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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on findings of a research study on the district-level control of principals in 12 effective school districts in California. Primary research objectives were (1) to expand knowledge on the nature of administrative control, (2) to develop a better understanding of the processes and activities in effective school districts, and (3) to study the role of the superintendent in providing leadership in coordinating district and school activities and in promoting effectiveness. Other objectives were to examine differences among patterns of control uncovered in these effective districts and in studies of other school districts, as well as to compare types of control used across districts within the sample. Issues studied included the following: the hiring of new principals from within and from outside the district; the use of formal administrator internship programs; factors superintendents look for in hiring principals; supervision and evaluation of principals; school visitation by superintendents; principal participation in staff development programs; rewards and sanctions; goals; resource allocation; behavior control and monitoring; and technological specifications. The paper concludes with a discussion of patterns and themes that emerged from the study. Appended are 1 figure, 1 table, 13 notes, and 5 pages of references. (IW)

# The Administrative Control of Principals in Effective School Districts

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Running Head: Administrative Control

# INTRODUCTION

In this paper we report our findings on the administrative control of principals in effective school districts in California. The objectives of the research project are to expand knowledge on the nature of administrative control in school districts, to develop a better understanding of the processes and activities in effective school districts, and to study the role of the superintendent in providing leadership in coordinating district and school activities and in promoting effectiveness. Although results for all three objectives are presented, we are primarily interested in reviewing findings that relate to the first objective--expanding our understanding of administrative control. In addition to presenting information about the general nature of administrative control, we examine differences between patterns of control uncovered in these effective districts and patterns found in studies of other school districts.[1] We also present information about similarities in types of control used across districts within the sample.

Research in all the areas investigated in this study has been limited. In general there has been a lack of research studies on school districts (Bridges, 1982). In addition, little research has focused on educational effects at the district level (Herriott & Muse, 1972) and few school effectiveness researchers are studying the role of districts in promoting educational effectiveness (Rowan, 1983; Hart & Ogawa, 1984; Cuban, 1984). Furthermore, only a few studies which investigate district office control of principals have been undertaken (Peterson, 1983; Crowson & Morris, 1984). Finally, although there have been calls for research that brings together the notions of administrative control and educational effects (Peterson, 1984; Firestone, 1984), we have been unable to find any studies that do so.

## Conceptual Framework

In order to investigate the research questions outlined below, two lines of inquiry and two specific frameworks were combined to develop the conceptual model presented in Figure 1. The first line of inquiry focuses on the characteristics and processes of effective schools (Hallinger, 1981; Hersch, 1981; Purkey & Smith, 1982) and districts (Bidwell & Kasarda, 1975; Hallinger & Murphy, 1982; Rowan, 1983). The conceptual framework from this line of inquiry was developed by Murphy and his colleagues (in press). The second area is knowledge regarding control in organizations in general and schools specifically (Ouchi, 1979; Lortie, Crow, & Prolman, 1983; Peterson, 1984). The conceptual framework selected from this line of research was developed by Peterson (1983). The two frameworks were merged and research questions focusing on effectiveness practices and control mechanisms were framed and sorted into the categories listed below. (See Murphy, Hallinger, & Peterson, 1985, for a further discussion of the development of the conceptual framework.)

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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The framework in Figure 1 is comprised of nine control functions -- selection, socialization, supervision, evaluation, rewards/sanctions, goals, resource allocation, behavior control, and technological specifications. The first five are "direct functions" which are designed to influence the behavior and activities of principals. The remaining four are "indirect functions." These controls are designed to constrain and form organizational structures, policies, and practices that influence the principal by controlling work conditions, processes, or task arrangements. Control functions, both direct and indirect, are posited to affect student outcomes by influencing the culture and technology (curriculum and instruction) of schools.

## Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study of administrative control. First, what types of administrative controls are used in each of the nine functions to influence the activities of principals? Second, within each function and across functions are patterns of control evident among sample districts? Third, how do the control mechanisms used in effective districts differ in pattern and form from those reportedly used in other districts? As noted earlier, although administrative control is the focus of this article, we also provide some information about the leadership patterns of superintendents in these districts.

Given our previous work with school improvement at the school, district, and state levels, we did not enter this investigation without some general working propositions. Although this can lead to problems in processing information, e.g., seeking confirming rather than disconfirming data (Miles & Huberman, 1984), Goetz and LeCompte (1984) note that it is better to acknowledge the subjective experiences of the investigator than to pretend that they do not exist. They maintain that safeguards are more likely to be incorporated in research designs when this is the case. Our basic proposition was that, although the types of controls used in effective and other districts would be similar, patterns of control and frequency of use would be different. We expected to find both the use of more administrative control mechanisms in these effective districts and a pattern of control that was focused more on curricular and instructional issues than the general literature suggests (Hannaway & Sproull, 1979; Rowan, 1982). We also expected to find that the direct control functions would be used to a greater extent than the indirect control functions.

# METHODOLOGY

## Defining the Sample

The first design issue in this study concerned the type of selection procedures to employ; that is, whether to use probabilistic sampling or criterion-based selection procedures. Discussions with other researchers (Bridges, 1984; Rowan, 1984) and a review of the literature suggested that each route bore strengths and limitations.

One strength of sampling, generalizability, was mitigated by the small sample size to be studied as well as the purpose of the study, to generate propositions for future research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). On the other hand, attempts to establish a set of criteria that would define operationally a unique case of "effective districts" necessarily suffer from limitations. Critiques of studies of instructionally effective schools also apply to research on effective school districts. For example, school effectiveness research has been criticized for focusing on a limited criterion for effectiveness, basic skills achievement on standardized tests in reading or mathematics (Purkey & Smith, 1982), for failing to integrate effects across organizational levels (Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983), for not examining aggregation and disaggregation fallacies (Herriott & Muse, 1979; Rowan, 1983), for utilizing test scores that are subject to instability over time (Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983), for the lack of theoretical models (Murphy, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1983), for conducting research on a narrow population of schools, primarily low SES, poor, urban elementary schools (Cuban, 1984; Farrar, Neufeld, & Miles, 1983), and for assuming causes rather than testing casual hypotheses (Rowan, Dwyer, & Bossert, 1982). Certain of these issues take on increased importance when attempting to identify and study district effectiveness. Rowan (1983) provides

a comprehensive and insightful analysis of these issues, noting, in particular, problems in the area of aggregation and disaggregation of data and the organizational structure of schools.

