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Working In Urban Schools



The Institute for
Educational Leadership

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WORKING IN URBAN SCHOOLS

Thomas B. Corcoran
Lisa J. Walker
J. Lynne White



Institute for Educational
Leadership
Washington D.C.

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FOREWORD

In my estimation, the most hopeful development in the education reform movement of recent years has been the emphasis placed upon society's need to recruit and retain superior teachers for our public schools. There has been growing acceptance of the reality that without effective teachers, meaningful educational improvement will not occur. Our business leaders and elected officials can use their influence to issue endless cogent reports and enact countless pieces of enlightened legislation to improve schools; the reality is, however, that unless talented teachers in the classroom perform well, little change of a permanent nature will occur.

The problem of teacher recruitment and retention transcends just issues of salaries and other perquisites. We will never recruit and retain in the classroom sufficient numbers of talented teachers unless we treat them with the dignity and provide the satisfactory working conditions that true professionals merit.

I am delighted that the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) has undertaken this important study of teacher working conditions in five large urban school districts. We are grateful to the Ford Foundation for its generous financial support and the Council of the Great City Schools for its crucial cooperation in IEL's unique effort to document and project important teacher working conditions which have been ignored for too long both by the general public and educational leaders.

I believe that this report has great implications for our efforts to improve our schools. At a time when the business community is decentralizing and viewing headquarters staff as a service agency to facilitate the work of operating units, schools are still commonly operated in a hierarchical context in their management style and philosophy.

This study, in documenting many conditions that depress both the morale and effectiveness of teachers, is persuasive in helping to make the case for fundamental change in the role, status and working conditions of classroom teachers. There is no issue of greater significance in education, particularly in our urban school systems. I am pleased that this IEL study makes such a unique contribution to this critically important concern in emphasizing that we will have to pay much more attention to daily life within schools and provide more ample resources to improve the buildings, the teaching materials, and the support available to teachers.

—William S. Woodside
Former Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer
Primerica Corporation
and

Chair, IEL Board of Directors
September 1988

PREFACE

The private sector is paying great attention to the impact of the working environment on employee productivity and creativity. In the public sector, however, the same questions often focus narrowly on ways to make public sector employees more productive. Are public employees efficient in the way they conduct their work? Are they competent? How do they use their time? Certainly, these questions have been raised in the recent concern about America's competitiveness in the classroom.

This report began as a way to answer more basic and underlying questions: What is the environment in which urban teachers work? What is their workload, what kind of space do they have in their schools and classrooms? Are their resources sufficient to teach? In short, is the environment one which is conducive to good and productive work? And how do these conditions affect teachers' attitudes toward their work and what they get done? These questions have been asked with particular urgency in large urban districts, and it is in these districts that we focused our efforts.

There are several reasons for examining these questions. If we are to improve the quality of education in urban schools, we should know the factors that have impact. If schools are to be held more accountable for the progress they are making toward policy goals, we should have some idea what the environment is for making these changes and how specific conditions will affect the outcomes.

Probably a more basic concern, however, is the ability of schools to attract and hold talented teachers in order to improve the outcomes of urban schools. Notwithstanding the urgent need to encourage many more talented young men and women into teaching, city schools are not as attractive as are their suburban counterparts. Urban schools work harder to attract teacher candidates and to find ways to support new candidates and hold experienced teachers. Few of the teachers we interviewed said they were ready to leave teaching, but little in their work environments gave them reasons to stay. Certainly, the "sink or swim" approach to induction of new teachers may cost districts many new candidates.

At one level, the IEL study set out to describe how urban schools with good and bad working conditions function as organizations and to describe what teachers' jobs look like in these schools. At another level, we searched for the differences that explain how and why the conditions vary. In each district we visited we found schools that were running well, where teachers were engaged and committed, where conditions were "better"—sometimes against the odds. And, we found the opposite.

This report has been helped enormously by the collaboration of the Council of the Great City Schools. Its Human Resources Subcommittee, chaired by Rachel Hedding of the Rochester, New York school board, served as the core of the study's advisory panel. The subcommittee has assisted us in reviewing the initial research design, making contacts with school districts, interpreting results and discussing the dissemination and use of the study's findings. Representatives of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers and principal representatives kept us on course by commenting on the research design, translating organizational behavior terms into language that makes sense to teachers and principals and helping us interpret the findings. Other members of the advisory panel have helped us in identifying pertinent research, commenting on presentation of the data and carefully reviewing the report.

We especially want to thank the superintendents and board members of the districts participating in the study (Denver, CO; Detroit, MI; Indianapolis, IN; New Orleans, LA; and Rochester, NY) for agreeing to participate in the study, helping us identify the schools analyzed, and opening their central offices to our research staff. Without their assistance and the helpfulness of the schools' staffs, this study would not have been possible. We thank the teachers, the principals, and central office staff for taking the time to be interviewed and sharing with us their perceptions of their schools.

Finally, this study would not have been possible without the assistance of the Ford Foundation and the involvement and guidance of Edward J. Meade, Jr., chief program officer with the Education and Culture Program. Questions raised by Meade began this study and started us off in the exploration of working conditions in urban schools.

Working in Urban Schools offers a unique picture of day-to-day life in typical urban elementary, middle and secondary schools. In its sample of 31 typical schools, there are "good" schools and "bad" schools in terms of their working environments. The findings identify conditions that make teachers' working lives more difficult and have a negative impact on their attitudes and behaviors. They also identify conditions that make teachers' work easier and have a positive impact on their attitudes. Most of all, *Working in Urban Schools* tells us that urban schools are organizations that can be run effectively and where employees can be treated as valued colleagues.

—Michael Usdan, President
Institute for Educational Leadership

September 1988

SUMMARY

As discussion about improving public education moves from student issues, such as requirements and testing, to the quality of teaching, education finds itself on a parallel with the business sector. Working conditions become paramount.

The most difficult working conditions for teachers exist in our urban schools. To better understand this environment and the influence of working conditions on the performance of urban teachers, the Institute for Educational Leadership, with funding from the Ford Foundation and with the cooperation of the Council of the Great City Schools, conducted a study of conditions in five urban school districts.

The project collected descriptive data on 31 elementary, middle and secondary schools, as well as statistical information from district officials. Teachers, school administrators, central office personnel, district officials, board members and union officials were interviewed. Altogether, more than 400 interviews were analyzed.

The observations, interviews and analyses confirm that, in most of these 31 schools, the working conditions of teachers are bleak and would not be tolerated in other professions. The major findings:

- Physical conditions are sub-standard, even in newer buildings, primarily because of a serious lack of repairs and preventive maintenance. Teachers need more space; some do not have their own classrooms. Yet, if other working conditions are good, teachers will tolerate poor physical conditions.
- Safety is not a serious problem to teachers, except in those schools located in very depressed neighborhoods.
- Urban teachers do not have even the basic resources needed, let alone access to new technologies.
- Urban teachers first want more personnel to deal with the personal problems of students, rather than teachers to decrease class sizes.
- Teachers generally understand the cultural gulf between them and their students but are unable to deal with what they consider aberrant student behavior because of their own orientations, skills or the lack of support on student discipline.
- Behind their closed doors, urban teachers exercise a great deal of authority over how they teach but perceive they are losing control over what they teach, primarily because of district-wide testing policies.
- Urban teachers have little confidence in supervision, staff development, or central office leadership but appreciate the effectiveness of principals in dealing with "downtown."

Despite these serious problems, working conditions and teacher effectiveness can be enhanced with measures short of the massive restructuring that often is proposed to turn around the schools. While dramatic changes may be the long-range goal, there are intermediate ones that would greatly improve the environment for urban teachers.

Good working conditions for teachers in the "best" schools include an adequately maintained physical plant, staff collegiality, participation in decision-making and sensitive but strong administrative leadership. Where these are present, teachers are enthusiastic, cooperative, willing to take responsibility and have high morale.

Ironically, almost all of these conditions are not only out of the hands of teachers, but depend more on district-level decisions than any in the building.

On the down side, all of the schools rated poorly by teachers were marked by a lack of resources, low staff collegiality, poor professional development, little teacher influence over school decisions, few rewards and poor leadership. There is no question that the performance of teachers is negatively affected in these schools. There is higher absenteeism, reduced levels of effort, less effectiveness in the classroom, low morale and reduced job satisfaction.

FINDINGS

- Urban teachers in the schools studied by IEL labor under conditions that would not be tolerated in other professional settings. This is true of teaching in general, but the compounding of problems in urban schools creates extremely difficult and demoralizing environments for those who have chosen to teach. Yet efforts to ameliorate the conditions are within the capacity of urban school leadership today, as intermediary steps toward restructuring of the schools.
- The physical condition of many buildings is substandard, due primarily to lack of repairs and preventive maintenance, problems created by "downtown" and not under the control of teachers. However, teachers appear to tolerate poor physical conditions, if other aspects of their working conditions are adequate or better.
- Lack of space, even in newer school buildings, prevents some teachers from having their own classrooms and most teachers from having sufficient storage and activity space for their students. Few teachers have adequate workspace to prepare for classes or meet with students individually.
- Teachers are cautious but not overly concerned about school safety, except in very depressed neighborhoods where "outsiders" threaten security within the building.
- Urban teachers often do not have even the basic resources needed for teaching. There are serious shortages of everything from crumpled paper to textbooks, teachers have limited access to modern office technologies, including copiers, let alone computers.
- Even though class sizes are comparatively large, 25-30 students on the average, teachers want more personnel to help students with social and personal problems rather than additional teachers.
- While large class sizes and hours spent outside of class (at least 8 hours a week) are not unusual for the teaching profession, they become more negative for urban teachers because of a lack of resources to get the job done. It is difficult, for example, to teach a large class with textbooks missing, supplemental materials limited, and student counseling services unavailable in the school.
- Both teachers and principals want to spend less time on paperwork and more on professional growth and improvement of instruction.
- Urban teachers struggle to deal with the cultures and problems of their students, with limited success. Where working conditions are better, the negative effects of student behavior are reduced. Teachers want more positive relations with their students, but district policies, lack of support on discipline problems and a widening gulf between the social backgrounds and values of teachers and urban students create enormous difficulties.

- Teachers want parents to provide more support for their children and for the mission of the schools, but they also understand the social and economic factors affecting their students' families.
- Relationships between teachers and students were better in elementary schools, in schools with strong administrative leadership (presumably because of help on discipline and attendance problems), in schools where teachers exercised higher influence over classroom decisions and school policies, in schools with adequate resources and in schools with higher levels of staff collegiality.
- Urban teachers exercise a great deal of discretion over how they teach but perceive they gradually are losing control over what they teach to district curriculum policies and testing programs.
- Standardized testing is viewed, both by teachers and administrators in urban schools, as a threat to professional authority.
- Other forms of monitoring the implementation of the curriculum, such as observations, are considered weak by teachers.
- Schools with teams or councils provide teachers with an important asset—control and influence over important decisions. These could be straightforward, intermediate steps toward restructuring of schools. But structures do not guarantee results. District and school building administrators must advocate and support teacher involvement, if it is to genuinely improve working conditions for urban teachers.
- Teacher involvement and collegiality are strongly influenced by the leadership of the principal, the size of the school and the time provided for involvement.
- Urban teachers do not trust the structure of supervision nor the capabilities of administrators to provide helpful supervision. Likewise, most administrators believe supervision strategies are inadequate. These findings hold true even in those districts that have moved to improve the process.
- Urban teachers view staff development activities as weak. Most are geared to elementary or new teachers and are hampered by lack of time and resources. Where teachers help plan and implement staff development and the activities are conducted at the school site, inservice training is accepted more positively.
- Urban teachers are not rewarded extrinsically for the difficult work they do. Outside of a paycheck, teachers receive little recognition for, or appreciation of, their efforts.
- The effectiveness of principals, in the eyes of urban teachers, diminishes as schools get bigger.
- The characteristics of good leadership by principals include human relations skills, technical competence, and instructional strengths. Ineffective principals are inaccessible, disorganized, inconsistent at enforcing rules for staff and students, and often dictatorial.

- While effective instructional leadership in principals is important to urban teachers, equally important is their ability to acquire resources for their schools, maintain the physical plants and buffer teachers from the bureaucracy.
- Most of the problems that diminish the quality of the working conditions of urban teachers require district-level action, such as workload and inadequate school resources. Further, teachers do not have much confidence in district leadership.
- While most districts have improvement efforts underway, they have not been well-communicated to teachers and convey a lack of stable direction.
- Where the problems with working conditions are serious enough to impinge on the work of teachers, they result in higher absenteeism, reduced levels of effort, lowered effectiveness in the classroom, low morale and reduced job satisfaction.
- Where working conditions are good, they result in enthusiasm, high morale, cooperation and acceptance of responsibility.
- Working conditions characteristic of the "best" schools are adequately maintained physical plant, staff collegiality, participation in decisionmaking and sensitive, but strong, administrative leadership. These characteristics are more frequently found in elementary schools in the IEL sample.
- The working conditions in the "worst" schools are characterized by lack of resources, low staff collegiality, poor professional development, low teacher influence over school decisions, low rewards and poor leadership.

- **How do working conditions affect teachers' abilities to do their jobs?**

“The issue . . . is not whether individuals are motivated or basically competent to perform their jobs, but whether they can perform well given their conditions of work and the resources they have available.”

