisions and capable of doing so. These parents, and even board members, usually expressed a lack of adequate knowledge to make informed decisions about the use of Chapter 2 funds.

Indirect Influence on District Chapter 2 Decisions

Although parents and citizens have not been heavily involved as participants in the formal Chapter 2 decisionmaking process and have not directly influenced district decisions, additional evidence suggests that they do have some indirect influence on local Chapter 2 program decisions.

Approximately one-fourth of the respondents indicated that "community preferences" were the primary influence on decisionmaking. As shown in Table IV-6, it was the fourth most frequently cited factor affecting district decisions among such factors as increases or decreases in funds compared with antecedent programs, the desire to continue activities funded by antecedent programs, reform reports and related mandates, and overall educational priorities of the district. However, community preferences were rarely cited as an important Chapter 2 decisionmaking factor by districts indicating fewer than three (of a total of nine) factors on the relevant mail survey item; only 6% of these districts noted community preferences as one of the factors.

Table IV-6

FACTORS REPORTED TO HAVE MAINLY INFLUENCED HOW THE DISTRICT USED ITS CHAPTER 2 FUNDS

Factor	Percentage of districts citing factor:
Overall educational priorities of the district	82
Preferences of key district or school staff	52
Desire to continue activities funded by antecedent programs	37
Preference of local community	28
Ongoing federal or state programs needing additional support	9
Recommendations in national or state reform reports	9
State mandates or priorities	9
Increase in funds compared with antecedent programs	9
Decrease in funds compared with antecedent programs	5

Community preferences thus figure into the decisionmaking process primarily in districts where a number of factors are allowed to influence the course of events.

As with more direct forms of parent or citizen involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking, community preferences were cited more frequently as influential in larger districts than in smaller districts (see Table IV-7), despite the fact that larger districts were more likely to report difficulties in identifying the appropriate community representatives to involve in Chapter 2 decisionmaking. The extent to which this influence actually altered district decisions is not clear. The communities served by these districts are also extremely complex and have heterogeneous populations comprising many subgroups with often competing interests. In these settings, it is difficult to attend to everyone's needs and demands even if an ideal parent involvement component were in place.

There are numerous examples in the case study data where community sentiments clearly permeated the district Chapter 2 decisionmaking process:

- In one large suburban district with several major high-technology labs within district boundaries and a large proportion of highly educated parents, the Chapter 2 coordinator explained that the perceived expectations of parents were a significant factor in the district's decision to use Chapter 2 funds to support computer-related purchases.

- In a small southern district, officials used Chapter 2 funds to respond to widespread parental concerns about students who were not being promoted to the next grade following failure of the state' mandated competency tests. The funds were added to the Chapter 1 program budget to support diagnostic testing, tutors, and a computer lab.

- In an extremely poor illiterate community in Appalachia, parents were never consulted about the uses of the block grant, but nonethless the district invested a significant proportion of its Chapter 2 funds in adult education (basic reading skills), directly addressing some of the most critical needs and interests of community members.

These examples do not reflect systematic parent consultation. They do, however, provide evidence for the indirect influence that is likely to occur.

Table IV-7

COMMUNITY PREFERENCES AS AN INFLUENCE ON LOCAL USE OF CHAPTER 2 FUNDS, BY DISTRICT SIZE

District Size	Percentage of districts reporting community preferences as influential in Chapter 2 decisionmaking
Very large (25,000 or more)	41
Urban	33
Suburban	50
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	37
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	36
Small (600 to 2,499)	28
Very small (less than 600)	23
All districts	28

Reasons for Patterns of Involvement and Influence

We probed for explanations for the generally low level of parent involvement and influence through the mail survey and site visits. The most common explanations offered by Chapter 2 coordinators are summarized in Table IV-8. A majority of survey respondents indicated that award amounts are too small to evoke much public interest. Also, in most districts, Chapter 2 coordinators feel that the public is satisfied with the district's Chapter 2 programs and presumably would have no special interest in becoming involved. Two other factors--the fact that program goals did not change with the shift to the block grant and the lack of public interest or awareness--are seen as important in approximately a third of all districts.

These explanations apply differently to districts of different sizes. The explanation that the award amount was too small applies more frequently to smaller districts, which received correspondingly smaller absolute amounts of Chapter 2 funds. (However, a small amount of money could have a significant impact on school operations. In one very small rural site, the $1,200 received under Chapter 2 was sufficient to keep the library accredited--based on volume per student counts.) Smaller districts show less evidence that continuity of program goals is a major factor in low levels of parent involvement. Larger districts, on the other hand, are more likely to identify a lack of change in program goals or general citizen satisfaction as explanations for patterns of parent involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking. At the same time, the interest and awareness level of (at least some) parents in these districts appears to be higher.

That any district identified its own lack of effort to get parent involvement as a factor might seem surprising. Actually, 14% (representing approximately 2,200 districts) selected "LEA didn't encourage parent involvement" as a reason. In one large district in a midwestern city, the Chapter 2 coordinator suggested that "things would be too chaotic if too many segments of the community were aware of this relatively small amount of [Chapter 2] money, and thought that they could get a piece of it." Another administrator in a large south central district said, "We don't believe in a lot of nonsense with community pressure groups that do not know what they are talking about." A third respondent reflected on the situation: "I don't know why the public hasn't gotten more involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking. Probably we haven't gone out and asked them." The Chapter 2 coordinator in a small western district summed up the involvement issue by asserting that: "The best needs assessment is your gut reaction to a problem. A good unobtrusive needs assessment is better than an obtrusive one."