While we acknowledge that these issues pose problems and constraints on any research concerned with district effectiveness, we chose to select districts on the basis of effectiveness criteria for several reasons. First, policy analysis must rely on common measures of effectiveness. Since publication of the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) test scores, despite their limitations, have provided that measure (Cuban, 1984). There is little reason to believe that they will not continue to be an important basis for policy making in the future. Second, given the limited number of districts selected for study, sampling would have provided little additional analytical power in terms of either data treatment or generalizability, and less rich and less useful information concerning practices which may be associated with district level effectiveness (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Third, the purpose of this study was to generate propositions which could be tested in later rounds of data collection and analysis. As with both earlier teacher and school effectiveness research, what is needed at this stage in research on instructional effectiveness at the district level are field studies that provide "richer detail about how districts organize such instructionally critical areas of system operations as staffing, curriculum, and resource allocation" (Rowan, 1983, p. 18). Fourth, certain problems we noted above about school effectiveness studies could be mitigated by the use of the effectiveness criteria employed in this study. As we note in the next section, the definition employed in the study considers achievement in multiple subjects over a three-year period of time.

## Definition of Effectiveness

Since we were primarily interested in looking at administrative control in effective school districts, an initial task was to define the criteria for district effectiveness. We began with a tripartite conceptual perspective presented by Murphy, Hallinger, & Peterson (1985) -- high overall levels of student achievement (quality), growth or gain (value added)[2], and consistency of achievement across all sub-populations of students (equality). Based on this conceptual perspective, the following operational definition of district effectiveness was selected: school districts whose student achievement scores, aggregated to the district level, consistently exceeded the scores of other districts after controlling for student socio-economic status over a three year period.

## Selection of Sample

California was selected as the base for the study for two reasons. First, there is a comprehensive statewide testing program, the California Assessment Program (CAP), which aggregates school test scores to both the school and district level. Second, using student and family background characteristics (% AFDC, parent occupation, language fluency) in a regression equation the state department of education computes test score expectancy bands for every school district. That is, aggregated test scores are controlled for student socio-economic status. This information is congruent with our operational definition of effectiveness and in line with the conceptual perspective.[3]

Twelve school districts were selected to participate in the study -- 5 elementary districts, 3 high school districts, and 4 unified districts. These twelve districts were calculated to be the most effective in the state in exceeding their expectancy bands in reading, mathematics, and language for the three years between 1980-81 and 1982-83.[4] A description of these districts is presented in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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## Instrumentation

A scheduled standardized interview instrument was developed to assess district level administrative control of principals. The protocol was designed to be used with the superintendent of schools. Questions were primarily open ended and were organized under the nine control functions in Figure 1. As noted earlier, the content of the questions was derived from the earlier work of Peterson (1983; 1984) and Lortie and his colleagues (1983) on organizational control and Murphy and Hallinger on effective schools (1984; in press a) and districts (in press b).

## Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with the superintendents of each of the 12 districts in their offices during July 1984.[5] The interviews ranged in length from 2 to 3½ hours with the average being approximately 2½ hours. After each interview session, approximately two hours were spent reviewing notes and making clarifications. All interviews were audio-recorded for closer analysis by the research team.

In addition to the interviews, districts were asked to provide the following archival data: district goal statements, principal evaluation forms, samples of evaluations of principals, district newsletters for the 1983-84 school year, agendas and minutes from the principals meetings from the 1983-84 school year, and the organizational chart. A number of districts volunteered other written information such as teacher evaluation programs and district policies and regulations on a number of matters, e.g., homework.

## Data Reduction and Display

Miles and Huberman (1984) present a variety of methods for reducing and displaying data. Three of the methods they discuss were used in this study--summary sheets, memoing, and coding. Summary sheets containing impressions on each site were completed during debriefing sessions following each interview. In addition, initial information was recorded about patterns and differences among districts in the use of control mechanisms. According to Miles and Huberman, "the memo is a brief conceptual look at some aspect of the accumulating data set: an insight, a puzzle, a category, an emerging explanation, a striking event" (p. 25). Memoing was used throughout the course of the study. Some preliminary efforts at data reduction through coding were also made. Coding was used primarily to divide districts into various categories (e.g., those in which statements of goals and objectives formed the content for principal evaluations versus those in which evaluation content focused on job descriptions).

Data was displayed on a descriptive matrix or chart for further analysis. The columns contained information on each district. Districts were grouped by type (elementary, high school, unified) and within type by size (number of schools in the district). The rows contained the nine control functions. The actual questions used in the interviews were listed under each function. Information entered on the chart was either direct excerpts from superintendent responses or information paraphrased and recorded by the researchers during the interviews.

## Data Analysis

Two approaches to analyzing the date were used. To begin with, each superintendent interview was analyzed individually across all the control functions to determine themes, factors, and characteristics of control which

emerged at that specific district. Next, the 12 district portraits were examined as a group to determine if themes of control were evident across the sample. In the second phase of the analysis, each separate control function was examined across 12 districts. Once the nine horizontal slices across the twelve districts were conducted to review for consistency of themes within control functions, a vertical analysis of those themes was made. The richness of the responses to the open ended questions provided data on a number of themes and facilitated the development of a number of typologies.[6] Within theme analysis a number of other qualitative data analysis tactics were employed, including counting, clustering, making metaphors, splitting variables, subsuming particulars into the general, and making conceptual/theoretical reference (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

The reliance on self-report by district superintendents could lead to problems concerning the validity of the data. As Goetz and LeCompte (1984) have pointed out, "information gathered is a function of the persons who give it" (p. 90). One method used to compensate for this limitation was triangulation of data sources. Document analysis often provided a second source of data which was used to check the accuracy of superintendent perceptions. For example, meeting minutes were examined to see whether superintendents made reasonable estimates of the amount of time devoted to technical core issues in principal meetings.

Despite the utilization of document analysis we approached analysis and interpretation of the data with caution. Researchers have found weak linkages between organizational levels in school districts (Meyer & Rowan, 1975; Hannaway & Sproull, 1979). This finding suggests that beliefs and perceptions characteristic of one level may not permeate other levels of the organization. In future research we will increase the number of data sources available for analysis by collecting data on school and classroom perceptions of control.

# RESULTS

## Selection

One of the questions in this section was designed to uncover whether there was a pattern of hiring new principals from within or from outside the district. Although no overall pattern was discerned, approximately two of three new principals in these districts were hired internally. There are few differences in hiring patterns by type of district. Only two superintendents expressed a personal preference on the topic--one worked to achieve a balance between internal and external hires while the other expressed a preference for hiring internally.

Another area of inquiry was the use of formal administrative internship programs to socialize potential principals to district norms and expectations. Of the twelve districts, two had no programs; five had programs, developed either locally or in cooperation with a regional office of education or a university that provided for work experiences and/or coursework but did not create new roles or use existing roles in the organization; three had internship programs that created formal salaried roles at the school or district level (e.g., resource teacher, curriculum coordinator), although one of these was in an inchoate stage and another was not currently in use; the final two districts used existing administrative roles (e.g., assistant principalships) as internship programs for potential principals.