—*Conditions and Resources of Teaching*,
National Education Association, 1988, p. 9.

1

THE CONTEXT: REFORMERS AND REALITIES

For urban teachers, “quality of worklife” is not an abstract concept. It affects their ability to do what they most want to do—teach children and youth how to succeed. It shapes their attitudes about students and their own profession. It figures prominently in their commitment to teaching.

Beginning in the Spring of 1987, the Institute for Educational Leadership examined working conditions in 31 schools in five urban school systems. The study team conducted more than 400 interviews with teachers, administrative and central office staff, school board members and union personnel. The purpose was two-fold: to provide a rich description of conditions facing urban teachers and to gain insight into how variations in conditions affect teachers.

The Reform Movement and Working Conditions

The decision to conduct the study came as educational reform in this country shifted from raising academic standards and tightening up accountability to improving the quality of teaching. In the past, public school teachers often were criticized collectively by the public and the media as less than competent, lacking in commitment, or responsible somehow for the inadequate achievement of American students. Today, good teachers are considered essential—and endangered. Recognition of the need to recruit and keep good teachers has led policymakers to focus on professional standards, incentives, and workplace reforms.

These changes, aimed at altering the conditions under which teachers labor, must be based on realistic descriptions of their worklives. They should be responsive as well to the needs of teachers as professionals in a working environment and they must contribute to student development and academic success.

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The School as a Workplace

The workplace reform and effective schools research contain similar propositions about the desired environment for professional work. Typically, these include:

- Decent and safe physical conditions
- Access to the materials and equipment needed
- Reasonable workloads and time for professional responsibilities
- Sufficient autonomy to meet student needs
- Active participation in decisions affecting their work
- Regular opportunities for interaction and sharing with colleagues
- Treatment as professionals by superiors and by peers
- Opportunities for professional growth
- Meaningful recognition/rewards for their efforts and achievements
- Supportive leadership

These ten dimensions of workplaces significantly affect the behavior and attitudes of workers and are essential to attaining and maintaining high levels of performance. Taken together, they provide a model of a professional environment. To some, they constitute the agenda for the reform of the school as a workplace.

The Call for Reform

Unfortunately, there is evidence that the proposed dramatic changes in the teaching profession, including greater participation in decisionmaking and restructuring of schools to alter teacher roles, are distant from the day-to-day lives of most urban teachers.

National and state surveys of teachers' views on schools as workplaces and on proposed reforms provide an unsettling picture of schools. Teachers express great dissatisfaction with communications with principals, seldom work with or are observed by colleagues, and have only limited opportunities to be involved in decisionmaking. Just as significant, teachers report frequent problems with obtaining adequate supplies and materials for teaching, inadequate space, and lack of equipment.

The reform efforts of the early 1980s did little to build teachers' trust that reform efforts are in their best interest. The 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education and subsequent reform reports

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expressed their concern that "not enough academically able students are being attracted to teaching." These early reports called for higher entry standards, higher salaries, better working conditions, and new opportunities for advancement for teachers. State responses varied; typically they raised salaries for beginning teachers, raised the standards for entry into the profession and improved teacher education. There were isolated, although well publicized efforts, to introduce new incentive structures, such as merit pay and master teacher programs, but, by and large, workplace issues were neglected.

As a result of the mounting evidence that talented teachers were leaving the profession because of poor working conditions and inadequate salaries, policymakers have turned their attention to the improvement of teaching environments. "Restructuring schools" and "professionalizing teaching" have replaced "raising standards" as the themes of the reform movement.

In 1986, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy issued a dramatic call for the creation of "a profession of well-educated teachers prepared to assume new powers and responsibilities to redesign schools for the future." The report recommended restructuring schools to provide more professional environments for teaching. This would free teachers to collectively determine how best to meet the needs of their students and fulfill state and local goals, while holding them accountable for student progress. Not long after, the National Governors' Association issued *Time for Results*, echoing these recommendations, citing better work environments, higher salaries, more policy influence, and career ladders as needed reforms in teaching. Both reports argued that better working conditions would attract and hold better people and that teachers would be more effective if their conditions of work were changed.

The recommendations in these reports and the promising experiments they have stimulated respond to the desires of teachers for greater professionalism. However, they also depend upon a restructuring of the public schools that is likely to take time. The proposed changes also are likely to be costly, e.g., smaller classes, more discretionary time, and higher salaries; it is hard for teachers to believe that such reforms will come to pass in the immediate future.

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In the plans to empower teachers and alter professional standards, the everyday problems that frustrate teachers—shortages of materials, inadequate facilities, the abundance of paperwork, disrespectful students—get little comment. This report focuses on the realities of urban teaching that need immediate relief and that can be addressed as initial efforts within broader reform plans.

Teacher Unions and Reform

Teacher unions also have been concerned with work reform in schools. Historically, they sought improved working conditions through collective bargaining with limited success. Their efforts have often been obstructed by limitations on the scope of bargaining. The distinction between policy, a prerogative of management, and working conditions has proved to be difficult to make in education and has hampered efforts to solve workplace problems through collective bargaining.

Furthermore, teachers' unions followed the model of industrial unionism and, as a consequence, tended to emphasize those improvements that would materially benefit all members and also strengthen the role of the union. They opposed reforms that would differentiate among teachers or blur distinctions between employees and management.

However, the industrial union model of collective bargaining hasn't meshed well with professional needs and aspirations of teachers. Adversarial bargaining led to the centralization of authority and policymaking and efforts by administrators to limit the discretion and autonomy of teachers. Concern over work rules competed with professional norms governing teacher behavior. There has been tension between teacher authority based on professional norms and standards of quality and the work rules defined by employers and by bargaining agreements.

Meanwhile, a revolution has been underway in management-labor relations outside of education, based on the premise that an enterprise functions best if all stakeholders participate in decisions affecting their work. The Carnegie Forum called for similar changes in education to empower teachers. The "school team" model of staff organization and career ladder described in the Carnegie report are manifestly different from the industrial labor-

... a revolution has been underway in management-labor relations outside of education, based on the premise that an enterprise functions best if all stakeholders participate in decisions affecting their work.

management model, and many feel that such reforms require new approaches to collective bargaining.

Experiments in collaboration have appeared in large school districts such as Miami-Dade, Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, and Rochester and in smaller ones such as Hammond, Indiana and Sunnyside, Arizona. These experiments, while varying in their scope and in their specifics, are changing the roles and responsibilities of teachers and the way that decisions are made. And their visibility is changing the character of national debates about the reform of the professional environment. The initiative has shifted from state capitols to local policymakers and union leaders.

There is still debate and ferment among union leaders about the meaning and durability of these reforms. Many see them as the flagships leading the way into a new era of collective bargaining; others remain skeptical and are concerned about the impact on their members.

Furthermore, there also are reasons to doubt the public will be willing to bear the costs of all proposed changes. Some of the more expensive proposals may prove difficult to sustain or extend. Many union leaders still feel teachers are more concerned with "bread and butter" issues and may see reforms as mere distractions if their basic needs for better salaries and working conditions are not met. And not all teachers want the new roles and responsibilities.

Nevertheless, teacher organizations are working with management to restructure schools, seeking ways to make them better and more effective workplaces. They are searching for ways to advance the profession, but always with the caveat that the strategies cannot undermine the bargaining process itself.

Urban Schools and the Conditions of Teaching

The need to make schools more effective while being sensitive to bargaining implications is quite clear in urban schools. In almost every instance where evidence is available, urban teachers have been found to work under conditions dramatically worse than teachers in general, caused in many instances by continuing fiscal crises. If anything, the financial base of urban schools has worsened during this period of reform. From 1981 to 1986, ^{total} revenues to the 44 largest school districts

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dropped by 20 percent. This change in support came at the same time as local tax bases and aid to cities in social services, transportation and revenue sharing were decreasing. Schools could not expect replacement revenues from local sources. Exacerbating this local resource problem were continuing inequities in state funding of local districts.

These districts, because of their fiscal problems, are more likely to have aging school buildings and less likely to be well equipped for new technologies. They have more difficulty maintaining their schools. Class sizes are likely to be larger and textbooks older.

Students in urban schools are poorer and more are "at risk." Fewer middle-income families remain in the city. More children come from single-parent families and live in neighborhoods where unemployment is high, and hope is not. And the achievement gap between inner-city students and more advantaged students remains high, despite recent gains by black and Hispanic youngsters. Further, the number of low-achieving youngsters and those in need of special services appears to be increasing.

Large urban schools . . . are less able to attract qualified teachers than surrounding suburban schools . . .

New demands for services, higher expectations for urban schools and a new philosophy of "doing more with less" have put urban school districts in a difficult place for implementing educational reforms and raising student achievement. Most have major initiatives underway: encouraging effective teaching; strengthening curriculum and management; designing alternate delivery systems for students needing and wanting specialized attention (including magnets, special academic or vocational programs); expanding early childhood programs; expanding social support programs to keep students from dropping out; and building partnerships with business. These programs are helping urban districts improve their effectiveness, but they place greater burdens on an inadequate fiscal base and often are implemented at the expense of other equally valuable programs.

Large urban schools also face a staffing problem that could undermine their efforts to improve. They are less able to attract qualified teachers than surrounding suburban schools, and their ratio of teaching vacancies was three times as high as other districts in 1983. With the aging of their teaching force and shortage of resources, the recruitment problem puts a premium on *retaining*

effective teachers and providing them the support and assistance they need. Like other districts, large urban schools find it difficult to recruit adequate numbers of minority teachers. Since 71 percent of all black students and 50 percent of all Hispanic students attend urban schools, the lack of minority teachers makes it difficult to bridge the cultural differences.

Recruiting better teachers is not an easily solved problem. Urban districts suffer from problems devastating to teacher morale: bureaucracies which stipulate teaching content and timing in order to build student achievement, student discipline problems, a greater share of students with whom it is hard to achieve results, and poor physical working conditions.

According to the Council of the Great City Schools report, only 39 percent of city teachers feel respected by society compared to 47 percent of all teachers. A full 47 percent feel that parental and community support for the school in which they teach is only fair or poor. A recent survey of teachers by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching found that urban teachers face more problems in their daily work, have less authority and get less administrative support than other teachers.

Working in Urban Schools was undertaken to develop better data on the conditions of teaching in urban areas. We were interested in examining the dynamics of the workplace and the conditions faced by teachers and their influence on teacher behavior and productivity. The surveys done in the past have little comparative data on urban schools and tell us little about how conditions in schools vary or why. Survey data do not reveal how teachers are affected by these conditions.

We have stayed close to the description of the schools as reported by the school staff and as observed by the researchers. We examine the impact of these conditions, using both the teachers' descriptions and other district data. We have represented data graphically so that readers can get a sense of what the typical situation is in these 31 schools, with variations where they exist.

The first chapter describes the physical shape of the buildings, including the condition of the buildings, space, maintenance and security. The second examines resources available and teacher workload. A third chapter

describes the impact of student behavior. The fourth and

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teaching in urban
areas.**

fifth chapters examine teacher influence, first in the classroom and then in other school decisionmaking. The sixth chapter, as well, examines teacher involvement with peers. Supervision, professional development and rewards, all topics talked about as ways of investing in human resources, are examined in the sixth chapter. Finally, we look at the impact of district policies and the overall effects of working conditions.

This is a study of a sample of urban schools. Our findings do not represent any one particular urban school or district; they are drawn from a varied group of schools in urban districts. They provide useful insights into the prospects of changing the quality of worklife for urban teachers.



**What is the overall physical
condition of the school?**

**“Teachers feel powerless to
change the physical
conditions.”**

2

THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: RED TAPE AND BEGGING

What is it that impresses you as you enter a school? Is the building an inviting, pleasant place—with life and interest, a home away from home, an environment which stimulates excitement and encourages expression? Few would put the school building top on the list of essential ingredients for a quality education. But again, can we delight in learning when the surroundings are drab and desolate? Aren't school buildings the physical expression of how a community cares for its young?

Recent reports and news stories are rife with descriptions of older school buildings in a "critical state of disrepair," maintenance deferred in order to shift funds to new programs. A 1987 report of the Council of the Great City Schools shows that 70 percent of the largest city schools are older than 25 years. Although older buildings often require more maintenance, only 3.5 percent of the annual budget is spent on maintenance in these 44 large districts, down from 6 percent four years ago. It is a steadily decreasing proportion of the school budget.

In 1983, the backlog of school repair and renovation projects was estimated at \$25 billion across the country, according to a study by the Council and two other national organizations. These projects included major items such as plumbing, heating and cooling systems, electrical wiring, roofing, and asbestos removal. This deferral of maintenance projects has continued. According to the Council's 1987 report, 85 percent of the maintenance funds are currently spent for "breakdown or emergency maintenance," not routine or annual work. In one large urban district, for example, "the current maintenance budget is enough to paint classrooms every 100 years and to replace floor coverings once every 50 years." (*Education Week*, 1987)

Despite these commonly held views and reinforcing statistics, the findings from our 31 schools (Table 2:1) hat overall, when considering physical conditions,

TABLE 2:1

OVERALL CONDITION OF BUILDINGS BY LEVEL OF SCHOOLS (N=3.)					
School Level	Assessment of Condition of Building				
	Good	Adequate to Good	Adequate	Adequate to Poor	Poor
Elementary (N=11)	1	3	4	3	0
Middle (N=10)	1	4	3	0	2
Secondary (N=10)	1	0	4	2	3
Total	3	7	11	5	5

space, maintenance and safety, teachers consider most buildings to be adequate. While physical conditions can vary significantly from building to building even within a district, only three schools were considered by teachers to be in "good" condition. Ten schools were reported as less than adequate. These judgments tend to be conservative. Teachers appeared to accept as normal, and therefore adequate, conditions that were at best bleak and dreary.