Communities responded accordingly. The Chapter 2 coordinator in a very large district in a southeastern city suggested: "This is our weakest area.... The structure and procedures for parental input are there. But

Table IV-8

REASONS DISTRICTS CITED TO EXPLAIN LACK OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING, BY DISTRICT SIZE

	Percentage of districts in each size category indicating...					
	Award amount too small	Citizens satisfied with programs	Program goals did not change	Low public interest/ awareness	LEA Didn't encourage public involvement	Difficulty identifying constituency groups
Very large (25,000 or more)	33	62	58	27	12	7
Urban	36	70	70	25	14	7
Suburban	29	77	41	30	8	6
Large (10,000 to 24,999)	41	70	54	37	16	9
Medium (2,500 to 9,999)	57	66	48	28	9	3
Small (600 to 2,499)	55	56	38	32	15	1
Very small (less than 600)	77	51	30	39	16	*
All districts	64	56	37	34	14	1

*Less than 0.5%

apparently few if any parents take advantage of these mechanisms to influence Chapter 2 decisions." One medium-size midwestern district attempted to establish a formal Chapter 2 advisory committee. However, no one attended the first meeting, despite newspaper advertisements--a frequently used strategy to notify parents. During interviews on site, respondents were often candid about the matter; they openly admitted a lack of effort to involve parents and citizens in local Chapter 2 decisionmaking, offering various reasons for their actions.

Community members sometimes do not believe they should participate in decisionmaking about educational programs of any kind. In several small sites, we obtained information from more than one source (occasionally board members) suggesting that the community members firmly believed that school decisions were the responsibility of the school administration. They did not feel "qualified" to make program decisions. In fact, they could be characterized as somewhat intimidated by district officials. This attitude is not surprising. As noted earlier, parents in rural communities generally believe that educational decisionmaking is the administrator's responsibility. Large districts tend to have more parents linked to various advocacy groups or causes, and tend to have more, better-educated parents, as well as more widespread differences in socioeconomic groups generally. These parents are living in an environment where they are more regularly forced to advocate on their own behalf and are less likely to be intimidated by LEA administrators.

Summary

The analyses reported in this section suggest the following findings. First, with regard to the extent of parent or citizen participation in decisionmaking about Chapter 2, we found that:

(1) Parents and citizens tend not to be heavily involved in formal Chapter 2 decisionmaking processes, particularly in smaller districts.

(2) Where community members do participate in decisionmaking, parents are more likely than others (e.g., representing civic groups, business concerns) to be involved.

(3) Parents and citizens typically do not seek active involvement. Only 14% of all districts report that active involvement was sought; however, the percentage is higher in larger districts, especially the largest suburban districts (enrollments exceeding 25,000), where it was 40%.

(4) The factors that stimulate parents to seek (and attain) an active role in Chapter 2 decisionmaking include geographic concentration of the community, antecedent program advisory patterns, the size of the Chapter 2 grant, the degree of controversy over programs supported by Chapter 2, major changes in funding under the block grant, and the general socioeconomic and educational level of the community.

(5) Patterns of parent and citizen involvement under Chapter 2 tend to mirror decisionmaking patterns with regard to local district educational funds, other federal programs, and antecedent programs.

(6) Where parents and citizens are actively involved, they are not perceived to represent a particular segment of the community (e.g., socioeconomic or ethnic group, advocacy interest). In a small percentage of cases, active parents do represent an identifiable segment, but no one kind of group seems to predominate: Chapter 2 coordinators report that poor parents, for example are as often represented as affluent ones.

Second, regarding the influence of parents and citizens on Chapter 2 decisions, we found that:

(7) For the most part, there was little evidence that parents directly influenced Chapter 2 decisions (despite the fact that coordinators in a third of all districts indicated that parents played a "very important role" in decisionmaking).

(8) Parents and citizens do have some indirect influence on local Chapter 2 decisions. Community preferences, for example, appear to be a major decisionmaking factor in approximately a quarter of all districts--more so in larger districts (half of the largest suburban districts).

(9) To accommodate community preferences, district decisionmakers apparently use Chapter 2 funds to address salient concerns voiced by community members, but not typically on the basis of a systematic review of these concerns. District decisionmakers do not (or cannot) attend to all community interests.

Third, the reasons for these patterns of involvement and influence can be summarized as follows:

(10) The relatively small amount of Chapter 2 funds is a major explanation for the low level of parent participation in Chapter 2 decisionmaking, especially in smaller districts which received less (e.g., $1,200 in a district with enrollment under 600).

(11) A majority of respondents indicated that the public is satisfied with their uses of Chapter 2 and therefore felt no need to become involved. (This response may mean several things, such as the fact that district administrators didn't hear any complaints--a fairly passive indication of "satisfaction.")

(12) In a smaller proportion of all districts (approximately one-third) Chapter 2 coordinators attribute the general lack of parent and citizen involvement to the fact that program goals did not change much with the shift to the block grant, or to the low level of public interest and awareness, or both. The lack of change in program goals is an especially important factor in the largest districts. Of urban districts with enrollments of 25,000 or more and major ongoing commitments to desegegregation programs, 70% indicated this reason.