An interesting dichotomy resulted when superintendents described the most important factor they look for when hiring new principals. Five noted that skills in the area of managing the technical core were of primary importance. Examples of these responses included leading staff in curriculum development, proven background in teaching methods and curriculum, and instructional

knowledge and curriculum background. These five superintendents believed that candidates possessing strong skills in instruction and curriculum could be taught whatever else they needed to be successful principals. Four other superintendents believed that if potential candidates had good human management skills they could learn whatever else they would need to be successful. Examples of the types of skills they reported as primary were the ability to relate to people and motivating and dealing with people. Three others noted that a combination of skills from each of these two areas was the most critical factor sought in the selection of new principals. None of the twelve placed system management or general administrative skills, such as organizing or managing budget and facilities, high on the list of important skills they sought when hiring new principals. However, six of the superintendents did mention general administrative skills when pressed to reveal other factors they would attempt to assess in the selection process. Two factors that seemed to be of secondary importance to a number of superintendents were the ability of the candidate to work as a team player in the district-wide organization and the match between the educational philosophy of the applicant and the superintendent. Again, there were no consistent patterns by size or type of district.

The processes used to select new principals in these districts seemed to be quite thorough. All twelve districts had well-defined procedures for selecting new principals and seven of the districts could be characterized as having highly developed systems. Collectively the following characteristics were reported to be part of the selection processes: procedures to generate lists of specific skills and abilities required for each position; defined procedures for screening original applications; multiple interview sessions for candidates; common sets of interview questions; written exams to test applicants' writing

skills and knowledge of curriculum; video-taped lessons to test candidates' understanding of instructional techniques; and systematic reviews of applicants' backgrounds, including visits to current or former places of employment. It is important to note that superintendents reported that the tests given during the selection process were generally coordinated with the preferred model of instruction used in the district.

Five of the districts involved parents (non-board members) and seven included teachers at some point in the selection procedures, although such involvement tended to be concentrated at the earliest stages of the process. Differences between districts based on size or type were not evident either in the thoroughness of the selection process or the evaluation procedures employed.

Finally it is worth noting that principals in nine of the twelve districts were hired for specific schools while in three districts they were hired for a district pool. However, many of the superintendents who hired principals for specific schools noted that they informed new administrators that they were district rather than school employees. A few reinforced this position by rotating principals through different schools in the district during their careers. We will return to the issue of principal transfer below.

## Supervision

In ten of the twelve districts, the superintendent was personally responsible for the supervision and evaluation of principals. In the two largest districts these functions were performed by the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. All the superintendents were active in visiting schools. The number of visits per year ranged from a low of 45 to a high of 875.[7] Nine of the superintendents reported visiting schools more than 100 times a year and three of these nine made over 200 visits to schools each year.

Superintendents noted that they used two patterns of visits--longer more formal visits which often lasted from 1½ to 3 hours and shorter informal visits which lasted from 5 to 60 minutes. The superintendents spent the equivalent of more than 15 eight-hour days at school sites. Eight of them spent more than 20 full days. The average amount of time devoted to visiting schools was 21 eight-hour days per year, or between 8 and 10 percent of the total work year for these superintendents.[8] It is important to point out that both the number of visits made and the amount of time spent at schools by superintendents in these effective districts were substantially higher than reported in a random sample of elementary school districts in Illinois (Peterson, 1983).

The superintendents reported using a combination of planned and impromptu visits. One high school superintendent, for example, planned regular visits based on the master schedule while one of the elementary superintendents simply reviewed schools in alphabetical order. A number of the superintendents required the school principal to accompany them on their rounds of the school. They reported that, more often that not, site personnel did not know when they would visit. There are no clear differences in the length or type of visits by size or type of district.

As part of the supervision process superintendents met with individual principals on a regular basis. The number of these visits ranged from less than one per year to more than 180 per year. The superintendents held individual meetings as follows: three between 0 and 5, one between 6 and 10, one between 10 and 25, four between 26 and 50, and three more than 100.

There were four basic types of meetings: (1) those held before, during, and/or after a superintendent's visit to a school; (2) meetings held in conjunction with the formal evaluation process (usually 3 to 6 per year); (3) meetings called to solve specific problems; and (4) "passing meetings" of a few

minutes duration. The first two types of meetings were initiated by the superintendent while the latter two types were arranged by either the principal or the superintendent.

Ten of the twelve superintendents considered their visits as very important to the overall supervision of principals. One noted that the visits were fairly important while the superintendent of the largest district in the sample, who did not take immediate responsibility for the supervision of principals, said that his visits were not used in the supervision of principals. As suggested below, it appears that these visits are important for a variety of reasons only some of which are directly related to the supervision of principals.

The supervision process was almost totally oral and visual, that is, none of the superintendents used standard forms to record their impressions and judgements. There were some instances of post-visit notes being placed in a principal's file or being sent to an assistant superintendent or director. However, consistent with previous studies of superintendents' activities (Mintzberg, 1973; Pitner, 1982; Willover & Fraser, 1979; Duignan, 1980; Friesen & Duignan, 1980), superintendents dealt with information collected through verbal exchanges and intuitive case constructions. The verbal exchanges included discussions with principals before, during, and after visits and debriefings with other district office personnel following visits. Case construction is a process of refining the mental set or picture the superintendent had for each school and principal based on the latest information gathered.

It is important to note that in addition to the visits by the superintendent, most of the schools in these districts received numerous visits from other district office personnel. Assistant superintendents for instruction and curriculum generally visited schools at least as frequently as superintendents.

Their visits were for more specific purposes than the superintendents. That is, they often focused on specific curricular or instructional issues, e.g., the implementation of a newly adopted spelling series in classrooms. Other district office personnel, e.g., district based special education staff, also visited schools frequently. However, in many instances these administrators were working on specific projects and problems which did not involve the principal. District office staff generally passed on information gleaned during their visits to the superintendent through both informal verbal exchanges and formal central office staff meetings. In addition, at least two of the districts organized a number of formal visits by board members. Again, information from these visits was conveyed verbally to the superintendent.

The superintendents in this study visited schools for a variety of reasons. First of all these visits had a clear supervisory function. Through their visits, superintendents modeled the type of leadership they expected principals to engage in and reviewed the progress principals were making in reaching their yearly objectives. Second, superintendents used their visits to examine how both district and school level systems were operating and to confirm or disconfirm a variety of information they picked up from people throughout the district and community. In their checking activities superintendents were particularly interested in assessing technical core operations at the school level. For at least six of them, review of curriculum and instruction was the primary activity during their visits. The heavy focus on technical core activities in these effective districts differs substantially from the focus found in studies of other districts (Hannaway & Sproull, 1979; Peterson, 1983). In addition to reviewing curriculum and instruction, superintendents spent much of their time during visits checking on the use and maintenance of school facilities and grounds. Finally, superintendents performed four climate building activities

that were designed to insure successful district wide operations in the future. They spent time communicating with and resolving problems for staff. They also spent considerable energy building a personal base of knowledge about the district; that is, they were constantly gathering and testing information for validity. A final activity, team building, was designed to convey the message to school level staff that everyone was part of a common team, that the superintendent knew what was going on, and that the top of the organization cared about lower levels of the organization.