Teachers told us that physical conditions have direct positive and negative effects on teacher morale, sense of personal safety, feelings of effectiveness in the classroom, and on the general learning environment. Building renovations in one district led to "a renewed sense of hope, of commitment, a belief that the district cared about what went on in that building," according to teachers. In dilapidated buildings in another district, the atmosphere was punctuated more by despair and frustration, with teachers reporting that leaking roofs, burned out lights, and broken toilets were the typical backdrop for teaching and learning.

Furthermore, there was little disagreement among administrators, teachers, and building representatives in all the schools as to the physical conditions of the schools and the nature of the problems encountered. Problems, when present, seemed fairly obvious to everyone. The grade level of the schools had no particular bearing on overall physical conditions.

The location of the school, however, was significant. In the three districts where inadequate facilities were

reported, each of the buildings was located in a low-income, inner-city neighborhood or downtown setting. These impoverished locations experienced problems of outsiders entering the building, vandalism, and unsafe parking lots. These schools were the only ones where safety was said to be an issue. Some newer buildings were identified as inadequate; age of a building was less of a factor than a history of disrepair and neglect.

The responses to questions about how the building was to work in—problems with the condition of the facility, adequacy of space, quality of maintenance, and building safety—are shown in Table 2:2 according to level of school.

TABLE 2:2

PROBLEMS WITH BUILDINGS BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL (N = 31)				
School Level	Physical Condition	Problem Areas		
		Space	Maintenance	Safety
Elementary (N = 11)	5	5	7	3
Middle (N = 10)	3	5	5	2
Secondary (N = 10)	7	6	8	3
Total	15	16	20	8

Physical Conditions: Don't Renovate and Cut Maintenance

According to administrators in a district with both adequate and inadequate buildings, a major fiscal crisis shelved a capital investment plan that would have refurbished structures or built desperately needed new schools. Many buildings were over 50 years old. The building plan had to be curtailed and the maintenance budget drastically cut. The area of the city with the oldest, most dilapidated buildings is predominantly black and Hispanic. This area also has the fastest population growth in the city. In response to pleas, the district reem-barked on a five-year capital investment plan, targeting many of the schools in this section of the city. However, according to district administrators and teachers alike, the cutbacks have had a lasting impact on working conditions and educational quality.

"and the only way principals can get maintenance done is through aggressive complaining."

In another district, physical conditions overall were fair to poor. For many years there was no regular or preventive maintenance, just major repairs when something fell apart. Eight years ago renovations covered major repairs, such as roof replacement, window replacement, and internal work in many buildings, but other buildings were left in bad condition. And now the district has lost the ability to generate monies for capital improvements. The maintenance program is bogged down in "too much red tape" complained many respondents, "and the only way principals can get maintenance done is through aggressive complaining." According to district officials, the money for repairs is sufficient, but getting repairs done is up to the principals.

"This School is a Disaster!"

Inadequate buildings had multiple problems: poor physical conditions, poor design, poor use of space, and poor maintenance. In the only school in one district which had not been remodeled, major repairs were long overdue, and worse, staff and student morale had deteriorated along with the gutter spouts. The grounds were littered, the hallways dirty. Said one teacher, "Sometimes I feel like I'm coming into a garbage can."

These voices reflect a common chord. In all schools, respondents said that principal leadership is vital to keeping up with the maintenance and repair in buildings. Success depends on whether the principal places a high priority on repairs and cleanliness. A real difference in a building can depend on whether the principal has a role in hiring or selecting custodial staff. A union representative claimed that "the head custodian is one of the most significant persons in the life of a school."

Space

Even if the school is new, well-built and maintained, professionals still need working space of their own. Yet, 16 of 31 schools reported space problems, centered around the lack of classrooms—the effects of over-enrollment, reduced class size, and special education and remedial programs. Other common space problems described were the number of students compared to the size of the

room, the lack or quality of office space or teacher lounges, meeting space and common areas, and the lack of storage space. Table 2:3 identifies these space needs.

Teachers don't talk about just needing classrooms. Their comments are in terms of specific teaching space needs. For example, especially at the elementary and middle school levels, teachers report needing rooms for special activities, meeting with parents, and remedial programs. And they report that the teacher/student ratio is judged by the district-wide average, not by the size of the room. In other words, space is not matched to needs.

In ten of these sixteen schools, there are teachers who do not have their own classrooms and "float" from room to room. Floating often is coupled with no teacher office space, workrooms or any storage space. Teachers say they are reduced to wheeling their materials around on carts from room to room.

"I Would Give Anything for a Classroom of My Own"

None of the four schools assessed as good in terms of conditions was said to have space problems. The major problem cited among schools with space problems was the lack of classrooms. "I would do anything for a classroom of my own," said one teacher, "I now have science classes plus labs in four different rooms." The only district where classroom space was not a problem in any of the schools studied was experiencing district-wide under-enrollment.

According to teachers in one district, accommodating special education classes has reduced classroom space. The role of special education in the district was expanded, but no arrangement was made to supply the space needed for classes of smaller size. This led to a space squeeze, creating large class sizes in many buildings, even at the elementary level. In some schools, storage space has been eliminated to provide needed expansion for other uses. As one elementary teacher indicated, "closets are being used for classrooms. The ditto machine is in a women's restroom." Another added, "the special education cadre is off in an unsafe closet with no ventilation windows, and exposed heating pipes."

TABLE 2:3
Space Needs As Cited By Teachers
Percentage of Total Responses
(N = 197)

More Classrooms*	20%
Storage Space	18
Larger Classrooms	16
Teacher Workspace/ Offices	13
Faculty Lounge	12
Meeting Space	5
More Space	4
Restrooms	2
Cafeteria/Auditorium	1
Departmental Offices	1
Library	1
Phone Facilities	1
Other	6

* In 10 of 31 schools, some teachers had to share classroom space.

"The ditto machine is in a women's restroom."

"I Teach in a Storage Room"

In a second district, teachers reported similar problems. "I have classes in a small lounge," said one. "It's windowless. It's claustrophobic. People come in to use the restrooms and disrupt classes." The feeling among the teachers was that there were simply too many students and not enough of anything else. Teachers sharing classrooms contended the arrangement kept them disorganized and unfocused throughout the day. Shifting from room to room increases the need for places to store books and materials, but these also are lacking. "I teach in a storage room," explained one teacher. "I've asked for years for a place to store textbooks." The teachers' lounge was so small that teachers ate outside the school or in their classrooms. "That is a lost opportunity for informal teacher interaction and collegiality," observed a school principal.

Even in schools where there were enough classrooms because of under-enrollment, there were problems because space was underutilized. Classrooms sat empty, rather than being assigned to teachers as office, workroom, or lounge space. Respondents felt that this displayed an insensitivity to teachers' daily needs. Teachers worked in isolation in their classrooms. Interaction with other teachers was effectively cut off.

Maintenance

Respondents reported some type of maintenance problems in 20 of the 31 schools. Major maintenance issues identified were:

- Daily cleanliness
- Inadequate custodial staffs
- Neglect of needed repairs
- The lengthy process of repair work

The major complaint was about unnecessarily complicated repair requisition orders that had to be processed through the central district office where response was very slow. On the other hand, aggressive principal leadership was often found to counter problems of "red-tape" at the building level. Said one respondent, "Custodians are restricted by union work rules and regulations. For example, school custodians can't screw a bolt in the door

"... school custodians can't screw a bolt in the door unless they call central administration."

unless they call central administration. It's a lengthy and bureaucratic process. As a result, we never get anything repaired." Minor problems neglected because of "red-tape" eventually turned into major problems, symptomatic of overall building decline. Generally, there was the perception that maintenance personnel have been reduced over the years, and their job descriptions increasingly specialized.

"It Took Hours of Begging to Get it Fixed"

"I had a broken clock in my classroom for five months. It took hours of begging, pleading, and writing invoices to get it fixed. That was time and energy that could have been used for instruction."

Other respondents felt slow repair times showed that the district didn't care about their building. "The central office wants to abandon this building and doesn't want to put money into it," said one principal. "We have constant breakdowns of the electrical, plumbing, heating systems. Bells do not work properly. It takes forever to get anything repaired. This building used to be immaculate, now it's so filthy I have to wash my hands every period." As a result, administrators and staff continually pestered the custodial staff. This led to "a constant badgering of people which is negative and counter-productive," said the principal.

"This building used to be immaculate; now it's so filthy I have to wash my hands every period."

In one school, all those interviewed were in absolute agreement about the signs of decay. The grounds were unkept, the building in disrepair, the hallways littered and "dangerous." Windows often were broken and remained so; hallways were dark from burned-out light bulbs. Respondents claimed there was no maintenance to speak of and not enough custodians or supplies to keep the building clean.

Said one teacher union representative, "Teachers feel powerless to change the physical conditions. The chief administrator could play a greater role in decision-making with regard to this." The building's operating budget did not begin to cover even daily maintenance expenses. The principal was buying toilet paper for the school from his paycheck. District administrators confirmed that morale in the school was extremely low and the building should be condemned.

"We Make Do With What We Have"

When maintenance problems extended to daily cleanliness, it greatly affected teacher morale. Many schools have experienced steady cutbacks in custodial staff and cleaning supply budgets. This was countered in one building where the principal embarked on a crusade to keep the building clean. The principal's first priority was to upgrade the custodial staff by paying personal attention to hiring energetic people. In this building, custodians were cleaning in the hall every period. The pride they showed in the building was obvious.

"We have made it a cooperative effort."

Building pride extended to the students, as well. The adults worked to maintain high expectations for students about the building, and the students responded. "Teachers, custodial staff, and principal have reinforced the idea of keeping a good, clean school," said one respondent. "We have made it a cooperative effort."

An Exception:

"The Building's in Good Shape"

One middle school, perceived to be in good condition by teachers and administrators, contained adequate classrooms and space for team offices and faculty workrooms. The building was air conditioned, which was considered a major benefit. No repair or maintenance problems were described, although there were shortages of cleaning supplies. In this case, strong principal leadership was the reason for the good condition of the school building. The principal placed an emphasis on cleanliness, assured that repairs were done quickly, and focused on generating "school pride" among teachers, custodial staff, and students.

Safety

Although building safety has been reported to be a concern of teachers, safety and security problems were reported in only 8 of the 31 schools, all of which were in inner-city, low-income neighborhoods or downtown. Safety was a problem in only three of the secondary schools. Most teachers did not report being fearful about going to work, although some were cautious about com-

ing too soon or staying too late. Some noted the need for better lighting and monitoring of parking lots. Others complained that building security needed to be stepped up to keep out non-students.

Teachers in one building finally raised enough money together for new lighting in the parking lot which seemed to decrease the problems. In another school, teachers pooled funds to pay for a security guard to monitor the parking lot.

A problem in some buildings was theft, usually break-ins after school hours. "Everyone has keys," one respondent said, "including custodians who have been fired." "You cannot leave valuables in the building," said another. "The master keys were stolen, but the locks have not been changed."

The biggest problems did not seem to be caused by students but by outsiders. Building security was a factor in all the schools reporting safety problems because too many outsiders had access, especially in buildings located in unsafe neighborhoods. Non-students came into the building during school hours to steal equipment and supplies. Respondents cited too many unguarded entrances and not enough security staff to patrol the building. "We have funding for a security officer four days a week, which is not sufficient," an administrator said. "We need at least two full-time officers in order to monitor halls." One secondary school had 40 entrances and exits to the building, "an impossible situation to monitor."

One teacher summed up the concerns of others: "I don't feel afraid," she said, "but I've had to develop coping strategies so my teaching job won't turn into a nightmare. The problem will come when my coping strategies absorb energy that I could expend on my students."

"I don't feel afraid, but I've had to develop coping strategies so my teaching job won't turn into a nightmare."

SUMMARY

In summary, the study determined that the physical condition of buildings was:

- Not dependent on grade level of school
- Not dependent on age of building
- Dependent on the condition of the neighborhood surrounding the school
- Dependent on the role of district policy
- Dependent on principal leadership

- Dependent on timely renovation and regular and preventive maintenance

There were serious facilities problems in about one-third of the schools. The most common problems were poor maintenance, lack of space, and failure to make major repairs. Good buildings were clean, safe, well-maintained, with adequate classrooms and common areas for teachers and students. Table 2:4 describes the characteristics of good and poor buildings.