(13) Survey results probably underestimate the lack of awareness of Chapter 2. In site visits, we were repeatedly struck by how little our respondents (board members, participants on advisory groups) knew about Chapter 2.

(14) A small percentage of respondents (in 14% of all districts) reported that lack of effort on the district's part explained low levels of parent or citizen involvement. Site visit evidence suggests that this explanation applies to a larger proportion of districts in all size categories.

V CONCLUSIONS

Our investigation explored what districts have done to involve parents or other citizens in local decisionmaking under Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, the federal education block grant. More specifically, we studied local response to requirements and guidance from the federal level that there be systematic consultation with parents and that information about Chapter 2 and what it supports be made available to the public. We also investigated the extent of parent or citizen involvement and influence that has developed as a result of (or in spite of) districts' efforts to seek the advice of the community.

Taken together, our evidence suggests that this aspect of local operations has not been particularly successful, when judged from the perspective of both federal agencies and the local communities. We believe the results may point to a need for rethinking federal expectations and requirements in this area.

General Patterns of Local Decisionmaking

The typical patterns of local decisionmaking under the block grant do not leave a great deal of room for input from parents, at least as far as the local allocation of funds is concerned. These decisions tend to be made by one or a few administrators in the district office, who in varying degrees consider the desires of school-level staff or others as they divide up Chapter 2 funds among different categories of use. School board members tend to have little to do with deliberations about the use of funds, beyond ratifying plans presented by administrators at school board meetings. Although school staff are nominally represented in many districts'

decisionmaking processes, we found relatively little evidence that school staff other than an occasional influential teacher or principal played an important role in decisions about the use of funds. Some district administrators we interviewed even mentioned their intention to avoid widening participation in these decisions because they perceived it to be more trouble than it was worth.

Decisionmaking about the implementation of Chapter 2-supported activities is another matter. Here the patterns of decisionmaking are as varied as local arrangements for carrying out the different kinds of instructional programs that receive aid from the block grant. The focus of decision might be at the district or school level, or both, and could involve a variety of individuals--teachers, principals, support staff, (e.g., librarians, counselors), district coordinators (e.g., of compensatory education programs, bilingual services)--in addition to the designated Chapter 2 coordinator. Parents might be among those people.

District Actions to Involve Parents and Other Citizens

District efforts to involve parents or other citizens in decisionmaking under Chapter 2 take various forms. Most often, districts use school board meetings (in approximately two-thirds of districts nationwide) or an existing committee (in approximately two-fifths of all districts) as a vehicle for receiving advice from parents about their Chapter 2 activities. Committees are less frequently set up specifically for Chapter 2; often, district officials report that they "consult with individuals" or use PTA meetings (in a way that is analogous to the school board). An estimated one-ninth of all districts report that they do not consult parents at all.

Our data suggest that, on the whole, district officials do not put a great deal of effort into encouraging parent or citizen participation in decisionmaking related to the block grant. Among the mechanisms for involving parents, the most prevalent are those less likely to generate

active involvement or a focused response to the possibilities presented by block grant funds, independent of other, larger programs to which Chapter 2 may contribute. Our field work and survey results suggest that most districts satisfy their consultation requirement with one or two kinds of outreach efforts--a school board meeting, a presentation to the PTA, or a conversation with an existing curriculum committee. Districts that try to involve parents more actively than this are an important exception. Although it is unusual for districts to use more than two of the consultation mechanisms described above, when they do, parents or other citizens are more likely to be active in block grant affairs.

District efforts to inform the public about Chapter 2 show a similar pattern. Across districts, a variety of mechanisms may be used, including making applications and budgets available, circulating newsletters about Chapter 2-supported activities, or providing evaluations upon request. Within districts, one or two of these mechanisms may be used, seldom more. However, as with consultation mechanisms, when a variety of approaches to informing the public are used, parents and citizens are more likely to be actively involved and/or to seek involvement.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that districts tend to fall short of federal requirements and guidance concerning systematic consultation and informing the public. There are exceptions to this generalization and a great deal of variation across districts in the approach taken to meeting the requirement, but the general finding holds in districts of all sizes.

From the perspective of district administrators, this pattern is understandable. They tend to view block grant funds as a small amount of money and don't believe an extensive consultation process would be warranted or useful. They point to frequent failures in the past at generating active interest among the citizenry despite efforts made in larger federal programs with more stringent parent involvement requirements. And they are often genuinely puzzled about whom they should consult and how.

In addition to this list of explanations, our analyses suggest three others. First, the philosophy of many district administrators is to maintain professional distance from parents in educational matters, a view shared by many parents (though not at all by the most vocal or active community members). Second, few antecedent programs (e.g., ESAA) established a tradition of active parent involvement and those that did were not widespread, unlike larger federal programs such as Chapter 1. Third, there is some evidence that the lack of regulations specifying the means of consultation has been interpreted by district administrators to mean that no special efforts are needed in this area.

Parent Involvement and Influence

Our findings about the degree of parent or citizen involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking and the degree of influence they exert over these decisions parallel, and are partially explained by, the patterns of district action just described. Participation by parents or other citizens in decisions made about the uses of Chapter 2 funds tends to be at a low level. There are important exceptions to this pattern, among them larger districts in which the substantial loss of funds for desegregation-related purposes under the block grant aroused parents and other community members to voice concern.