## Evaluation

Principals in all of the districts were formally evaluated on a yearly basis. The evaluation process was characterized by a high degree of rationality. In many districts, principal evaluations are either non-existent or episodic, perfunctory, and non-substantive. However, in the districts we studied, there were well established procedures and clearly-defined criteria for evaluations. The evaluation content generally took the form of yearly school goals or principals' objectives.[9] Progress on yearly objectives was the key aspect of the evaluations for principals in seven of the districts studied. For principals in the remaining five districts, yearly objectives were an important part of the evaluation process but thev were used in conjunction with expectations written into evaluation forms and/or job descriptions. In the section on goals we discuss the content of school objectives in more detail.

The procedures used in principal evaluations were in many respects similar across districts. There was a pre-school or beginning-of-the-year conference to discuss school goals/principal objectives for the year specifically and areas of interest and concern generally. As noted earlier, the superintendent was the key district office figure in ten of these districts. A number of mechanisms

were designed to monitor progress and provide updates on school objectives during the year, including review of progress on school goals during site visits by superintendents; formal and informal mid-year review meetings; quarterly reports with individual conferences; written bi-weekly principal updates; and public reports to the Board of Education. Principals in all the districts received formal written evaluations which were reviewed in end-of-year conferences. The connections between final evaluations and system rewards, e.g., salary, were generally attenuated. However, tighter linkages were reported in districts between the final evaluations and continued employment in the district and the following years goals and objectives. A more complete discussion of accountability in the evaluation process is presented in the section on rewards and sanctions.

Socialization: Staff Development

Nine of the twelve districts had some formal administrative staff development program. In eleven of the districts, participation in administrative staff development activities was mandatory, even though in many of the districts similar activities for teachers were voluntary. Although the majority of the districts coordinated, and often developed staff development activities for principals, five superintendents noted that they put their administrators through inservice programs developed by the county office of education or a local university.

Superintendents reported that principals attended a variety of different types of programs. A number of themes emerged from their comments. First, the overwhelming majority of principal inservice activities, both in terms of the number of programs and the amount of time devoted to training, focused on issues of curriculum and instruction. The major areas of emphasis for administrative staff development were as follows: (1) supervising and evaluating

teachers, especially the application of clinical supervision techniques; (2) improving the instructional leadership skills of the principal; (3) promoting effective teaching strategies, especially the use of lesson design and the principles of interactive teaching; (4) improving the quality of the curriculum; (5) developing strategies to improve the use of time in classrooms; (6) improving instructional and curriculum programs for bilingual education; and (7) creating better classroom management systems, especially the use of assertive discipline. Non-instructionally based staff development programs for principals focused on communication and time management skills.

Alignment between district mandated programs and expectations and the content of staff development activities is another theme evident in these districts. As we noted in the section on supervision, superintendents modeled a strong instructional leadership role for principals. They expected principals to be instructional managers. The inservice activities presented to principals were consistent with that expectation. In addition, as we discuss later, nine districts had a preferred model of teaching that they expected to be emphasized in all classrooms. The staff development programs in the areas of effective teaching strategies, time usage, and the supervision and evaluation of staff were designed to provide principals with the knowledge and technical skills in ensure that preferred teaching strategies were implemented in their schools. In short, there appeared to be a high degree of congruence between the areas reported as important by superintendents in their districts and the topics selected for staff development for site level administrators.

In six of the districts the superintendent personally selected the content for principal staff development activities. They noted that their choices were based on educational philosophy, knowledge of the district, and/or Board goals. Although principals in these districts had some informal influence in the

selection of inservice content, the decision process was highly centralized. At the time of the study a seventh district that had been using this centralized approach was in the process of changing to more decentralized procedures. Four districts actively sought out input from the administrative team, either through needs assessment or group meetings, in determining the content for staff development programs. In the twelfth district, two teachers had started a district wide staff development program that in turn had become the basis for administrative inservice activities.

The last staff development area assessed was the extent to which transfer or rotation plans were used as a source of professional growth and/or administrative control. Two districts had formal policies that required the transfer of principals between schools every five to seven years, although only one of the two districts implemented the policy. A third district had an "informal policy" of transferring principals every five to seven years. Five districts had no formal or informal policies about principal rotations, and administrators in these districts were rarely transferred. In the four remaining districts, principal transfers occurred frequently but not necessarily on a regular basis. It does not appear that central office control was an important basis for the transfer of principals in these districts. Only one superintendent mentioned breaking the institutionalization of principals as a reason for transferring administrators. Rather, principals in these districts were transferred to provide (1) a better match between the needs of a particular school and the skills of a particular administrator, (2) a "second chance" to principals before reassignment or other job actions were taken, and (3) professional growth opportunities for principals, e.g., a sense of renewal, broadening experiences at a new school.

Rewards and Sanctions

Formal rewards appeared to be infrequently used with principals in these districts. None of the twelve districts had any type of merit pay plan. Salaries were not tied to evaluation results or quantitative measures of outcomes. Only the largest district provided differential salaries based on the number of students enrolled. Although the use of longevity step increases was not uncommon, in general the salary schedules were quite truncated, usually having only three to five steps. A number of superintendents reported that they tried to hire internally when filling district office administrative positions. However, the facts that there were a limited number of these roles available and that many of them were parallel with the principalship in rank and salary tended to severely limit the use of district office jobs as rewards for principals. In addition only one district has a formal chain of promotion. The major formal reward was continued employment. We discuss this more fully below. In addition, half of the superintendents reported that their administrative salary schedules were comparable to very good when compared with like schedules in surrounding districts and/or with teacher salary schedules in their own districts. Four superintendents reported that the district provided money for principals to attend conferences and other professional growth activities. They noted that this was a type of reward.

Several informal rewards were cited by the superintendents in these districts, including opportunities for principals to (1) work in a good district, (2) work closely with the superintendent and other top officials, (3) try out what they learned in professional growth activities, and (4) build reputations for future employment. Other examples of informal rewards were "the pat on the back," acknowledgement at Board meetings, and participation in administrative retreats with district office staff and Board members.

Sanctions in these districts also tended to be more informal than formal. Sanctions were primarily verbal and were generally given in individual meetings with the superintendent. Superintendents reported that they also infrequently provided written reprimands. Most of these did not find their way to principals' personnel files.

There appeared to be two key components to the sanctioning process in these districts, the willingness of superintendents to (1) confront principals to resolve problems and (2) hold principals accountable for their job performance through continued employment. Although all of the superintendents fit the conflict resolution pattern described below, seven of them noted it specifically when asked to describe the method they found most effective in changing principal behavior. Superintendents in these districts did not avoid conflict. They took the lead in calling meetings with principals when they sensed problems. They did not allow problems to escalate beyond the point where reasonable remedies would work. They noted that candidness and objectivity were critical ingredients in their discussions with principals. Problems were defined; people were not attacked. In addition, specific actions that could be taken to change an undesirable state or resolve a problem were often clearly specified. Finally, superintendents reported that they required change strategies to be implemented and followed up with principals to be sure that they were.