TABLE 2:4

CHARACTERISTICS OF "GOOD" AND "POOR" BUILDINGS				
	Facility	Space	Maintenance	Safety
Good	Recent major renovations	Ample, large classrooms	No repair problems	Monitor building closely
	New furnishings	Teacher workspace	Emphasis on cleanliness	Adequate security staff
	Well maintained building	Team offices	Sufficient custodial staff	Secured parking area
	Efficient cooling/heating system	Adequate storage space	Adequate cleaning supplies	
		Renovated faculty lounge	No delay on repairs	
			Pride in building	
Poor	Windows broken	Not enough classrooms, teachers "float"	Major repair problems	Access of building
	Lights burned out		Shortages of cleaning supplies	Inadequate security staff
	Long term decline, neglect	No offices or teacher workrooms	Custodial staff cutbacks	Vandalism
	Poor design	No storage space	Lengthy process for repairs	Unsafe neighborhood
	Shoddy construction	Small classrooms		
	Major repair problems	Overcrowding		



**Are there adequate staff,
materials and equipment to
meet the needs of students?**

"Many teachers buy their own supplies because they are so demoralized by begging and pleading for materials."

3

RESOURCES AND TEACHER WORKLOAD: BUILDING A HOUSE WITH NO NAILS

Teachers often spend hours trying to locate the materials they need. When basic school resources, such as textbooks, supplementary materials, audio-visual equipment, and support staff are lacking, teachers' energies are drained away from students into activities akin to foraging. If their efforts fail, teachers purchase materials themselves, but often the end result is to limit classroom activities and undercut expectations for success.

And if their workload is increased, through larger class sizes, additional paperwork, or non-instructional responsibilities, energy again is diverted away from the classroom into related but incidental pursuits. Often classroom effectiveness boils down to physical stamina and endurance.

Taken together, teaching resources and workload can make or break effective teaching. Yet, a 1986 survey of California teachers concluded that teachers operate daily with insufficient textbooks, materials, and equipment to carry out their teaching tasks. A second report, undertaken by the American Federation of Teachers, entitled *Schools as a Workplace*, argued that school systems need to improve resource allocation, standards for equipment and supplies, and availability of materials in order to alleviate stress. Pressures cited were long hours, too much paperwork, large classes and no planning time.

These two dimensions of working conditions, then, are very closely interwoven and interdependent. Lack of resources increases the teacher's workload. A heavy workload makes it difficult for the teacher to effectively use even those resources that are available.

The Common Picture: "We Don't Have the Resources To Do the Job. . ."

In 25 of the 51 schools, resources—materials, staff, and equipment—were rated as less than adequate. Nineteen of these schools were reported as definitely "inadequate."

In only six schools did teachers and administrators find their overall resources "adequate" or "adequate to good." None of the schools were perceived as having a "good" resource situation. There were no marked differences of opinion between teachers and administrators about the adequacy of resources. Most administrators frankly admitted chronic and exasperating resource inadequacies. Table 3:1 summarizes the responses of teachers and administrators to the resource situation in their schools. Table 3:2 goes one step further to show the number and level of schools with resource problems of staffing, materials, or equipment.

TABLE 3:1

ADEQUACY OF ALL RESOURCES BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL. (N = 31)					
School Level	Assessment of Adequacy of Resources				
	Good	Adequate to Good	Adequate	Adequate to Inadequate	Inadequate
Elementary (N = 11)	0	1	2	1	7
Middle (N = 10)	0	0	2	3	5
Secondary (N = 10)	0	0	1	2	7
Total	0	1	5	6	19

TABLE 3:2

PROBLEMS WITH RESOURCES BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL. (N = 31)			
School Level	Staff	Problem Areas	
		Materials	Equipment
Elementary (N = 11)	10	7	7
Middle (N = 10)	10	6	4
Secondary (N = 10)	7	7	4
Total	27	20	15

Staffing: "These Kids Need Special Help to Meet Their Needs"

There was virtual unanimity across all the schools about the need for more staff. Of the 31 schools, 27 iden-

tified insufficient staff as a problem area. Repeatedly, teachers and administrators cited the need for counselors, specialists, social workers, security staff, custodial staff, and more teachers. But most of the needs cited, surprisingly, were not for more regular classroom teachers. More often than not, teachers requested support staff, such as counselors, nurses, social workers, security staff, and aides. The primary need was to have services and personnel to deal with students' academic and emotional problems and with discipline, especially because of the large class sizes.

Almost every school lacked support staff, such as social workers, counselors, and nurses. Many felt that support staff would provide more of an immediate benefit than adding more teachers. "It would take a lot of the pressure off of us," said one teacher. Teachers linked the need for support staff with the complex needs of the student population. In many schools, the majority of students needed specialized attention. Counselors were needed to refer families to appropriate agencies that could help them. Many children needed support from other adults that they didn't have at home. Many students were from low-income, single-parent families, who came to school with many more additional problems to classroom learning. "We are just able to deal with crisis intervention; there's no time for prevention and no time for follow through," said one teacher. Teachers often found themselves caught up in students' personal problems to the extent that on some days they played more the role of the social worker or counselor, less the role of instructor.

"Our school counselors don't have time to counsel students," one teacher said. "They spend 99 percent of their time on administrative tasks and responsibilities." According to one principal in an elementary school, "We need a full-time social worker and counselor. We are now using part-time, retired junior high school counselors. We need a counselor three to five days a week instead of just one day. We need an assistant principal in the building or a quasi-administrative assistant to help." Many elementary schools were run by one overworked administrator, and even teachers pointed out the need for an assistant principal.

"We need a social worker and a counselor to assist children with behavioral problems," said a teacher. "We

Teachers often found themselves caught up in students' personal problems to the extent that on some days they played more the role of the social worker or counselor, less the role of instructor.

TABLE 3:3

Staff Needs as Cited by Teachers

Percentage of Total Responses
(N = 472)

Counselors	17%
Teachers	12
Teacher Aides	10
Social Workers	9
Clerical Support	8
Substitutes	8
Security	6
Maintenance	6
Nurse	6
Psychologist	4
Special Education	4
Administrative	2
Other	8

need aides because of the large classes." In another building: "We need more counselors; the ratio is 1:400. We only have two clerks to handle attendance, school finances, and the office. So we're stretching it."

Counselor ratios at the secondary level were too high (ranging from 3:700 to 1:500, with most being 1:400 to 1:450), and few counselors or other support personnel existed at the elementary level.

The need for more classroom teachers usually was mentioned in the context of reducing class size. Or in the case of middle schools, more specialized teachers were needed to teach science, music, and physical education to offer a more balanced and diverse curriculum. Other staffing needs commonly repeated were for more custodians, security guards, and substitutes.

"Three or four years ago, we had a much more extensive curriculum for our students," said one administrator. "Due to finances, we keep losing faculty. We should be offering other classes." A teacher echoed the complaint: "We need additional staff for major academic subjects—language arts, science, math, social studies. Teachers are trying to teach across subjects. There is not enough staff to teach classes the way the building is designed. We're forced to teach closed-class subjects within an open-plan building."

In some schools, finding qualified substitutes was a major problem. As one teacher remarked, "Special program staff have to substitute on a regular basis which lessens the quality of our programs." One district permitted one full-time substitute for the building and gave discretionary money for substitutes; if none were available, then a class was divided into thirds and teachers paid one-third of the daily substitute salary. Lacking substitutes, teachers were asked to cover classes during their group period or to take additional students into already crowded classes.

Said a respondent from another school: "The class size is outrageous, totally out of hand. I had to substitute 27 times this year for other teachers at \$7 per hour. Lots of teachers show up late." And at another school: "This school needs more substitute teachers. Every school has two school-based substitutes but often have five or six teachers absent."

"Special program staff have to substitute on a regular basis which lessens the quality of our programs."

Materials: "Part of Every Paycheck Goes Toward Buying Supplies"

With only six schools indicating that resources were adequate, teachers and administrators in the other schools expressed over and over the need for more materials. They reported shortages of everything from textbooks to toilet paper. For example, one teacher complained that "classes need desks and blackboards. I finally bought two small blackboards and pounded them into the wall." This example was echoed by many who said principals and teachers have to make purchases from their own pockets. In one district, respondents reported that supplemental materials, dictionaries, reading kits, and science equipment were not available in five of the six schools studied. One high school teacher lamented, "I have three classes without textbooks. We are not allowed lab workbooks."

"I finally bought two small blackboards and pounded them into the wall."

In some schools, teachers don't even have the most basic materials—paper, pencils, textbooks, reading kits, ditto fluid—for teaching. At the same time, they face large class sizes and no resource assistance. Teachers often must beg or borrow resources from others or spend their own paychecks on supplies.

Some schools ration paper or keep it locked up, which further demoralizes teachers. The process for distributing supplies is experienced as demeaning and unprofessional. "We have to ask the secretary for everything—paper, pencils, crayons," said one teacher. "Most of the time, I buy my own supplies because I don't want to go through the secretary. The supply closet is her kingdom and she is very protective about it." Said a second teacher, "We get a small package of chalk with eight sticks; ditto paper has to be purchased out-of-pocket or borrowed from friends at other schools. Workbooks are not even one per student."

"For the last four years," said another, "I have had to buy ditto masters and paper from my own pocket. The amount of supplies is dismal. There is no lab equipment for science and persistent shortages every year with textbooks." A fourth teacher responded: "There are not enough reading books for the students. No reading kits, tape recorders, workbooks, or other supplementals. We even have shortages of paper." And a fifth teacher com-

mented: "I just bought a case of ditto paper out of my own salary."

The lack of supplies directly affects teacher attitudes. Typical of the comments: "Many teachers buy their own supplies because they are so demoralized by begging and pleading for materials." In most schools, there was a "rationing atmosphere" about basic supplies, summed up well by the teacher who said, "It's like they want us to build a house but not use any nails."

Equipment: "We Have to Sneak to Use the Xerox Machine"

In 15 of the 31 schools, there was limited availability or access to such equipment as computers, copiers, telephones, and AV equipment. Both quantity and quality of equipment were concerns.

The copy machine was a prized piece of equipment in almost every school, and it was a major item of contention. Because textbooks were not readily available in all schools and supplemental materials limited, the ability to quickly duplicate materials was prized and considered essential by many teachers. As one teacher said, "We only have one copier. The lines are long, and teachers wait a long time." Or, an elementary principal said, "We only have one copier that 65 people must use. Our budget does not allow us to purchase or even rent one, so ours is broken down a lot. It's frustrating for teachers." In other schools, teacher use of copy machines was limited or not allowed because maintenance and paper were too costly for constant use, which caused resentment among staff. From another building: "We have to sneak to use the Xerox machine. They told us they bought it for the teachers, but now we're not allowed to use it."

Even respondents with fairly ready access to a copy machine complained that it always seemed to be broken and that there was no money to fix it. Teachers often are forced to fall back on the hand-cranked mimeo machines. "I would love to use the copier instead of a messy ditto machine," one teacher said. "I know it is a little thing but it would help so much."

In several of the high schools, AV equipment had been stolen and not replaced.

In most schools AV equipment was available but very limited. In several of the high schools, AV equipment had been stolen and not replaced. In other schools, equip-

ment stayed in disrepair due to lack of funding. One teacher referred to the "hand-me-down" equipment in his building.

In a different school, a teacher responded: "The equipment is accessible but we need more of it, especially a telephone for the teachers. Teachers have requested an additional telephone, even if it's a pay telephone, but requests have been turned down." Lack of access to a telephone was decried by teachers in many other schools, where they often had to share an office phone or go out of the building to find a pay phone.

Concerning access and availability of computers for use by teachers, one teacher expressed it best: "Computers? We don't even have typewriters to type our tests." Easy access to computers was an anomaly in most of the schools. If computers were available, they were in computer labs or had to be shared by several teachers. There were extremes. In one district the only computers were in the library or computer lab, but teachers didn't have access. In a second district, computers were more abundant, and teachers had to share, but could use them. But even the availability of computers was a problem. One teacher said that computers were in storage because the principal couldn't decide who would get them.

Distribution of Resources

In four of the five districts, respondents agreed that although resources were limited, they were distributed fairly within the district. In one district, the distribution of resources was equitable in that it was based on a student formula. But some schools had a larger base of resources to begin with than other schools, and the formula ignored those inequities.

Some schools have found ways to supplement existing resources. This was done mainly through fundraisers or involving parents. Some schools are able to take advantage of these alternatives, and some are not. "District distribution doesn't take into account that some schools have more affluent student populations and are able to do fundraising. There is no parental fundraising in this school," said a teacher. "There is equal distribution of funds from the district," said a teacher from a different building, "but spending is different because some schools have a good PTA, parents give money, and there are busi-

TABLE 3:4
Typical Equipment
Needs as Identified by
Teachers
(N = 260)

Copiers	28%
Telephones	20
Computers	16
Audio Visual Equipment	13
Typewriters	11
VCR	4
Repair Old Equipment	3
Other	5

"District distribution doesn't take into account that some schools have more affluent student populations and are able to do fundraising."

An Exception: "We Want for Nothing"

One of the few schools where resources were plentiful was a secondary magnet school in a district where the majority of the students were poor. From the beginning, the school had a reputation for being a high-achieving school. The principal had been a teacher at the school for 15 years and had a strong belief in the school's mission. He had developed a strong relationship with the district superintendent and had been instrumental in the school's selection as a magnet school. The school had a strong focus on academic achievement and had a reputation for being a high-achieving school.

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Although class sizes were high, staff levels of career educators were beyond the typical day teachers did not complain about either. In fact, the principal explained that the school had a high level of flexibility in scheduling, planning, and instruction of students and team teaching. There was provided daily time to meet for planning, sharing, and instruction. Counselors were a regular part of these meetings, so opportunities existed to discuss student needs. In addition to the extra planning period, teachers were relieved of all non-instructional duties. Having a duty free lunch was especially prized by staff members. As one respondent said, "This school is better than most."

ness partnerships. Affluent parents have more access to downtown and inroads to getting resources. Area superintendents try to get more for certain schools."