The explanations for this low level of activity go beyond the fact that most districts invest relatively little in consulting with parents. For one thing, communities vary greatly in the number and variety of citizen groups that take an active interest in educational matters. Despite the efforts of district administrators, communities are often unresponsive to the call for consultation on matters related to most federal programs or, for that matter, the district's core academic program. In addition, no matter what district officials may do, Chapter 2 funds lack a visible identity. Because these funds are typically not associated with a specific identifiable program but instead provide partial support to several ongoing programs

(e.g., libraries in all the elementary schools, the district-wide computer education initiative, a compensatory education program), the occasions for making decisions about the block grant funds are less discrete and generally not visible to the community. Finally, the absolute amount of money is small in most districts: A Chapter 2 grant of $30,000 in a district whose operating budget is $10,000,000, for example, is unlikely to attract much attention among parents. (By the same token, administrators in such districts are often reluctant to draw attention to this amount for fear that expectations will be unjustifiably raised.)

This generally low level of activity in Chapter 2-related matters does not seem to be associated with any decline in parent or community involvement in the affairs of local educational agencies in general. The public still gets heavily involved in district decisionmaking when the topic is school closings or in fund-raising efforts for extracurricular activities or for a computer in the school building. But the shift to the block grant and the ongoing pattern of receiving federal aid under Chapter 2 rouses little of the controversy provoked by school closings. Thus, the vast majority of parents and other citizens are not only inactive in but unaware of the district's Chapter 2 program.

While their involvement in allocation decisions is usually low, a few parents participate in the implementation of Chapter 2-supported activities, for example, by sitting on district committees that advise on purchase decisions, especially where Chapter 2 funds are supplementing other funds in support of a large educational program. The findings vary by district size. At one extreme, large urban districts--many with Chapter 2-supported desegregation programs formerly supported by ESAA funds--have various groups of parents or community representatives who are active. At the other extreme, small, rural districts with relatively small Chapter 2 grants have an unspoken understanding that it is the role of the district administrators to make sound decisions on the best educational use of the funds.

The fact that, on the whole, parents lack direct involvement and influence should not imply that districts are unresponsive to parent interests or to community needs. We found some evidence that community preferences are an important factor in decisions about the use of funds (approximately one-third of all districts surveyed said so). During site visits, we often found that administrators' perceptions of parental concerns or community sentiments had driven decisions about some uses of funds: for example, parents were among those pushing for more computer education in several sites; parental worry about students' passing competency tests contributed, in several other districts, to the use of Chapter 2 funds for increased remedial services. Perhaps because Chapter 2 funding is so flexible, it is an easy way to respond to at least some of the most salient concerns voiced by members of the community. However, not all segments of the community can be accommodated with the relatively small amount of block grant funding. Responsiveness to the community's needs under the block grant is necessarily selective; especially in the larger, more heterogeneous districts, not all segments of the community are heard in the process of deliberating the use of Chapter 2 funds.

Putting the Findings in Perspective

The evidence asembled here suggests that parents tend not to be heavily involved in district deliberations concerning Chapter 2 program decisions, nor are districts investing much effort to encourage their participation. The absence of specific parent-involvement mechanisms in federal law or regulations under the block grant, the emphasis in ECIA on complete local discretion, and the lack of sanctions or state monitoring associated with the "systematic consultation" provision may have contributed to these results. Traditions under antecedent programs, basic patterns of community-school relations, and the relatively small amount of money involved also contribute. Apparently, neither the exhortation in law that districts consult systematically with parents nor the federal guidance about appropriate mechanisms of consultation or informing the public are achieving the intended results in a majority of the nation's school districts.

Our evidence suggests the block grant comes closer to achieving federal intentions with respect to parental involvement in the implementation of Chapter 2-supported activities, after the initial allocation of funds is determined. Some parents are on advisory committees related to particular programs receiving Chapter 2 support; knowledgeable parents are asked about such matters as computer purchases; others work as volunteers in libraries, media centers, or computer labs that have received some funding under Chapter 2. The numbers of these parents are not great: during site visits we typically found one or a few such parents that were active in their respective programs, either at district or school level. These parents participated more often out of individual interest than as a representative of a larger group of parents.

It is not obvious that a more active federal posture on parental involvement under Chapter 2 will effect much change. To be sure, requiring a parent advisory council or the equivalent would increase the count of such groups among districts. But our analyses cast doubt on whether that would substantially raise either the direct input of advisory group members (or their constituents) into decisions or their indirect influence on district actions. The basic patterns of decisionmaking under Chapter 2, bolstered by views on the relationship of schools and the community held by educators and many community members over long periods of time, do not encourage widespread participation in these decisions. Conversely, the scope of the block grant is virtually the entire educational program of the school district. In principle, the block grant funds can contribute to any aspect of the core academic program (provided the assistance is supplementary) and to the full range of services aimed at special educational needs. Under such circumstances, who should--or could--represent the interests of parents and do justice to the variety of preferences and needs found in the communities served by most districts? Although its role in block grant deliberations is usually perfunctory, the school board (and some districtwide curriculum committees) is a surprisingly logical choice for a Chapter 2 consultation vehicle--it alone speaks for the community at large, if only symbolically. Yet, one would like to believe that if there is to be consultation, it would involve more than symbolism.