Superintendents held principals accountable for their performance in a number of ways. Principals were required to review progress on school goals in conferences with the superintendent and in public Board meetings. In addition, in at least eight of the districts, principals were at least partially evaluated on the basis of student test scores. References to progress on yearly objectives were evident in the final written evaluations. Incompleted

goals and areas of weakness in the one years evaluation were often specified as performance objectives in the subsequent years evaluation process. Three superintendents reported that they had placed a principal in an improvement mode evaluation, i.e., the principal needed to improve or he or she would be reassigned or not have a contract renewed. Finally, it should be noted that approximately 15 percent of the principalships in these districts turned over in the last five years because of inadequate job performance.

## Goals

Specification of goals appeared to be important in these effective districts for two reasons. First, they established a sense of direction for district activities and second, they provided a key mechanism for coordinating and controlling school objectives and principal goals. The literature on educational goals reports that they are often vague, nebulous, and non-directive in nature (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; Meyer & Rowan, 1975; Weick, 1976; Goodlad, 1984). This did not appear to be the case in the districts in this study. All the superintendents reported that they had written goals.[10] Although many of the districts had general philosophical statements of purpose, eight of eleven also had much more specific objectives, i.e., ones that could provide a clear sense of direction to district and school personnel.

Goal content was another topic examined through document analysis. Given the prevalence of literature which describes the loose coupling and nebulous technology of schools (March, 1978; Cohen & Miller, 1980), it was surprising to find that district objectives were heavily focused on curriculum and instructional issues.[11] Categorizing the content of objectives conservatively, the range of objectives devoted to curriculum and instruction was between 50 and 100 percent, with an average of approximately two-thirds of all goals being focused on technical core areas. For example, in one district, 13

of the 24 district objectives were clearly devoted to curriculum and instruction (e.g., provide a staff development program for administrators to certify their skills in clinical supervision). Five other objectives we labelled as "student/ guidance objectives" (e.g., develop alternative programs to reduce drop outs and push outs). An argument can be made that these five objectives should be included as curriculum and instruction goals. Of the remaining six goals, three dealt with finance, two with home school community relations, and one with developing better ties with state legislators. When superintendents noted only the two or three most important goals in their districts, the percent devoted to technical core issues rose to approximately 75 percent.

Superintendents in these districts also reflected a strong norm of educational excellence. Keeping in mind that we are examining 12 highly effective districts, the responses superintendents made when asked to describe the one, informal goal they held for their districts are informative. One of the superintendents from a lower SES district noted that his goal was to get the message across that every student in the district could learn. A second low SES district superintendent reported that his goal was, in spite of the fact that they were a poor district with a high concentration of minority students, to become one of the finest districts in the Los Angeles valley. Three other superintendents reported that their respective goals were to develop the best district in the state, to develop the best district in Northern California, and to be in the 99th percentile on student test scores.

Two patterns of goal development were discussed by these 12 superintendents. In seven districts the process of goal development had a heavy internal focus. In the internally-focused pattern, the superintendent, the Board of Education, and oftentimes the administrative team set district goals. The superintendent generally took responsibility for developing draft goals

which the Board modified and approved. In these districts, community interests were represented by the Board. There were no systematic efforts to collect community input in other ways. In the other five districts, more efforts were made to collect community input directly, e.g., through needs assessments. There was little evidence of direct teacher involvement in district goal development in any of these twelve districts.

District goals were communicated to principals in several ways. The primary methods were through forced school goal coordination with district goals and through the supervision and evaluation processes. Goal coordination is discussed more fully below. In addition, according to the superintendents, information about district goals and goal progress was communicated to principals in general staff meetings, in individual meetings with the superintendent, through staff development activities, and in formal reports to the Board. Although efforts at communicating information about goals externally occurred less frequently and were less systematic than internal goal communications, superintendents reported that they used the following avenues to occasionally disseminate information about district goals to the public: district wide newsletters, articles in local newspapers, and speeches to service clubs and school advisory councils.

All twelve superintendents believed that district goals had a strong influence on budget allocations. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very little" and 10 being a "great deal," the superintendents rated goal influence on budget allocations at 8.7. Although a few superintendents pointed out that many goals did not require the commitment of additional funds, there was a clear belief that when needed, goals were backed by a strong district commitment of financial resources. Some internal support for this position was contained in their discussions of budget cuts made in response to Proposition

13. These budget reductions generally supported the position of prominence given to curriculum and instruction.

Superintendents also believed that district goals influenced and guided activities at the site level. They rated the influence of district goals over school activities at 8.0. District goals exerted considerable influence over the shaping of school level objectives. In all the districts, principals were required to develop school or principal objectives which tied into district or superintendent goals. Two distinct patterns were used. In the majority of the districts, Board or superintendent goals acted as an umbrella for school objectives. That is, school objectives had to be written to address specific district goals. For example, in one district a goal was to improve SAT scores in mathematics. The school objective in one high school in this district was to increase the percentage of students taking three and four years of mathematics. Another high school reflected the district goal with an objective to review the higher level mathematics course objectives against the objectives in the test and to change the curriculum course objectives accordingly. Under the "umbrella" pattern, schools were generally expected to match all district goals with one or more local objectives. They were generally free to add additional local objectives that did not have one-to-one correspondence with district goals. In the second pattern, district goals formed the basis for approximately half of the local school objectives. Individual principals were then required to develop an approximately equal number of site specific goals and objectives.

All of the districts had fairly comprehensive testing programs[12] that controlled principal activity in two ways. First, test scores were used directly in the evaluation process in half of the districts. That is, specific targets of student achievement were set in the evaluation process and principals were supervised and evaluated on their ability to meet those objectives. In two

other districts the superintendents noted that test scores were not used in a formal way but that "everyone knew" that they were used in the evaluation process. This pattern of test score use in the evaluation process was not found in random sample of Illinois districts (Peterson, 1983). In the four remaining districts, one superintendent noted that test scores were used in evaluations only when they fell below a threshold while the other three superintendents deliberately attempted to keep test scores out of the evaluation process. In all four of these latter districts, however, superintendents reviewed test scores with principals for planning and problem solving purposes.

The testing program constrained principal behavior in a second way by influencing the district goal development process. Test results were often aggregated to the district level to form the base for district goals. As we noted above, these district goals then provided the basis for principals' objectives. In addition, some of the superintendents noted that they expected principals to reference achievement data when selecting specific school objectives.

## Resource Allocation

Resource allocations were used to control and constrain principal and school activities in two ways--by providing the basic pool of resources available and by determining the level of local control over the expenditure of those funds. It is the latter issue that we are most concerned with here. Consistently, these districts exercised tight control over the bulk of funds distributed to individual schools. In all twelve districts, personnel costs were controlled at the district level, i.e., schools could not opt to purchase fewer teachers and more materials. Thus, 70 to 80 percent of the school budget was controlled by the district from the outset. In addition, a majority of the districts controlled school level choices about textbook and capital outlay

expenditures. The basic pattern that resulted then was one in which individual school received only a very small allotment per student (e.g., $20 at the elementary level and $50 at high schools) after districts had controlled for the major categories of expenditures.