Active principal leadership was credited with acquiring additional resources for some schools. In one district, administrators claimed that secondary magnet schools received more materials than the other schools because

they took on subsidized pilot programs. The principal of another school observed: "Comprehensive schools are treated as second-class citizens."

Principal leadership also seemed to be the key to building parental support, developing business partnerships, and dealing with area superintendents and other district administrators to get additional resources. The district administrators agreed that principals play a large role in whether a school experiences shortages or has enough supplies for the year.

... principals play a large role in whether a school experiences shortages or has enough supplies for the year.

Workload

Class sizes of 25 students or more were reported by respondents in 20 of the 31 schools, 19 of which were marked by shortages of materials, staffing needs, and limited access to equipment. Moderate class sizes, 20-25 students, were found in 11 schools. None of the schools had average class sizes below 20 students. Within each school, individual respondents reported exceptions to the average class size. The exceptions were either special education classes or small advanced placement classes at the secondary level.

In general, there was consensus across all 31 schools that contract agreements on class size were adhered to "as closely as possible." When there were deviations, they usually were affirmed by the teachers. In several schools, however, this apparent good will and trust was complicated by other feelings: "When there is some deviation with the contract, we agree to sign a waiver," said one teacher. "There's some implicit pressure because you could be transferred to another place if you don't agree to pick up an extra class."

Class Size and Out of School Time

"Five full periods a day and 150 students is too much," one teacher said. "Plus, I teach a full range of English courses. We should reduce the teaching load to three periods a day. All teachers should be given a counseling period, something to allow one-on-one work with students. Teachers should not have to teach different levels, not three to four different preparations."

Additionally, the majority of teachers across all schools estimated their time outside the classroom on prepara-

TABLE 3:5

TYPICAL WORKLOAD FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS		
Average Class Size:	25 - 30 Students	
No. of Preparations:	4 - 5 per day	
School Day:	6 hours, 45 minutes	
Instructional Hours Outside of School:	10 - 17 hours per week	
Non-instructional Duties:	No Reported Duties	(23%)
	Monitor Lunchroom	(20%)
	Bus Duty	(12%)
	Before School	(7%)
	All Other	(38%)
TYPICAL WORKLOAD FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS		
Average Class Size:	25 - 30 Students	
Total No. of Students:	135 Students	
No. of Preparations:	2 - 3 per day	
School Day:	6 hours, 45 minutes	
Instructional Hours Outside of School:	8 - 10 hours per week	
Non-instructional Duties:	Monitor Halls	(23%)
	No Reported Duties	(20%)
	Monitor Lunchroom	(13%)
	Bus Duties	(8%)
	All Other:	(36%)
TYPICAL WORKLOAD FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS		
Average Class Size:	25 - 30 Students	
Total No. of Students:	125 Students	
No. of Preparations:	2 - 3 per day	
School Day:	7 hours	
Instructional Hours Outside of School:	13 - 21 hours per week	
Non-instructional Duties:	Monitor Halls	(32%)
	No Reported Duties	(17%)
	Monitor Study Hall	(15%)
	Monitor Lunchroom	(15%)
	All other	(21%)

tion, grading papers and paperwork during a typical week to total at least eight hours, with many teachers reporting up to 15-20 hours. Teachers in only one school reported three to five hours weekly. These hours were in addition to the school day, which varied from 6 hours and 15 minutes for elementary teachers in two of the districts to 7 hours and 30 minutes for high school teachers.

Some individual teachers spent anywhere from 20-35 extra hours on their work, per week. One principal provided an explanation for this situation. "There are problems in getting people to take on extra tasks—we have to overwork the few who are willing," he said. "The younger people will do it. But it has been getting harder to find people to do it."

"There are problems in getting people to take on extra tasks—we have to overwork the few who are willing."

However, there was a difference between teacher estimates of time spent out of class and those provided by administrators and department chairs. Teachers almost invariably rated their amount of out of classroom effort as high, over 10 hours weekly. Administrators and department chairs rated teacher efforts as moderate, six to 10 hours.

In 24 of the 31 schools, teachers were assigned duties for which there was no compensation, including hall monitoring, lunch duty, bus supervision, and study hall.

Only one elementary school claimed no assigned duties. In general, regular elementary classroom teachers did not have an assigned duty, such as lunch or hall supervision. In some secondary schools, teachers were given an "administrative assignment" by contract. Because this responsibility was negotiated by the bargaining unit, the assignment did not appear to be a strong point of contention. Middle school teachers did not have assignments because of their team planning periods. Several secondary teachers indicated their desire to have more "constructive" duties—to use their time and expertise to better ends than those of monitoring study halls or office phones. Compensation was not an issue because the assignments were negotiated into the contract.

In a second district, teachers had non-instructional duties which were described in the contract and for which they received no extra compensation. The types of duties were typical of other districts—monitoring bus loading, playground, hall, and cafeteria duty. At one middle school, for example, teachers took on administrative duties such as handling truancies and counseling tardy students. In one elementary school, teachers were assigned to clean up the faculty lounge.

Changes in Workload

Respondents in all schools reported a desire to change of the teachers' responsibilities. Reducing class size

was cited frequently as a needed change, as were time allocations. Teachers expressed a desire to spend more time planning and less on paperwork. They also wanted more accountability—from the central office, parents and students. There was a strong sense that parents needed to be more involved and that outreach efforts should be expanded.

“I would cut teachers’ workload in half regarding the number of students per day they teach, but I would monitor much more closely what they do.”

One principal commented: “I would cut teachers’ workload in half regarding the number of students per day they teach, but I would monitor much more closely what they do. Smaller classes should mean different teaching methods.”

Most administrators, building representatives, and department chairs would like to see teacher responsibilities changed. The most frequently expressed desire was for streamlining paperwork and reducing non-instructional duties so teachers could have more time with their students.

Summary

Resources were a problem throughout the schools we studied. In 25 of the schools, resources were rated as less than adequate and none of the schools was rated good. Schools needed additional staff, basic materials and equipment. In most instances, teachers were concerned about additional counseling and support staff, not additional teachers. The lack of counselors, social workers, even administrative personnel in elementary schools, made dealing with student’s problems a difficulty. There were shortages of all materials and supplies from textbooks to toilet paper. Rationing was in effect in many schools. Copy machines were limited and a bone of contention, and telephones often not available.

These factors created a crippling combination in terms of teacher effectiveness and morale. As one principal said, “Our effectiveness varies from day to day; from total frustration to seeing bright spots. All of us in this building are pretty stressed out. We don’t have the resources to do the job satisfactorily. When we have the resources, we can do it.”

In addition to insufficient materials, scarce equipment, and inadequate staff, teachers in these schools were faced with large classes and unending time demands with no

compensation. They prepare for larger classes without enough textbooks or easy access to copiers to produce instructional materials. Because resources are limited, administrators are forced as their only option to ask more of dedicated teachers. But administrators are put at a distinct disadvantage when neither compensation or time can be offered, nor additional materials and resources provided to perform professionally.

**Do the characteristics or
behavior of students affect
your work as a teacher?**

// You go home tired most days. Sometimes you feel like the gestapo—you have to repeat a lot, can't back down, have to establish authority . . . There seems to be a conflict between the values of the home and those of the school. **//**

The attitudes and behavior of students play a major role in defining school working conditions and significantly affect teacher attitudes and work performance. Teachers' sense of confidence, or lack of it, depends on their ability to help students learn. In survey after survey teachers have identified student discipline as their number one concern. Student cooperation and teachers' abilities to direct the activity of their students are prerequisites to learning. In addition, most of a teacher's day is spent with students; if they are rude, noisy, or difficult to control, the teacher's work is frustrating and exhausting. Conversely, if students are cooperative and pleasant, and especially if they respond to the work with enthusiasm, teachers find their work rewarding and are motivated to do more for their students.

The Data

For the IEL study, then, the effect of student behavior on teachers was an important area to be explored especially since the socio-economic characteristics of the student bodies in the 31 schools varied. The number of elementary students eligible for free lunch in the schools ranged from 24 percent to 82 percent, with a median of 45 percent. In the middle schools, this indicator varied from 19 percent to 90 percent with a median of 59 percent. For the high schools, the number ranged from 13 percent to 74 percent, with a median of 38 percent.

The proportions of minority students also varied widely, from 32 percent minority to 100 percent in the elementary schools; 43 percent to 99 percent in the middle schools; and 46 percent to 100 percent in the high schools. The respective medians were 74 percent, 82 percent, and 67 percent. In general, this sample of urban schools served students who were predominantly black and Hispanic and likely to be poor.

Teachers Perceptions of their Students

For the most part, teachers' responses described the positive effects their students had on their work experi-

ence in the schools. A minority mentioned positive effects such as "enjoying the students," "getting satisfaction from working with them," or "the students are happy to be in school." Most of the positive comments were from teachers working with elementary students.

Positive relationships with students have a positive effect on teachers as these comments indicate:

I find that when I have students who are enthusiastic, I become enthusiastic too. This is a normal bunch of kids. There are some awfully good kids and others who aren't so good. They can achieve as well as others.

Many kids in this neighborhood lack motivation, but some blossom and it is rewarding when it happens.

I feel very good about the children I teach. I thoroughly enjoy my job because I see positive results and growth.

Many teachers wanted more positive relations with their students but indicated that large class sizes, busing policies that created long distances between home and school, lack of time for individual work, lack of student participation in extracurricular activities, and coping with some students who were disciplinary problems were obstacles to working effectively with students.

Problems with Students

Table 4:1 presents the concerns expressed most frequently by teachers about their students. The dominant issue was poor student discipline; it was a serious problem to the staffs in 24 of the 31 schools and in all five districts. Other frequently mentioned concerns were negative student attitudes toward school, poor student attendance, low student motivation, conflicts between schooling and the cultural background of student families, and lack of parental support. Questions of student ability, academic performance, and mobility were seldom raised by the respondents, although mobility was mentioned as a significant issue in several schools.

Table 4:2 displays the frequency with which common student problems were mentioned by respondents in the

The dominant issue was poor student discipline; it was a serious problem to the staffs in 24 of the 31 schools and in all five districts.

TABLE 4:1

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT PROBLEMS BY DISTRICT AND BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL			
District	Level of School		
	Elementary	Middle	High Schools
A	Discipline Attendance Mobility Cultural background	Discipline Attendance Parent support Motivation	Discipline Attendance Cultural background Parent support
B	Parent support Discipline Attendance Motivation	Discipline Attendance Parent support Motivation	Discipline Attendance Motivation Student attitudes
C	Discipline Parent support Attendance Cultural background	Discipline Attendance Parent support Student attitudes	Discipline Student attitudes Attendance Motivation
D	Parent support Attendance Mobility Discipline	Discipline Motivation Parent support Student attitudes	Discipline Attendance Motivation Student attitudes
E	Parent support Discipline Cultural background Attendance	Discipline Attendance Motivation Parent support	Student attitudes Discipline Attendance Motivation

five districts. Discipline was seen as serious by most respondents in all five districts. Perceptions of problems with attendance, student attitudes, and parent support varied across the districts. The poorest districts and those experiencing extensive busing seemed to suffer most from these problems. Understanding the dimensions and causes of these issues lies beyond the scope of this study, but these factors affect the quality of school life and working conditions for most urban teachers.

TABLE 4:2

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS MENTIONING STUDENT CONCERNS BY DISTRICT					
	District				
	A	B	C	D	E
Discipline	72%	71%	92%	62%	77%
Attendance	55	37	73	24	53
Attitudes	10	7	52	59	41
Cultural Background	36	14	35	24	29
Parent Support	25	51	60	45	35
Motivation	16	27	34	35	29

Student Discipline

Many teachers and school administrators expressed frustration and depression about the behavior of their students. Teachers frequently complained about the lack of parental and administrative support to help with problem students. Teachers at all levels, and in most of the schools, were troubled by poor student discipline. Some typical comments were:

Many teachers blamed school and district administrators for not supporting them with strong discipline policies and consistent enforcement.

... we are prohibited from handling the chronic offenders, our hands are tied.

There are too many student rights; they know they can do whatever they want and nothing can be done, except suspend them.

Teachers and administrators also complained about the instructional time lost because of poor discipline. Lack of respect for teachers, in the form of verbal abuse from students, was cited by some as a major source of discouragement for teachers:

The attitudes of the kids, their talking back really gets teachers down.

Student language, their use of profanity, is one of the negatives of teaching. You almost become immune to it.

Improvement of Discipline

Many teachers blamed school and district administrators for not supporting them with strong discipline policies and consistent enforcement. They said it wasn't totally the students' fault because parents, teachers, and administrators were not setting appropriate expectations.

Most of the respondents wanted tougher policies and programs to remove chronic offenders from the classroom. Many mentioned the need for alternatives or for in-school suspension programs for chronic offenders rather than letting them remain in the classroom. Some mentioned the need for stronger discipline codes, and many called for stricter enforcement of policies.