The achievement of federal intentions is not the only basis on which to interpret our findings. Whether one draws the conclusion that there is enough or too little involvement by parents and citizens, or enough or too little activity on the part of school districts to stimulate that involvement, depends on what level of expectation is set and on one's beliefs about desirable levels of parent participation. Advocates for particular programs or particular target groups of students (e.g., reducing racial isolation, serving gifted and talented students) can legitimately be concerned with district responses to the law's "systematic consultation" clause. Those who are interested in greater citizen involvement in educational decisionmaking generally are likely to be disappointed in the patterns we have described. The fact that many districts appear to follow the "path of least resistance" makes them appear less responsive to parent and citizen interests than they might be. State monitoring of the requirement for consultation may be what groups with these political interests can lean on. SEAs are beginning such monitoring, and this change may make a difference in parent involvement at the local level. Similarly, advocates for school district accountability, who believe that making more information available to the public will help their cause, may look to requirements for SEAs to evaluate local Chapter 2 programs as a step in the right direction.

Our overall conclusion is that parent involvement under Chapter 2 may need rethinking. Either the expectations for this aspect of the law should be moderated, or it needs a clearer definition that matches the realities of the block grant at the local level. We do not mean to imply that specific mechanisms should be formalized in federal regulations, although one option is to make regulations and guidance more explicit about the approach to involving parents. Alternatively, the emphasis of federal requirements could shift from "consultation" to demonstrating that the uses of funds are related to important community needs. Perhaps local reporting to the public on the uses of the funds should receive greater emphasis. Whatever the outcome of their deliberations, federal policy makers should examine their assumptions about the roles that parents or other citizens can play in the kind of broad-aim funding vehicle that Chapter 2 represents.

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Appendix A

TECHNICAL NOTES AND STANDARD ERROR VALUES FOR TABLES

Appendix A

TECHNICAL NOTE AND STANDARD ERROR VALUES FOR TABLES

This appendix contains a technical note and tables replicating those in text, including row or column n's and standard error values for means or proportions.

Technical Note

The tables in text and in this appendix are all based on population (or subpopulation) n's, estimated by multiplying raw n's within each cell of the survey stratification grid by the inverse of the sampling fraction (recalculated to reflect nonresponse) and by the inverse of the item matrix sampling fraction. Thus, all percentages, means, and medians in the tables are national estimates. For further detail on sampling and weighting procedures, see the methodological appendix to the main report of the study (Knapp and Blakely, 1986).

Standard Error Values for Tables

Confidence intervals around estimated population means and proportions can be calculated by:

$$+/- 1.96 (Se_x) \quad [p < .05]$$

The significance of differences of nonoverlapping samples can be determined from the normally distributed statistic:

$$(M_1' - M_2') / (Se_1^2 + Se_2^2)^{1/2}$$

where M_1 and M_2 are means (or proportions) and where Se_1 and Se_2 are standard errors of the two samples.

Table A-II-1

SCHOOL BOARD'S ROLE IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size* (Enrollment)	Percentage of districts in which school board... Debated the uses of Chapter 2 funds	Approved budgets for Chapter 2 programs/ purchases	Received information about Chapter 2 programs/ purchases
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 162)	18% (2)	91% (2)	85% (3)
Urban (N = 91)	18 (3)	91 (3)	86 (4)
Suburban (N = 71)	18 (2)	92 (3)	82 (6)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 449)	13 (3)	79 (4)	94 (2)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,986)	14 (2)	76 (2)	86 (2)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,276)	10 (3)	64 (4)	82 (3)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 5,953)	18 (6)	63 (7)	77 (7)
All districts (N = 14,826)	14% (3)	67% (3)	81% (3)

*Number of districts nationwide in each size category.

Table A-III-1

METHODS OF DISTRICT CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS AND CITIZENS

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Method of Consultation	Percentage of districts
	(N = 14,693)
School board meetings	62 (4)
Existing advisory committee	37 (3)
Consultation with individuals	26 (3)
PTA meetings	22 (3)
Chapter 2 committee	21 (3)
Parent survey	9 (2)
Other parent consultation	6 (2)
No consultation	11 (2)

Table A-III-7

METHODS OF CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS AND CITIZENS
REGARDING CHAPTER 2 DECISIONS, BY DISTRICT SIZE

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size (Enrollment)	Percentage of districts using method of parent/citizen consultation:							
	No consultation	School board meetings	Existing* advisory committee	Chapter 2 committee	PTA meetings	Consultation with individuals	Community survey	Other consultation
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 158)	0 (0)	69 (3)	47 (4)	31 (4)	24 (3)	23 (3)	13 (3)	11 (2)
Urban (N = 91)	0 (0)	73 (4)	54 (6)	27 (4)	24 (4)	16 (4)	17 (3)	10 (2)
Suburban (N = 67)	0 (0)	64 (5)	37 (5)	37 (6)	24 (6)	33 (5)	8 (3)	13 (3)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 445)	1 (1)	59 (5)	52 (5)	25 (4)	25 (4)	18 (4)	6 (2)	16 (3)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,982)	5 (1)	66 (2)	47 (3)	23 (2)	28 (2)	23 (2)	7 (1)	6 (1)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,213)	14 (3)	60 (4)	38 (4)	19 (3)	22 (3)	22 (3)	10 (3)	8 (2)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 5,895)	13 (4)	62 (8)	29 (7)	20 (6)	19 (6)	31 (8)	7 (5)	4 (4)
All districts (N = 14,693)	11 (2)	62 (4)	37 (3)	21 (3)	22 (3)	26 (3)	9 (2)	6 (2)

*E.g., Chapter 1 Parent Council, general district advisory group, committee formed under antecedent programs.