Within this per pupil allocation, superintendents reported that principals generally exercised a great deal of discretion over how funds were budgeted and expended. That is, they were able to establish budget categories and transfer funds between accounts fairly much at will. On the other hand, however, only two of the districts had discretionary contingency funds. In the other districts, if additional funds were needed, special requests had to be submitted to the superintendent.

A variety of patterns were used to allocate funds to schools. Seven of the districts simply allocated a certain dollar amount per student for current expenses. The five remaining districts used a variety of methods to determine school budgets. At one end of the continuum there simply were no separate school budgets. All requests for materials were sent to the district office for approval or disapproval. At the other end of the continuum, two districts reviewed school needs and established site budgets on a line by line basis. A fourth district allocated funds on an historical base while the final district established budgets in administrative team meetings based on student enrollment figures and special requests.

Behavior Control: Monitoring

This function assesses both how superintendents monitored the activities of principals and the extent to which superintendents reported using district wide standard operating procedures to constrain principals' behavior. In the districts studied, superintendents relied most heavily upon the supervision and evaluation functions to monitor principal behavior. As noted earlier, both

frequent site-visits and regular reviews of progress on school goals were key monitoring activities in the supervision and evaluation functions. Test scores in turn were often used in monitoring goal progress. Superintendents reported using feedback from community members and information gleaned at school functions as additional methods of monitoring site level activities.

Principals attended an average of 3.3 district office meetings per month. Superintendents noted that these meetings served a number of purposes, one of which was to monitor school activities and principal behavior. Another was to communicate expectations and a sense of district direction. For example, as we mentioned earlier, these districts appeared to exhibit greater interest in and attention to technical core operations than the general literature suggests. One way they communicated this interest in curriculum and instruction was by giving these topics considerable attention during principal meetings. Superintendents reported that they spent approximately two-thirds of the time in these meetings discussing technical core issues. Although document analysis could not provide an answer to the question of how much time was devoted to curriculum and instruction in these meetings, we were able to determine that approximately 45 percent of the items in the minutes from principal meetings dealt with curriculum and instruction.[13]

In general, superintendents reported that principals were not heavily constrained by either reports that needed to be completed for district office personnel or by centralized rules and procedures. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being "few" and 10 being "many," they rated required reports at 3.8, with a range from .5 to 6.5. The superintendents provided a composite rating of 4.6 on a similar scale when asked to determine the extent to which what principals do is determined by rules and procedures promulgated at the district office. The range on this question was from 1 to 9.

Technological Specifications

This control function examines how districts attempted to influence technical core activities at the school level. In the area of instruction, teaching methods, staff development, and teacher evaluation were examined. Curricular issues included textbook selection procedures, curricular expectations, and the procedures for the selection and transfer of staff.

Seven of the twelve districts had a preferred method of teaching which they expected all teachers to emphasize. Two others had a preferred instructional philosophy that closely resembled the models used in the first seven districts. In all nine of these districts preferred strategies had been in place for at least three years and in five districts for at least five years. Clinical teaching was the nucleus for most of the preferred instructional models, although it was often supplemented with research findings on academic learning time and teacher expectations on student achievement. Superintendents reported using a variety of mechanisms to ensure that the preferred teaching model was actually used in classrooms, including regular classroom visits by teacher-peers and district and state level administrators; district office review of teacher and principal goals for evidence of objectives on the preferred teaching model; district level staff development programs that focused on the approval model; and the commitment of additional resources to provide indepth assistance for teachers as they learned to use the model.

District offices exerted a fair amount of control over school level staff development programs. Specifically, superintendents reported that they controlled approximately 40 percent of school staff development activities. The remaining 60 percent were determined locally. Learning and implementing the preferred method of instruction was the major focus of district staff development programs in those districts which emphasized a specific approach toward

instruction. The remaining portion of district controlled staff development activities focused on district wide goals and curricular standards.

All districts used standard procedures and forms in the teacher evaluation process. District level personnel also reviewed principal evaluations of teachers regularly, both to ensure that correct procedures were followed and to assess quality. There was considerable variation in the personal attention given to these evaluations by the superintendents. Half the group reviewed a high percentage of teacher evaluations--three read all evaluations and three others read between one-third and three-fourths. The other superintendents tended to read only the evaluations of current and potential remedial and dismissal mode teachers, i.e., the problem cases. Nine of the superintendents reported that student achievement results on tests were used in teacher evaluations--four directly and five informally. Three other superintendents said that student test scores were not part of the teacher evaluation process.

Districts seemed to exert considerable influence over the curriculum used at individual schools. Eight of the districts had developed district wide curriculum objectives that teachers were expected to make the focus of their instruction. Regular classroom observations by district office and site level administrators were again used to insure that the prescribed curriculum was used in classrooms. For example, one superintendent said that he expected his curriculum directors to be out in schools every day checking on curriculum implementation. In addition, as noted earlier, the majority of the districts included measures of student performance on curriculum objectives in teacher and principal evaluations. Additionally, districts attempted to influence the implementation of curriculum expectations through training, i.e., though district wide staff development programs, through ownership, i.e., by having staff help develop the standards, and in five districts through pressure, i.e., by retain-

ing students-who did not pass proficiency exams based on the curricular standards.

In addition to influencing educational content through the specification of curricular standards, ten of the districts also exercised considerable control over textbook adoptions at the site level. In eight districts a single textbook adoption was made for the district and all schools and teachers were required to use the adopted text. In two other district, schools were allowed to select from a specified number of choices, usually two. The districts that used standardized tests also required all schools to use the same instrument.

District control in the area of teacher selection was moderate. That is, although both the district and the school played significant roles in hiring new teachers, superintendents reported that the schools exercised more control than the district in this area. Districts exerted more influence over the selection of assistant school administrators than teachers, although schools still retained a large amount of influence. That is, schools and districts tended to exercise roughly equal influence in this area. No clear conclusions about the balance of control between schools and districts in the area of teacher transfers were discerned. However, at least in these districts, it is clear that the emergence of teacher contracts has altered the balance of control between teachers and administrators in the area of teacher transfers.

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

A number of patterns emerge as findings within and across control functions are reviewed. In this concluding section we briefly discuss these themes under the following seven categories: extent, focus, variety, pervasiveness, interlocking nature, directiveness, and centrality of the superintendent.

Extent. -One of the most important findings of this preliminary study is that there appears to be more district level control of principal behavior and site level activity than the previous research has indicated (see especially Hannaway & Sproull, 1979; Peterson, 1983). In other words these effective districts appear to be more tightly coordinated and controlled than many districts. Although we are unable to conclude that this control is associated with the high level of student achievement in these districts, it would seem that further analysis of this possibility is clearly in order. As noted earlier, validation studies using multi-level designs seem especially appropriate.