Many also mentioned the need to reduce class size in order to provide more personal assistance. In large

classes it is not possible to give much individual attention to students. Teachers felt discipline problems were related to student frustration and failure. They also reiterated the need for more counselors and social workers in the schools to help with difficult students and with family problems.

The Two Cultures

The schools and their staffs were trying to overcome the effects of social and economic problems in their communities. Teachers expressed both sympathy and frustration about the gap that had to be bridged:

...we have a rough bunch of kids. We serve two communities—around the school, Caucasian, and from open enrollment, black kids. There are still hardcore rednecks in this area who give me fits, still people trying to work these things out.

Lots of kids come from troubled homes; there are many disruptions in a day. Lots of kids who come to school angry, ready to see who can scream the loudest. It's difficult getting them to sit in their seats.

Teachers were troubled by instances in which the lack of parental care and support brought harm to children or contributed to their failure in school. Many expressed frustration at their inability to intervene on behalf of the child.

Some respondents felt many teachers simply didn't know how to cope with their new clients:

Some teachers rely on intimidation [with minority kids]; once it fails, they feel helpless. I try to get teachers to use more positive methods. . . . Teachers who fail with fear tactics feel a loss of power.

The students are typical urban kids—loud, mouthy, noisy. The teachers don't know how to deal with them or teach them.

The staff find the adjustment to working with these kids difficult. They [teachers] are used to dealing with middle-class kids. These kids have language problems. . . . Parents have a language barrier.

Busing scrambled the kids. Teachers in the low SES schools responded positively, teachers in the high SES schools couldn't handle it. . . . Some teachers lay down and die with low achieving kids.

Improving Student-Teacher Relations

Many teacher comments about disciplinary problems implied a serious, and perhaps widening gulf between the culture of the public schools and that of the poor, predominantly minority students served by schools in urban areas.

Some suggested better training for the teachers. A few felt that more contact with parents and the children's culture would help teachers understand and be more sensitive. One teacher, however, summarized the views of many of those interviewed when she said:

You go home tired most days. Sometimes you feel like the Gestapo—you have to repeat a lot, can't back down, have to establish authority. . . . There seems to be a conflict between the values of the home and those of the school.

Parents and Poverty

The lack of parent support was described as a serious problem in about one-half of the schools, particularly in elementary and middle schools and in those schools receiving large numbers of students from distant neighborhoods:

There is not much of parents coming in on their own. It was kind of hard to see the empty seats at the music festival last week. Students and their parents have limited loyalty to the school; sometimes it's just very hard to get here.

The two-year school makes it hard to get to develop identity and commitment, even hard to get to know the kids and for them to know the staff. Busing makes it worse, parents don't know where the school is and can't get here for events. There is no PTA . . . even free food doesn't attract people.

The teachers said that families, their health and their support for education, were the number one problem in urban schools.

We can't reach the parents easily, and it is hard to communicate. The students and parents are not as involved in the school or as committed to it.

Teachers repeatedly expressed concern about the lack of parental care, describing how the responsibility for "caring" was being shifted to the schools. Many of the students needed affection and supervision at home. They came from broken homes, single parents, or had both parents working and needed to know that somebody cared about them. The teachers said that families, their health and their support for education, were the number one problem in urban schools. Preoccupied with survival, many families were unable to make education their priority, and this created stress for teachers. Children often came with no breakfast and inadequate clothing, and they had no access to medical care:

The biggest frustration is parents who love their children but who don't know how to help them.

The children are very young, and they need lots of social and emotional support. The home situations are not always good. Their lives are difficult.

My students' backgrounds are so different from mine. My parents were so supportive, but my students have difficulty in obtaining \$2 for sewing supplies.

Many of the teachers understood that life was not easy for the families of their students and that it was not easy for parents to cope with the schools:

The biggest frustration is parents who love their children but who don't know how to help them.

Teachers are not very sensitive to making parents feel welcome. It's a predominantly white faculty with a predominantly black student population.

Parents are intimidated by our language and our behavior. They are not sure they know what we want from them.

Improving Relations with Parents

The lack of parental understanding and support was the major obstacle to educational success. Some

respondents despaired of finding solutions to these complex problems; rather, they pleaded for more public understanding of the difficulty of their jobs. They pointed to the enormous range of needs in their classrooms and the strain that children's problems placed on them.

Teachers expressed a desire for more administrative support in dealing with parents. There was a feeling in several districts that central office administrators had adopted a policy of the "parent is always right," which was undermining the authority of teachers. Most felt they could do a better job for their students with adequate resources and stronger public and administrative support. Some called for stronger public policies to hold parents responsible for caring for and disciplining their children.

Motivation, Attitudes, and Attendance

The consequences of these value clashes and the lack of parental support became low student motivation, negative attitudes, and poor attendance. Motivation was described as a major problem by about one-third of the teachers and school administrators. Attendance was a problem in an equal number of schools, generally the same ones. Typical comments were:

... many [students] believe that because their parents aren't making money, they have no chance to do better, no hope.

In general, the kids aren't too bad here, but teachers constantly face kids who don't want to be here.

I am affected by (student motivation) in terms of exhaustion and burn-out. I have to learn to care less. I am constantly trying to get lower track students to pass, to make up work missed, to go over materials again and again.

In this area, the kids are respectful. They have good family background and are loving kids ... but they lose interest in school about grades 5 or 6.

The lack of motivation leads to poor attendance:

I can't teach them if they are not here.

Students come to class at their convenience. Lateness is a serious problem, and most teachers have accepted it. Our students could do the work; they just don't bother.

Attendance is an overwhelming problem—high volume. Parents don't give priority to school; they keep kids home. Usually just a lack of self-discipline, but sometimes watching siblings.

... there is an attitude among the kids that school is not a serious activity; there are serious attendance and truancy problems here."

Improving Student Motivation

In the schools in which many staff described problems with motivation and attendance, there were shortages of counselors, social workers, and other specialists. Teachers also complained about the lack of strong attendance policies or the failure to enforce them. They felt that better support services, smaller classes, and more follow-up would result in better attendance and higher levels of motivation.

Quite a few administrators and some teachers felt that low expectations on the part of teachers contributed to low student motivation and to the accompanying attendance and discipline problems. Students, said one administrator, are led to believe they can pass without doing the work. Standards have eroded, and students get passed along until they are too far behind to do the work. As another principal noted: "Teachers did not choose the students, and the students did not choose the teachers. If the staff decides collectively this will be a good school, then the students will do what is demanded by adults."

Another administrator felt the problem was due to a generation gap:

Not all teachers understand the cultural differences. They don't always give the kids the credit they deserve and they have low expectations. People don't see it in themselves. Some of the younger teachers see it differently; they have higher expectations and more energy. They have been around more minority kids, went to college with them; they are more comfortable.

"If the staff decides collectively this will be a good school, then the students will do what is demanded by adults."

Motivation is a problem, and the problem worsens as the students get older. Teachers had no easy solutions to offer, but there was agreement that poor student motivation affected teacher motivation.

Variations in Teacher Attitudes

Schools in which positive statements about students were most frequently expressed enrolled students with similar social and ethnic backgrounds as those schools in which more negative statements were expressed. However, positive attitudes were more likely to be expressed in elementary schools and in smaller schools. Also, they were associated with strong administrative leadership (presumably meaning more support on discipline), higher levels of teacher influence over classroom activities and school policies, adequate resources, and higher levels of staff collegiality. The most negative statements about students were associated with weak leadership, inadequate resources, large classes, low levels of teacher influence, and poor physical conditions.

It is not clear from this analysis whether having better behaved and more highly motivated students led to perceptions of better working conditions or whether better working conditions altered teacher perceptions of students. However, the "best" and "worst" schools, in terms of working conditions, did not differ significantly in terms of the social or ethnic composition of their student bodies. This at least suggests that working conditions in which teachers feel a greater sense of control over their environments may lead to more positive attitudes toward students.

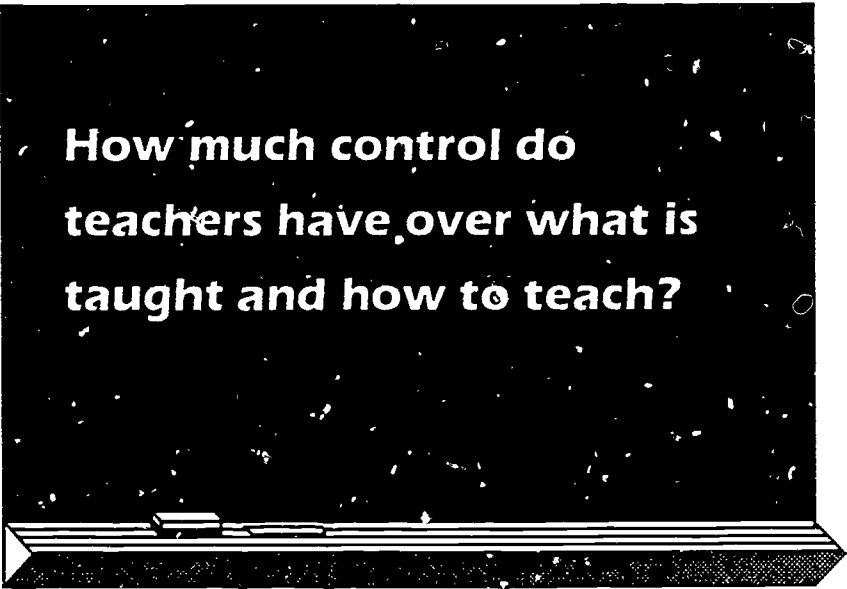
... working conditions in which teachers feel a greater sense of control over their environments may lead to more positive attitudes toward students.

Summary

There were serious problems with students in most of the 31 schools. Discipline, attendance, motivation, poor attitudes toward education, and lack of parental support were the most frequently mentioned. Teachers saw these factors as having serious negative effects on their work-lives and their ability to perform their jobs. They also felt the problems could be alleviated with better leadership, stronger policies, and adequate resources.

Teacher attitudes toward students varied directly with the quality of working conditions in their schools. The

schools in which teachers expressed the most positive attitudes toward students generally had better working conditions and more professional climates. These schools tended to be among those judged to have the best working conditions overall.

A blackboard with a white border, containing the text "How much control do teachers have over what is taught and how to teach?" written in white. A piece of chalk and a eraser are on the ledge below the board.

**How much control do
teachers have over what is
taught and how to teach?**

“Teachers don’t have much control over what is taught, but there is lots over how it is done.”

“The pressure of testing is real and it will increase . . . you have to cover what is tested. **”**

5

TEACHER AUTONOMY: "CONTROL THROUGH BENIGN NEGLECT"

Traditionally, public school teachers have been given considerable autonomy in their classrooms. Boards of education and school administrators have sought to limit teacher discretion through the development of curriculum guidelines, review of lesson plans, informal and formal classroom observations, and other monitoring devices. Nevertheless, administrators have not penetrated very far behind closed classroom doors.

In recent years, school districts have stepped up attempts to control teaching. More rigorous monitoring systems, including student testing, and specified curricular objectives, materials, sequence of lessons, content to be covered, and timelines for content coverage are among current strategies. This is true particularly in urban school districts where concern about low test scores and high dropout rates, especially among minority students, has brought public demands for improvement and greater accountability.

Critics of these new accountability programs argue that they restrict the ability of teachers to meet individual needs, and, therefore, have negative effects on teacher morale, work effort, and turnover. Proponents contend that the measures are necessary to raise teacher expectations for student achievement, ensure that students have equal opportunity to master the curriculum, and provide accountability.

The Data

The five districts studied by IEL have moved to standardize their curricula, especially at the elementary level, and have taken steps to strengthen monitoring of curriculum implementation. Two districts are implementing system-wide models of teaching that can be evaluated with common, measurable criteria. Teachers in all five districts reported some loss of control over what they teach, but most indicated that they still had considerable discretion.

Administrative intrusions into instructional practice

tices were reported, including the use of curricular monitoring systems and an emphasis on the use of specific instructional behaviors through in-service training programs and supervision. In one district, elementary teachers felt that the "pacing" system used to monitor the rate of student progress was defining how and when teachers taught particular subjects.

In spite of such initiatives, however, Table 5:1 reveals that teachers in 27 of the 31 schools unanimously reported they had high discretion over how they taught, and in the remaining four schools teachers reported moderate to high influence. Their responses were somewhat less unanimous when they were asked about their influence over curriculum content; the data in Table 5:2 show that in only one school were teachers unanimous about having high control over curriculum. Staffs in 22 schools reported they have moderate or moderate to high influence.

TABLE 5:1

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR CONTROL OVER INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS (N = 31)					
School Level	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low
		to High		to Low	
Elementary	10	1	0	0	0
Middle	9	1	0	0	0
Secondary	8	2	0	0	0
Total	27	4	0	0	0

TABLE 5:2

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR CONTROL OVER CURRICULUM CONTENT (N = 31)					
School Level	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low
		to High		to Low	
Elementary	0	5	4	1	1
Middle	1	1	4	3	1
Secondary	0	6	2	2	0
Total	1	12	10	6	2

Variation Across the Five Districts

Teacher influence over curriculum and instruction did vary somewhat across the districts. Variations appeared to be related to the methods of monitoring implementation of the curriculum. Six of the eight schools in which teachers reported low levels of influence over curriculum content were located in a district with a strong monitoring procedure. It was the only district in which a "pacing system" had been implemented to monitor the progress of covering core competencies in each elementary classroom. Lesson plans were also regularly reviewed. The other districts had weaker systems, relying on combinations of review of plan books, observations, and district testing programs to ensure curriculum implementation.