Table A-III-3

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MECHANISMS USED TO SEEK PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISTRICTS THAT DID AND DID NOT HAVE ESAA PROGRAMS BEFORE CHAPTER 2

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Number of different mechanisms used to obtain parent input	Percentage of districts in the 1981-82 school year that had...	
	No ESAA program (N = 13,093)	ESAA program (N = 638)
0	11% (3)	3% (3)
1-2	63 (6)	33 (6)
3 or more	26 (6)	64 (6)
	100%	100%

Table A-III-4

CHAPTER 2-RELATED MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC, BY DISTRICT SIZE

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size (Enrollment)	Percentage of districts making types of Chapter 2 information available: Chapter 2 application	Budget information	Evaluation* information	Newsletters	Information on students served through Chapter 2	Information* about participation by private schools	Other materials
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 152)	60 (4)	69 (4)	53 (4)	21 (4)	45 (4)	50 (4)	13 (2)
Urban (N = 87)	69 (6)	72 (6)	51 (6)	24 (4)	43 (5)	48 (5)	12 (2)
Suburban (N = 65)	48 (7)	65 (6)	55 (5)	16 (5)	47 (5)	53 (7)	15 (3)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 433)	68 (5)	60 (5)	39 (5)	30 (5)	48 (5)	34 (5)	11 (3)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,964)	54 (3)	58 (3)	35 (2)	30 (2)	38 (3)	26 (2)	7 (1)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,239)	36 (4)	51 (4)	29 (4)	34 (4)	32 (4)	12 (3)	4 (1)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 5,930)	40 (7)	47 (7)	20 (5)	33 (8)	28 (7)	5 (2)	5 (4)
All districts (N = 14,718)	47 (4)	51 (3)	27 (2)	33 (4)	32 (3)	13 (1)	5 (2)

*The trends in these columns are heavily influenced by the fact that smaller districts tend not to have conducted evaluations of their Chapter 2 program(s) and often do not have eligible private schools within their boundaries.

Table A-III-5

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METHOD OF CONSULTATION
AND THE DEGREE OF ACTIVE PARENT AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

	Percentage of districts reporting...	
Method of Consultation	Parents not actively involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking*	Parents actively involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking*
Community survey (N - 1,294)	70 (14)	30 (14)
Chapter 2 committee (N = 3,097)	74 (10)	26 (10)
PTA meetings (N - 3,331)	81 (7)	19 (7)
Existing advisory committee (N = 5,518)	82 (2)	18 (2)
Consultation with individuals (N = 3,810)	82 (4)	18 (4)
School board meetings (N = 9,322)	82 (4)	18 (4)
Other consultation (N = 972)	90 (2)	10 (2)
No consultation (N = 1,662)	100 (0)	0 (0)

* In this table and in the similar tables that follow, we distinguish districts in which parents were "actually involved" from those in which they were not, based on a four-point scale divided at the midpoint ("not at all" and "not very involved" versus "somewhat" and "very actively involved"). "Active involvement," by this definition, includes a range of parent behavior from "some active participants but most uninvolved" to "a large proportion of the community participating in Chapter 2 decisions." The questionnaire item thus provides only a crude measure of involvement, but it is sufficient to demonstrate a general pattern confirmed by our site visits.

Table A-III-6

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF MECHANISMS USED TO INVOLVE PARENTS (OR OTHERS) AND THE DEGREE OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Number of different mechanisms districts used to involve community	Percentage of districts reporting... Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
0 (N = 1,662)	100 (0)	0 (0)
1 - 2 (N = 9,360)	88 (2)	12 (2)
3 or more (N = 3,961)	75 (9)	25 (9)

* See Table A-III-5 for the list of district efforts to involve the community.

Table A-III-7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METHOD OF INFORMING THE PUBLIC ABOUT CHAPTER 2 AND DEGREE OF ACTIVE PARENT PARTICIPATION

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Kinds of materials made available	Percent of districts reporting... Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
(N = 9,918)		
No materials available	98 (2)	2 (2)
Chapter 2 application	79 (5)	21 (5)
Chapter 2 budget	80 (4)	20 (4)
Chapter 2 evaluation	75 (5)	25 (5)
Newsletters	82 (7)	18 [illegible]
Information about students served	77 (4)	[illegible]
Information about private school participation	75 (5)	25 (5)

Table A-III-8

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIETY OF CHAPTER 2 INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN DECISIONMAKING

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Number of types of Chapter 2 information available to the public*	Percentage of districts reporting: Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
0 - 2 (N = 9,481)	93 (2)	7 (2)
3 - 6 (N = 5,250)	73 (4)	27 (4)

* See Table A-III-7 for the list of Chapter 2 materials available.

Table A-IV-1

INDEX OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DISTRICT CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING PROCESS,* BY DISTRICT SIZE

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size (Enrollment)	Median index value (values from 0 to 9)
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 163)	1.9 (7)
Urban (N = 92)	2.0 (9)
Suburban (N = 71)	1.9 (13)
Large (10,000 - 24,999) (N = 471)	1.5 (12)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 3,022)	1.6 (7)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,367)	1.3 (11)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 6,517)	1.0 (15)
All districts (N = 15,540)	1.3 (7)

*Values range from 0 to 9. The index is a composite of nine items including: community preference was a major influential factor, parents played a very important role in decisionmaking, district established a formal Chapter 2 advisory committee, district conducted a community survey, community preferences were a major decisionmaking factor, district used an existing advisory committee to obtain parent input, district consulted with individual parents, advocacy groups related to antecedent programs were involved in Chapter 2 decisionmaking, other advocacy groups were involved in decisions, and parents actively sought to influence Chapter 2 decisions.