Focus. A second finding of importance is that there is considerable district level attention to technical core issues in these effective districts. Previous studies concluded that attention to the coordination and control of instruction and curriculum was conspicuous by its absence in most schools and districts (Deal & Celotti, 1977; Peterson, 1978; Hannaway & Sproull, 1979; Crowson, Hurwitz, Morris, & Porter-Gehrie, 1981; Pitner, 1982). The prevalence of the technical core as an emphasized zone of control in these districts is consistent with findings from earlier work on effective schools (Purkey & Smith, 1982; Murphy, et al., in press). In general, much work needs to be done to examine zones of control emphasized in different districts. Specifically, it would appear that more indepth analysis of how districts coordinate and control technical core activities would be especially fruitful as efforts to improve district effectiveness are undertaken.

Variety. Districts in this study relied upon a wide range of control mechanisms, both direct and indirect, to shape administrative activity at the school level. Our original belief that effective districts would rely more heavily upon direct than indirect control functions was not supported. All control functions, with the exception of behavior control, appeared to be prevalent in

these districts. Given the loosely coupled nature of many districts, it is possible that central offices will need to develop multiple control mechanisms if linkages to schools are to be effectivelv developed. In addition to examining this proposition, additional research should begin to examine interaction effects among the control functions and possible hierarchial ordering of control functions in relation to promoting varying combinations of district goals. Finally, research that examines patterns of control in varying work situations is needed (Firestone, 1984).

Pervasiveness. Control functions in these districts appear to be pervasive. This is consistent with earlier research on district control functions (Peterson, 1983). That is, control mechanisms were not limited or bunched in a single phase of activity, but were prevalent in input, throughput, and output phases of school operations. For example, administrative internships and structured selection procedures were used to socialize new administrators. Objectives at the school level were required to be aligned with district goals and examination of progress on these objectives were frequently made. Curricular expectations, textbooks, tests, and instructional approaches were often dictated. In addition, outputs seemed to be subject to more analysis in these districts than they are in many districts. A number of authors have argued that effective districts can best be promoted by concentrating district influence at the input (goals) and output (evaluation) phases of school operations (see especially Purkey & Smith, 1983; Finn, 1983). Preliminary findings from this study would suggest that more attention should be devoted to examining the district role in the throughput phase of operations as well.

Interlocking Nature. One of the findings of special importance is the extent to which the various control functions are interwoven. The overall schema that results from a review of the control functions is one of connectedness rather than the compilation of isolated factors. A few of the functions

greatly facilitated the operation of other control mechanisms. For example, goals drove the supervision and evaluation functions. Other functions supported the implementation of control mechanisms. For example, budget controls often supported district level control of technical core activities. In addition, important topics tended to appear in and be reinforced by a variety of control functions. The preferred model of instruction was an important control mechanisms in its own right in nine districts. However, it also reappeared in and was supported by a variety of other control mechanisms. For example, the selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of staff were all based at least partially on the preferred model of instruction. Preliminary evidence leads us to believe that consistancy and coordination among control functions may be a key to improving districts.

Directiveness. Two tests of the control functions seem especially important. First, did they work; did they control administrative behavior and form viable connections between central offices and schools. Second, were they related to district effectiveness as defined in this study. Although we are unable to draw any strong inferences about the relationship between control patterns and district effectiveness, the fact that the patterns of control found in this study differ from those found elsewhere does provide some direction for further investigations and a sense of excitement that the path may lead to useful results.

Although the answer to the first question must be tempered in light of the study limitations noted earlier, the evidence gathered suggests that the control mechanisms may be influencing site level activity and administrative behavior. The results presented under staff development, supervision, evaluation, and goals lend the most concrete support to this conclusion. Less tangible support is found throughout the control functions.

Centrality of the Superintendent. In general, the superintendents of these districts played a key role in connecting schools and district offices. In almost all the districts studied they were the hub and the glue that kept the various organizational components united. They seemed to exercise leadership patterns that brought focus and meaning to potential control functions, e.g., goals, supervision. They also exercised the specific behaviors that actualized many of the control mechanisms, e.g., site visits to schools, regular review of principals' objectives. It may be possible that strong centrality of direction is needed to insure the development and use of control functions in loosely coupled organizations like school districts. Furthermore, it may be that superintendents by the nature of the formal roles they hold in the organization are in the best position to provide this centrality of purpose. This proposition is consistent with the finding that superintendents are key actors in successful school improvement efforts (Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984). In any case it is difficult to ignore the strong role played by the superintendents in these districts in linking schools and district offices. Additional work on the role of the superintendent as a linking agent within the control functions is needed. Investigations that examine that role in various school and district organizational contexts would be especially useful.

Peterson (1983) in his work on the coordination of the work of principals by district offices developed the concept of "web of control." The ideas embedded in that concept are twofold. First, a number of weak or low level controls can add up to form a state of tighter control than might be expected by simply looking at the parts. Second, regardless of strength, controls when viewed as a group are often likely to exert more influence than the sum of the parts. In this study we found evidence that strong webs of control constrain

and shape the behavior of principals and others at school sites. Controls were pervasive throughout these districts and appeared to exert considerable direction over school level operations in general and technical core activities specifically. We also found that the superintendent seemed to occupy a central position both in terms of the development and effective functioning of this interlocking web of control.