Autonomy and the Level of Schooling

There was some variation in teacher influence by level of schooling. Consistent with findings from other studies, high school teachers reported slightly more discretion than other teachers. This came as no surprise, given the subject matter orientation of high school teachers, their strong tradition of academic freedom, and the departmentalized structure of high schools. The degree of teacher autonomy in the high schools appeared to vary with the subject taught. Said one science teacher: "... it looks as if language arts people are given very little leeway; lots of it in science, we can decide what we teach."

The response of the elementary staffs was more surprising because the focus on basic skills in urban districts and stronger accountability measures were expected to have had negative effects on teachers' discretion over content and pacing. And indeed, our elementary respondents reported that testing was influencing their teaching (this varied across districts) and that curriculum was being more tightly monitored. Yet, they still believed they exercised considerable control over what was being taught.

Somewhat surprisingly, middle school teachers reported less influence over curriculum than teachers at the other two levels. The reasons for this are not clear. Perhaps it is the effect of team structures on individual discretion (while increasing collective teacher influence), or it may be due to greater use of competency

The degree of teacher autonomy in the high schools appeared to vary with the subject taught.

testing at this level. One principal noted: "The team structure helps push teacher performance; not all teachers want the team environment because it limits their options." However, the slight loss of discretion appeared to be offset by increased collective influence over instructional decisions and greater collegial interaction.

Instruction: "I'm pretty free to teach the way I want"

Typical responses were:

The staff have almost complete control of how they teach.

They don't have much control over what is taught, but there is lots over how it is done.

I have absolute control over how I teach—that is the best thing about being in this school.

There appeared to be no systematic efforts in the five districts to reduce teacher control over their choice of techniques, although there were voluntary programs operating in several of the districts. These sought to alter classroom methods by introducing effective teaching programs. New supervisory procedures based on Madeline Hunter's work or a similar model of teaching also were being introduced in several districts, but they had not yet had an impact on teachers' sense of autonomy.

Curriculum: "Constraint but no real outside control"

Considerable teacher control over curricular content also was reported by respondents in 23 of the schools (74%). They said they had moderate to high discretion in determining the content of their teaching. As one teacher put it: "There is some constraint by tradition, but no real outside control. No one asks about what you teach or how you teach it." Another said "it is your room and your course, as long as you are within reasonable guidelines, you are OK." The work situations of about one third of the teachers interviewed might be described as *laissez-faire*; there were no effective constraints on what they did, or didn't do, in their classrooms. However,

... it is your room and your course, as long as you are within reasonable guidelines, you are OK."

the majority reported some constraints on their curricular decisions and monitoring of content coverage.

"Treating the text as the curriculum"

Some administrators felt that the constraints were self-imposed. Said one:

Teachers can have control over what is taught, but they allow curriculum guidelines to dictate to them what to teach. It is a misconception; guides could be used more as just resources. Teachers have control over how they teach."

A number of administrators, department heads, and supervisors agreed that too many teachers were treating their textbooks as the curriculum and not using the discretion they had:

Teachers treat the text as the curriculum, and then feel that they are being controlled.

Teachers generally reported that they participated in textbook selection by serving on selection committees or reviewing books being considered. Typically, district committees were selected by district supervisors. Sometimes teachers in all schools were given the opportunity to review the books being considered. However, the majority of respondents were cynical about these procedures, indicating that most teachers usually were not consulted and that when they were, their advice often was ignored. "They are handed down to us like the tablet on the Mount," said one. Some said this resulted in the selection of inappropriate books. The perception that administrators do not respect teacher advice on this subject or on anything else was quite strong.

The Expansion of Testing: "Test scores as the end result"

Testing was influencing the curriculum in all five districts, but the degree varied. Three of the five districts administered both state and local tests. Three had competency tests in various subjects. Two set district-wide final examinations in academic departments in the high schools. Only one of the five relied exclusively on the

administration of a nationally normed test. Testing was seen by both teachers and administrators as a major influence over curriculum and as a threat to professional authority in all five districts. Teachers felt responsible for assuring their students had been exposed to the tested material and expressed frustration because the curriculum had become so test sensitive. Concerns about the impact on teaching, testing's fairness to students, and reactions of parents were raised.

One principal expressed the views of many, saying: "Control is really being taken away from the teachers." Another said: "The administration sees the test scores as the end result of what schools are doing." Another described the effects in his school: "We have become so test conscious that teachers are unwilling to take field trips because of the need to cover the material." The actual effects of testing on curriculum and program are beyond the scope of this study, but such comments indicate the strength of teacher concerns about too much testing and tests that are not congruent with what is important in the curriculum.

"It [the test] is a waste because the standards are too low."

Teachers expressed a variety of reactions to the expanding testing programs. The typical response was reluctant acceptance. One teacher forecast:

The pressure of testing is real and it will increase. Knowing your students will be tested at the end of the year influences your curricular choices. You have to cover what is tested. There will be more pressure on teachers—more state testing.

Many were concerned about the use of the scores: "The test leads to paralytic demands and abuse—they blame the teachers," said one teacher. A few described extreme responses by their peers: "There was hysteria and anger about the tests, some advised cheating, and some do it."

A few felt the tests were a positive factor, helping to shape up both students and teachers. "Teachers see the test as a threat instead of a tool," said one. And a few others felt the tests being used were too easy. "... It [the test] is a waste because the standards are too low."

A number of teachers were upset about the adequacy and fairness of the tests for their students; an elementary teacher said,

Teaching is heavily influenced by [the test]. It stinks . . . The test assumes kids can listen, can sit in their seat. It creates failures.

And a secondary teacher expressed a similar sentiment:

I've only given the science [test] one time—an abysmal experience; the students were tested on things we don't teach. If they take it seriously, they have to bring students up to par in science; they don't have the money.

Another said: "I don't teach to the test because of its discriminating qualities." A middle school teacher in the same district said, "The district now controls the curriculum, and the tests determine what you cover; the coverage is difficult except for the higher classes."

Concern about testing did not affect all teachers equally, however. Some said the tests had little or no effect on them; this was often due to their assignment, occasionally to the attitudes of the leadership in their buildings. Teachers of subjects other than math, English, and reading were seldom affected more than marginally. In several districts, only teachers of the basic skills were affected beyond the elementary grades. In addition, the attitude of the principal toward the tests and his/her use of test results either exaggerated the effects of testing on teaching or buffered teachers from them. At a middle school with a reputation for good test scores, a teacher complained: "There is lots of stress on test taking skills here because of [the school's] reputation."

"Freedom to teach, but carefully monitor"

Twenty-nine of the 31 schools have some process to monitor the implementation of curriculum besides tests. The processes used varied across districts, and within districts, across grade levels. Teachers generally rated these monitoring systems as weak. In almost every school, there were teachers who said they deviated from the district guidelines and were able to do as they pleased in the classroom.

A principal described the environment in his middle school in these terms:

In almost every school, there were teachers who said they deviated from the district guidelines and were able to do as they pleased in the classroom.

I give teachers the freedom to teach but I keep on top of what they do. My motto is 'Give them the freedom to teach, but carefully monitor their work.'

His approach, however, was far from the typical model. In over one-fourth of the schools, located in four of the five districts, teachers and administrators agreed there was no regular monitoring of what was taught. One principal admitted that "... I wonder myself, I look at the test scores and make observations, but there is no formal way to monitor. You just have to trust that it is done." Teachers in another building said "... we don't have anyone monitoring; if we don't agree with certain topics, we skip the material."

It is more important to meet student needs than it is to follow curriculum guidelines strictly." Some teachers thought there should be more monitoring, "We have total control," said one. "There are certain guidelines, but once the door is closed, you do what you want; there is good teaching and bad teaching going on."

"There are certain guidelines, but once the door is closed, you do what you want; there is good teaching and bad teaching going on."

The most common mechanisms for monitoring the curriculum were checking lesson plans, informal observation, and district-wide tests. Schools in one district relied solely on review of lesson plans and infrequent informal observations. In two other districts, however, collection of lesson plans was prohibited in the teacher contract, although they could be reviewed during a classroom visit. District-wide tests were used to monitor the progress of covering the curricula in high schools in four of the five districts and also were used at other levels in two of the five districts. Unit tests in basic skills, teacher schedules, reading reports, pacing charts, weekly or quarterly plans, and external administrative teams were also used, but less frequently.

Some schools used pacing systems; their impact was described by one principal this way:

They [teachers] don't have much control over what is taught, but lots over how it is taught. There are lots of parameters in this building, in terms of pacing. Teachers decide how to reach their benchmarks. Very few [of them] are off when these parameters are checked. If the parameters are not set, the pacing is not there.

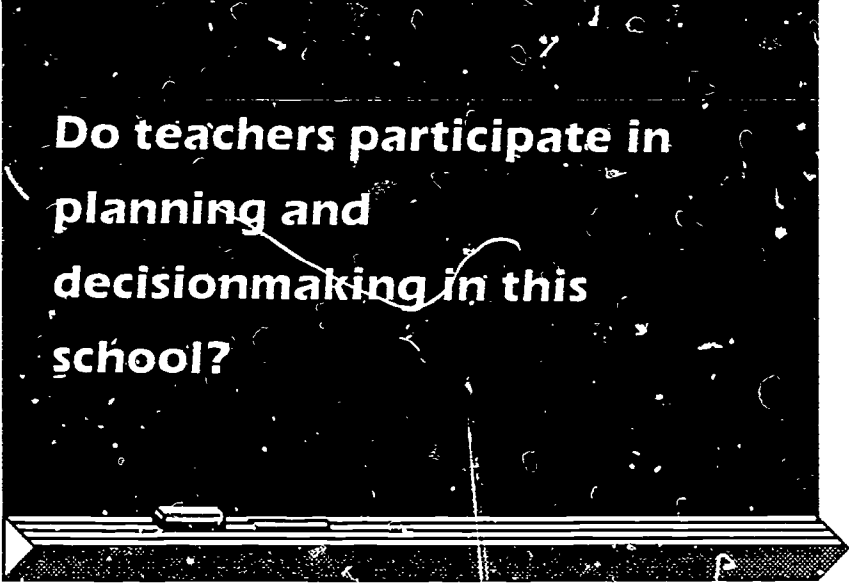
A teacher in the same school gave a more mixed commentary on pacing:

[There is] not much [control]; we are on a pacing schedule; if you want to deviate by enriching activities, you are not written up but you are told you are off task. Pacing helps and hinders my teaching. Sometimes I want to spend more time on a subject, so I just do."

Not surprisingly, this school was located in the district in which staff reported the lowest level of discretion in making curricular decisions.

Summary

Teachers reported having considerable discretion over what they taught and how they taught it. They gave more varied responses to questions about their influence over curriculum content, pacing, and sequence of curriculum than they did to questions about selection of instructional methods. There was some variation in teacher autonomy across the five districts; teaching staffs in one district gave systematically lower assessments of their control over curriculum than teachers in the other districts. This seems to have been the result of stronger monitoring procedures in that district. High school and elementary teachers reported having somewhat higher degrees of discretion than did middle school teachers. Almost all teachers expressed concern on the increased use of testing.



**Do teachers participate in
planning and
decisionmaking in this
school?**

“Participation is a shell game. There is a world of difference in participation that is simply a word game and participation that is meaningful. No one listens to what we say; we don't count. **”**

6

TEACHER INFLUENCE AND COLLEGIALITY: A SHELL GAME?

If teachers have considerable control over their classroom relationships with students and how they teach, they are at the other extreme when it comes to other decisions which affect their work. Yet, it is this decision-making that has become the focus of workplace reform in general, and the education reform movement specifically. How teachers communicate and interact with school and district administration and how they work with their peers have important influence over school cultures and structures and now are receiving considerable attention by the reform movement.

While our data document the generally low level of teacher influence over school policies and support the benefits of increasing teacher influence over school policy and strengthening collegiality, it is clear that existing forms of school organization, such as team structures or school councils, can produce significant benefits for both teachers and their schools. These findings suggest that careful consideration should be given to more conventional forms of teacher participation as well as to greater restructuring.

The costs associated with making team planning or staff councils function effectively may be no less than those associated with other forms of school site management, but there may be less opposition from administrators.

However, participatory structures do not ensure genuine participation or higher levels of teacher influence. The data reveal clearly how vulnerable they are to manipulation or neglect by school administrators or to weak policy implementation and monitoring by district officials. The district must play an advocacy role if teacher participation is to be successful at the school level. The roles and responsibilities of district staff in supporting participatory structures at the school level need to be carefully examined.

Finally, genuine participation in decisionmaking is

more likely if time is allocated during the workday; it cannot depend upon volunteer time over the long run.

Lack of time was cited as the major reason for poor communication and as a major obstacle to cooperation with other staff. Provision of adequate time for teachers has costs associated with it, and many urban districts may not be able to afford it. However, attempts to build collegial climates without addressing the time issue seem doomed to failure.

The Response from Teachers

Levels of teacher participation and collegiality generally are less than teachers desire and vary greatly from building to building within and among districts, according to our findings. Only three schools were rated as more than moderate in the level of teacher influence over decisions, and only six were rated as more than average in collegiality.