Table A-IV-2

DEGREE TO WHICH PARENTS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING, BY DISTRICT SIZE

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size	Percentage of districts reporting: Parents not actively involved	Parents actively involved
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 157)	69 (4)	31 (4)
Urban (N = 90)	75 (4)	25 (4)
Suburban (N = 67)	60 (6)	40 (6)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 445)	84 (4)	16 (4)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,928)	82 (2)	18 (2)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,214)	85 (3)	15 (3)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 5,911)	89 (5)	11 (5)
All districts (N = 14,655)	86 (2)	14 (2)

Table A-IV-3

PARENT AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING RELATIVE TO OTHER DISTRICT DECISIONMAKING PROCESSES

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Compared with involvement in decisionmaking for:	Percentage of LEAs reporting involvement in Chapter 2 decisionmaking is...		
	Lesser	About the same	Greater
Regular district educational funds (N = 14,571)	21 (2)	62 (4)	17 (3)
Current federal programs other than Chapter 2 (N = 13,759)	21 (3)	74 (3)	5 (1)
Antecedent programs consolidated into Chapter 2 (N = 11,433)	10 (2)	76 (4)	14 (3)

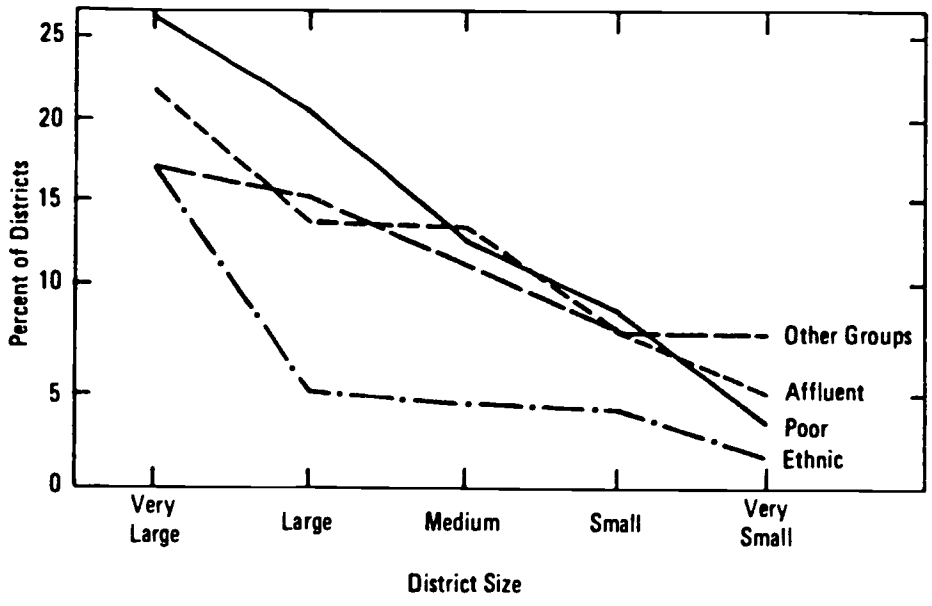
Table A-IV-4

SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY REPRESENTED
BY ACTIVE PARENT AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Segments of community represented by parents and citizens actively involved	Percentage of districts
(N = 14,536)	
Affluent	8 (1)
Poor	8 (1)
Ethnic	3 (1)
Others	9 (2)
None in particular	48 (4)
No involvement	34 (4)

FIGURE A-IV-1 SEGMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING, BY DISTRICT SIZE



(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size (Enrollment)	Affluent	Poor	Ethnic	Other groups
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 148)	22 (3)	26 (4)	17 (3)	17 (3)
Urban (N = 85)	19 (5)	25 (5)	18 (3)	18 (3)
Suburban (N = 63)	25 (6)	28 (6)	17 (5)	16 (2)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 429)	14 (4)	13 (2)	5 (2)	12 (2)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,901)	14 (2)	20 (4)	5 (2)	14 (4)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,179)	8 (2)	9 (2)	4 (2)	8 (3)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 5,673)	4 (2)	3 (2)	1 (1)	8 (5)
All districts (N = 14,330)	8 (1)	8 (1)	3 (1)	9 (2)

Table A-IV-5

DISTRICT REPORTS OF PARENTS AS PLAYING A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN SELECTING PURPOSES FOR CHAPTER 2 FUNDS, BY DISTRICT SIZE

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size (n)	Percentage of districts reporting that parents play a very important role in in decisionmaking
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 158)	54 (4)
Urban (N = 91)	48 (4)
Suburban (N = 67)	63 (6)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 430)	38 (5)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,914)	45 (3)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,189)	36 (4)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 5,910)	20 (6)
All districts (N = 14,608)	32 (3)

Table A-IV-6

FACTORS REPORTED TO HAVE MAINLY INFLUENCED
HOW THE DISTRICT USED ITS CHAPTER 2 FUNDS

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

Factor	Percentage of districts citing factor:
	(N = 14,770)
Overall educational priorities of the district	82 (2)
Preferences of key district or school staff	52 (2)
Desire to continue activities funded by antecedent programs	37 (3)
Preference of local community	28 (2)
Ongoing federal or state programs needing additional support	9 (1)
Recommendations in national or state reform reports	9 (2)
State mandates or priorities	9 (1)
Increase in funds compared with antecedent programs	9 (2)
Decrease in funds compared with antecedent programs	5 (1)