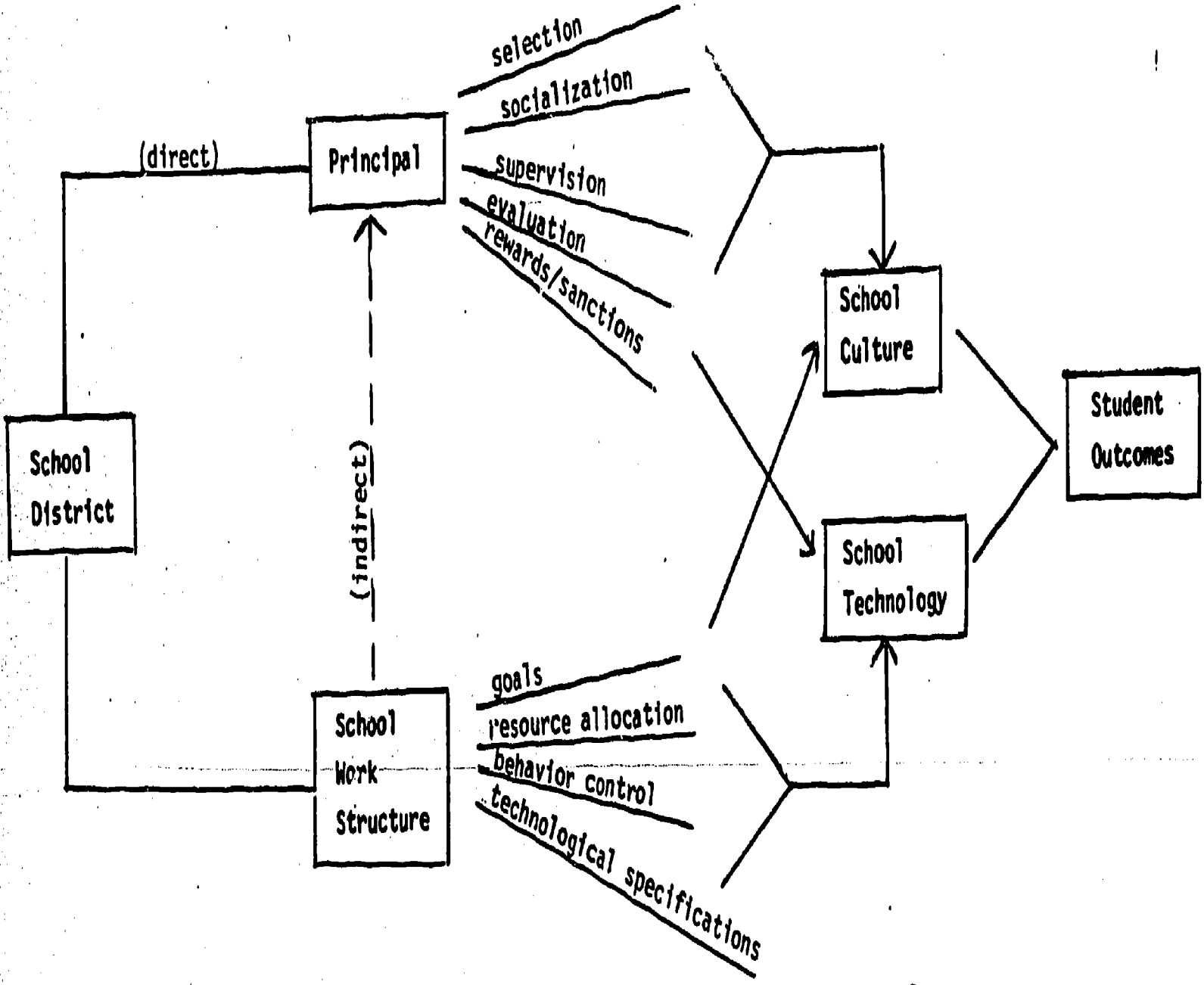


Figure 1: Framework of Administrative Control

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of schools | 20 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 29 | 19 | 5 | 5 |
| Number of students | 11,656 | 4,844 | 3,790 | 3,330 | 1,996 | 7,317 | 6,100 | 5,358 | 19,360 | 13,342 | 2,376 | 2,097 |
| Organizational structure | K-6 | K-8 | K-6 | K-8 | K-6 | 9-12 | 9-12 | 9-12 | K-12 | K-12 | K-12 | K-12 |
| Tenure of superintendent | 17 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 10 | 2½ | 6 | 3½ | 14 | 2 | 3/4 |
| AFDC (%) (1) | 51 | 76 | 58 | 60 | 16 | 94 | 91 | 48 | 87 | 85 | 65 | 84 |
| Limited English Proficient (quartile) (2) | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Parent education/occupation index (%) (3) | 39 | 49 | 43 | 42 | 78 | 12 | 42 | 72 | 37 | 17 | 49 | 13 |

1. This is an average across all appropriate grades taking the CAP test. It is the state percentile.

2. This is an average across grades 3 and 6; no information is reported for grade 12. It divides the state percentiles into quartiles. The higher the quartile the greater the percentage of kids who are limited English speaking.

3. In grades 3 and 6 this is a measure of parent occupation; in grade 12 it is a measure of parent education. It is based on the state percentile; lower percents mean parents with less skilled jobs or less education than the parents in districts with higher numbers.

Table 1. School District Characteristics

## NOTES

1. Administrative control in "average districts" in this study is based on findings from the work of Hannaway & Sproull, 1980, and Peterson, 1983.
2. We are grateful to Jim Guthrie and the Policy Analysis for California Education for bringing this notion of "value added" to our attention.
3. The notion of "value added" is absent form the operational definition used here. Also, while the operational definition presents a good proxy for equality, it is only an indirect measure. It is still possible to exceed the expectancy bands and fail to have high achievement among all sub-populations in a district. Nothing substitutes for disaggregation of achievement data by sub-populations in the school or district.

   At the time of the study, California had 1028 school districts--648 elementary, 112 high school, and 268 unified. The scores for each school district in the state were coded as follows: 2 equals above expectancy band, 1 equals within expectancy band, and 0 equals below expectancy band. Three years scores, 1980-81 through 1982-83, in areas of reading, mathematics, and language arts were coded. Elementary schools take the CAP test in grade 3 and 6, high schools in grade 12, and unified districts in grades 3, 6, and 12. Elementary school districts could receive a maximum of 36 points (2 grades x 3 subjects x 3 years x 2 expectancy points), high school 18 (1 x 3 x 3 x 2), and unified 54 ( 3 x 3 x 3 x 2). Of the 648 elementary districts, nine had scores of 36. Five of these were selected for the study; two were eliminated because of small size, one was dropped because two of the authors had worked as consultants in the district, and one turned out to be part of a unified district in actuality if not name. From the six high school districts with scores of 17 or 18,

three were selected. Of the remaining three, two proved to be unified districts in practice and in the other the superintendent had just been fired. One of the two "unified in practice" districts here is the same as in the elementary sample. Four unified districts had scores of 46 or higher. Two of these were selected and two were eliminated because of financial constraints. Two other "unified in practice" districts were selected from the elementary and secondary lists to bring the total number of unified districts to 4 and the total number of districts to 12--five elementary, three high school, and four unified.

5. In nine of the districts the interview was conducted only with the superintendent. In two of the districts the assistant superintendent for educational services was also present. In one district with a relatively new superintendent, a team of five was present for the interview--the superintendent, the assistant superintendents for educational services and business services, and two school board members.
6. The archival data were used primarily to confirm the self report data from the superintendents.
7. The total visits per school can be determined by dividing these numbers by the total number of schools in the district.
8. This average was computed after eliminating the two ends of the range.
9. At least for the superintendents in this study, the notions of school work agenda and principals' objectives are synonymous. Therefore, they are used synonymously in this paper.
10. Written goals were available for ten of the eleven districts that provided information for document analysis.
11. There is some evidence also that state educational policies and recently enacted legislation had an impact on district goals, especially in the high school districts.

12. The California Assessment Program (CAP) is mandated at grades 3, 6, 8, and 12. Locally developed criterion referenced tests are also mandated at selected grade levels. Ten of the districts used at least some standardized tests.

13. The document analysis presented here is based on source documents from the four districts that submitted a complete set of minutes of principal meetings for the 1983-84 school year. All four were elementary school districts.

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