Table A-IV-7

COMMUNITY PREFERENCES AS AN INFLUENCE ON LOCAL USE OF CHAPTER 2 FUNDS, BY DISTRICT SIZE

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

District Size	Percentage of districts reporting community preferences as influential in in Chapter 2 decisionmaking
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 162)	41 (2)
Urban (N = 92)	33 (2)
Suburban (N = 70)	50 (3)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 461)	37 (4)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,954)	36 (2)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,204)	28 (3)
Very small (Less than 600) (N = 5,989)	23 (5)
All districts (N = 14,771)	28 (2)

Table A-IV-8

REASONS DISTRICTS CITED TO EXPLAIN LACK OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN CHAPTER 2 DECISIONMAKING, BY DISTRICT SIZE

(Standard error values are in parentheses)

	Percentage of districts in each size category indicating...					
	Award amount too small	Citizens satisfied with programs	Program goals did not change	Low public interest/ awareness	LEA didn't encourage public involvement	Difficulty identifying constituency groups
Very large (25,000 or more) (N = 150)	33 (4)	62 (4)	58 (4)	27 (4)	12 (2)	7 (2)
Urban (N = 85)	36 (6)	50 (5)	70 (5)	25 (5)	14 (4)	7 (3)
Suburban (N = 65)	29 (5)	77 (4)	41 (7)	30 (5)	8 (3)	6 (5)
Large (10,000 to 24,999) (N = 432)	41 (5)	70 (4)	53 (5)	37 (5)	16 (4)	9 (3)
Medium (2,500 to 9,999) (N = 2,930)	57 (3)	66 (3)	48 (3)	28 (2)	9 (2)	3 (1)
Small (600 to 2,499) (N = 5,230)	55 (4)	56 (4)	38 (4)	32 (4)	15 (3)	1 (1)
Very small (less than 600) (N = 5,896)	77 (6)	51 (6)	30 (7)	39 (8)	16 (6)	* (*)
All districts (N = 14,638)	64 (3)	56 (3)	37 (3)	34 (4)	14 (3)	1 (*)

*Less than 0.5%

Appendix B

LIST OF ANTECEDENT PROGRAMS

Appendix B

LIST OF ANTECEDENT PROGRAMS
CONSOLIDATED INTO THE CHAPTER 2 BLOCK GRANT

Program Name	Authorization
1. Basic Skills Improvement (Basic Grant) - Parent Participation - Out of School Program	Title II, ESEA
2. Metric Education	Part B, Title III, ESEA
3. Arts in Education	Part C, Title III, ESEA
4. Preschool Partnership Programs	Part D, Title III, ESEA
5. Consumer Education	Part E, Title III, ESEA
6. Youth Employment	Part F, Title III, ESEA
7. Law-Related Education	Part G, Title III, ESEA
8. Environmental Education	Part H, Title III, ESEA
9. Health Education	Part I, Title III, ESEA
10. Correction Education	Part J, Title III, ESEA
11. Dissemination of Information	Part K, Title III, ESEA
12. Biomedical Sciences	Part L, Title III, ESEA
13. Population Education	Part M, Title III, ESEA
14. International Cultural Understanding	Part N, Title III, ESEA
15 School Library Resources	Part B, Title IV, ESEA
16. Support & Innovation	Part C, Title IV, ESEA
17. Guidance & Counseling	Part D, Title IV, ESEA
18. Strengthening State Agencies	Part B, Title V, ESEA
19. Emergency School Aid	Title VI, ESEA (formerly ESAA)
(1) Basic Grants to LEAs - New - Continuation	

Program Name	Authorization
(2) Grants to Nonprofit Organizations - New - Continuation	
(3) Magnet Schools - New - Continuation	
(4) Special Projects - Planning Grants (new) - Preimplementation - Out-of-Cycle Grants - Special Discretionary Grants - SEA Grants - Arts	
20. Community Schools - LEA - SEA - Institutions of Higher Education - Nonprofit Organizations	Title VIII, ESEA
21. Gifted & Talented - Statewide Planning - Professional Development - Model Demonstration Projects	Part A, Title IX, ESEA
22. Educational Proficiency	Part B, Title IX, ESEA
23. Safe Schools	Part D, Title IX, ESEA
24. Ethnic Heritage	Part E, Title IX, ESEA
25. Teacher Corps - 1978 Program - 1979 Program	Part A, Title V, HEA
26. Teacher Centers - New - Continuation	Part B, Title V, HEA
27. Follow Through - LEAs (Compensatory Education) - Sponsors - Resource Centers	Part B, Head Start & Follow Through Act (phase in to Chapter 2)
28. Precollege Science Teacher Training	Section 3(a)(1), National Science Foundation Act
29. Career Education	Career Education Incentive Act

Program Name	Authorization
30. Alcohol & Drug Abuse Education	Alcohol & Drug Abuse Act
31. Cities in Schools	Authorization uncertain
32. Push for Excellence	Authorization uncertain

Abbreviations

ESEA - Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended in 1978

ESAA - Emergency School Aid Act (part of ESEA)

HEA - Higher Education Act