Grade level had some effect on both conditions. Tables 6:1 and 6:2 display the levels of teacher participation and collegiality in the 31 schools. High school staffs generally reported lower levels of participation and collegiality. Only two of the 10 high schools in the sample were rated "moderate" or above in influence on decisions and only three of the 10 were moderate or above in collegiality.

School administrators, not surprisingly, rated teacher influence higher than did teachers. Seventy-two percent of the administrators said teachers had moderate to high influence over school policies, but only 45 percent of the teachers agreed.

TABLE 6:1

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR INFLUENCE OVER DECISIONS BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL (N = 31)					
School Level	Level of Teacher Influence over School Decisions				
	High	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low
Elementary	0	3	3	3	2
Middle	0	0	5	3	2
Secondary	0	0	2	2	6
Total	0	3	10	8	10

TABLE 6:2

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGIALITY BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL (N = 31)					
School Level	Level of Teacher Collegiality				
	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Low
Elementary	0	2	4	3	2
Middle	0	2	4	2	2
Secondary	0	1	2	5	2
Total	0	5	10	10	6

Links between Influence and Collegiality

There was a correlation between the levels of teacher influence and staff collegiality. Ten schools out of 31 were rated as "moderate" or better in influence and as "average" or better in collegiality. Five of these were elementary, while only two were high schools and three were middle schools. Of the 13 schools that were rated "low" or "low to adequate" on both dimensions, six were high schools.

Patterns of Teacher Influence

Teacher and administrator ratings did not differ from previous research. In general, they reported high teacher influence over decisions close to the classroom—setting goals, selecting materials—and low influence over decisions generally made at the school or district level, such as hiring staff, developing budgets, and allocating time.

However, staffs in schools with teams and councils reported they had more influence over priorities, curriculum, staff development, evaluation of programs, school rules, budget development, resource allocation, and student assignments than did staffs in schools without such structures. High school teachers generally reported somewhat more influence over curricular decisions, development of budgets, and allocation of resources and less influence over planning inservice training, evaluating school programs and defining school rules. This is a consequence of the delegation of decisions to departments which tend to function in a more democratic, collegial or than staff structures at the elementary level.

TABLE 6:3
PERCEIVED LEVEL OF
TEACHER INFLUENCE

High

Setting Goals
 Selecting Materials
 Defining Rules

Moderate

Determining Content
 Planning Inservice
 Allocating Time
 Assigning Students
 Evaluating Policies

Low

Hiring Staff
 Evaluating Staff
 Developing Budgets
 Resource Allocation

Teachers listed student assignments, time allocation, application of disciplinary codes, teaching assignments, and class size when asked to identify decisions over which their colleagues would like to have more influence.

Table 6:3 displays the levels of teacher influence in the 31 schools in 12 critical decision areas. Teachers consistently reported having greatest influence over selection of instructional materials and least influence over hiring and evaluating staff and developing school budgets.

Teacher influence in the other nine areas varied widely among the school staffs. In schools with strong council structures or teaming, teachers reported higher levels of influence.

Little Teacher Influence, Low Collegiality

The schools rated as "low" in teacher influence and collegiality had a number of things in common. First, their teachers reported feeling isolated and divided. Some blamed this on the profession itself: "Each classroom is like a kingdom, and the teacher is king or queen." One said that "teachers basically deal only with children, and we only wave at other teachers."

Another, expressing the view of many respondents, complained that:

There are many opportunities to cooperate if you want to take advantage of them. Some don't want to cooperate. There are problems among ethnic groups on the staff; there are cliques.

"... teachers basically deal only with children, and we only wave at other teachers."

While rare, there were festering racial divisions among the faculty in some schools. These showed up in resentment among white teachers about affirmative action and transfers made to balance a staff racially and frustration among minority teachers about the attitudes of white staff toward minority students. Events celebrating ethnic holidays and minority culture sometimes contributed to the problems. The result was described by one teacher:

"People see each other as groups, not as individuals. Ethnic groups sit together at faculty meetings and at lunch. There are barriers."

"Opportunities, Yes---But Meaningful Opportunities, No!"

Divisions also existed between staff and administration. In several of the schools the faculty was described as being divided into "those who support the principal and those who don't."

Communication between teachers and building administrators was reported as poor in schools rated low on collegiality. Teachers described a "we-they atmosphere" and "almost no communication between the administration and the faculty." Building leaders were more likely to be perceived as autocratic. Teachers felt they had influence "only by complaining." They were "seldom asked their opinion" or if they were, "the principal just went through the motions" and "input was not given consideration." Many felt manipulated by aggressive administrators:

Real participation—no! Real decision making—no! There is lots of pseudo-decision making but it's not real... We need to act more like a profession—nobody's really asking us; lots of decisions are made before the teachers even meet.

Teachers felt they had influence "only by complaining."

TABLE 6:4

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS WITH HIGH AND LOW RATINGS ON INFLUENCE AND COLLEGIALITY		
	High Influence	Low Influence
High Collegiality	Broad range of faculty decisionmaking Decisions by voting Strong committees Team planning Time for teams to meet Principals active Good staff-administrative relations (N = 10)	Weak administrators Small schools Turnover of leaders Stable faculty Team planning Time for teams to meet High sharing Poor staff-administrative relations (N = 2)
Low Collegiality	High staff input Team planning Strong, "directive" principals Small-medium size schools Scheduling problems Feelings of inequity Mixed staff-administrative relations (N = 3)	Teachers isolated Poor communications Autocratic leaders Infrequent meetings Larger schools Principal invisible Teacher burnout Poor staff-administrative relations (N = 10)

Another teacher put it more bluntly: "We are consulted but not listened to." Another said:

... Participation is a shell game. There is a world of difference in participation that is simply word play and participation that is meaningful. No one listens to what we say; we don't count!

However, building administrators in these schools expressed their own frustration with changing management philosophies:

I would be willing to come up with a shared decisionmaking model, but I never really know where the superintendent stands on this issue.... He wants teachers to have a share in the decisionmaking and then calls and says 'No, that's not what I meant by it'.

Administrators in these schools consistently rated teacher influence higher than the teachers did but also expressed strong feelings that you could not "run a school by committee" and that "somebody had to be in charge."

Participatory Structures

Structures for participation in decisionmaking and building collegiality existed in most of these schools. For example, seven of the 13 schools with low collegiality and participation had faculty councils, and all of the seven high schools rated low on both dimensions had departmental structures. But structures did not guarantee results.

Councils were seen as ineffective in these schools:

The principal gets resentful if you disagree with her.

... If the principal is not in agreement, he does exactly what he wants to do.

Scheduled meetings were not held or they were held but "no action followed the discussions." Departments, if they existed, seldom met and meetings were brief, focusing on bureaucratic concerns rather than curriculum or

teaching. Administrators often felt the staff did not like faculty meetings and sought their favor by not holding them. Staff reported they had limited access to their building administrators and little opportunity to discuss school issues.

High Participation/Collegiality: "Trust—and Reasonableness"

In contrast, in the ten schools rated as "adequate" or better on both variables, faculty reported high levels of collegiality/sharing and high influence over a range of decisionmaking opportunities. "Cooperation is unusually high in this building; there are few people who don't get along," said one. "Comparatively, this is a better place than other places I have worked; people cooperate," said another. Decisions were often made by faculty vote. Principals were perceived as active leaders and the buildings generally had good staff-administration relations. Perhaps the best way to describe the relationship between the administration and faculty in these schools is mutual respect. Typically:

There's lots of trust—and reasonableness. The teachers have common goals with the administration. The principal and vice-principal are a complementary team as well, so we are in this together.

Faculty meetings were held regularly and were described as being "two-way rather than just information giving." "Weekly meetings are lively and there is good participation," commented a teacher. And another said, "Teachers give input and the principal values the opinions and suggestions of the faculty." The key difference seemed to be the belief that opinions were respected and suggestions or decisions were acted upon. "She places a high priority on follow-through on teacher concerns," one teacher said of a principal. There was recognition of constraints:

... she listens then she does what she can. Down-town edicts are inflexible, but we do get results here.

The principal genuinely wants our input, but you can't deal with the big issues because they cost money.

Staff reported they had limited access to their building administrators and little opportunity to discuss school issues.

"Teams Provide Opportunities"

Teachers and administrators reported that strong committees existed and that teachers planned together. The middle schools, in particular, often used team structures for teachers in the core academic areas to foster greater influence over work-related decisions and greater collegiality. Weekly team meetings provided opportunities for teachers to talk together about students, the academic program and other professional concerns. "Cooperation is pretty good and has improved since the principal introduced teaming," said one teacher.

"Cooperation is pretty good and has improved since the principal introduced teaming."

The teams had joint planning time and met with principals frequently. In some schools, decisions made by the team once were the prerogative of the principal or other administrators. The team members felt they were making important decisions. In most instances, they had influence over schedules and student assignments, and in several cases they developed their own budgets.

When we examined the overall effect of team structures on teacher influence and collegiality, we found an interesting relationship. Of the 10 schools rated as "adequate" or better on both participation and collegiality, seven had some form of team structure. All 10 schools with teams rated average or above in either influence or collegiality. Table 6:5 displays these findings. Teachers on teams felt more involved in decisionmaking and reported stronger collegial relationships with their peers. Team structures appear to enhance discourse among teachers and lead them to feel a greater sense of control over decisions affecting their work.

TABLE 6:5

TEACHER INFLUENCE AND COLLEGIALLY IN SCHOOLS WITH TEAM STRUCTURES (N = 11)					
Collegiality	Influence				
	High	High-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Low
High	0	0	0	0	0
Average-High	0	1	3	0	0
Average	0	1	2	2	0
Low-Average	0	0	2	0	0
Low	0	0	0	0	0
	0	2	7	2	0

In the two cases where schools with teams reported less than adequate levels of collegiality, there were problems because of time. In one school, teams had to meet at lunch. In both cases, the schedules did not permit specialists to meet or to communicate with the core academic teams. In addition, specialists had one planning period, while the core teams had two daily. There was considerable conflict over the perceived inequities in these schools. In the four schools with teams and with participation rated as less than moderate, principals were not sharing schoolwide decisions with staff. As a result the authority of the teams over curricular and instructional matters was perceived by teachers to be threatened by central office policies on testing and curriculum.

Other Modes of Participation

Participation in decisionmaking took a variety of forms in the schools we sampled. In most, traditional bimonthly or monthly faculty meetings were convened by principals. In one district, principals by contract could hold one faculty meeting per week, but only one principal did so. More often than not, the meetings that were held did not promote either collegiality or participation. Most teachers reported the agendas usually were set by the principal, items were dispensed with in a business-like manner and there was little or no time for genuine faculty dialogue and participation.

High schools did have departmental meetings by subject area. In these schools, not surprisingly, teachers said that collegiality was stronger at the departmental level than school-wide. Regular departmental meetings, however, were often not held or were abbreviated, apparently, because they were unpopular with many teachers. This may be because meetings often were mere conduits for "information processing" from "the top" rather than real opportunities for communication, sharing or thoughtful decisionmaking.

Elementary schools in the sample, generally, provided few opportunities for grade-level meetings unless they were conducted before school or over lunch. Meetings of this sort were held in over half of the elementary schools, usually as a result of teacher initiative. When they were required or "encouraged" by administrators, teachers expressed resentment.

More often than not, the meetings that were held did not promote either collegiality or participation.

The Effect of School Councils

Table 6:6 displays data showing the distribution of the 18 schools with faculty councils. The data show no clear relationship between the existence of such councils and teachers' sense of influence and collegiality. The reason for this apparent paradox is that the roles and effectiveness of the councils in our sample of schools were determined by many factors, including the leadership style of

TABLE 6:6

TEACHER INFLUENCE, COLLEGIALITY, AND SCHOOL COUNCILS (N = 19)					
Collegiality	Influence				
	High	High-Average	Average	Average-Low	Low
High	0	0	0	0	0
High-Average	0	1	2	0	0
Average	0	2	3	2	0
Low-Average	0	0	3	2	1
Low	0	0	0	2	1
Total	0	3	8	6	2

the principal and the character of the faculty, district policy and practice. Two of the five districts had councils in every building which included the building representatives. However, the actual influence of the councils and the scope of their decisionmaking varied enormously across schools within these two districts. One problem was that authority of the councils was not well defined. The districts had not delegated specific decisions to the councils. In addition, district officials did not appear to be holding the principals accountable for making the school councils work. There were policies specifying the composition of the councils and the frequency with which they should meet, but there was no monitoring of their implementation. Sometimes district policies seemed to be in conflict. "The district is going through an identity crisis, trying to raise standards and decentralize decisions at the same time," said one respondent.

Other Factors Affecting Teacher Influence and Collegiality

Conditions also varied by type and style of leadership. Even when faculty were provided with time to meet, the

"The district is going through an identity crisis, trying to raise standards and decentralize decisions at the same time."

meetings were not necessarily participatory if the principal wanted to be autocratic. For example, in one city, a district-wide policy provided only dismissal one day per week to accommodate district and building needs for meetings. One week was designated for all-school faculty meetings; a second, for departmental or grade-level meetings within buildings; a third, for district-wide grade or subject meetings; and fourth, for some kind of in-service training. However, the data from this district indicate that actual communication and participation varied considerably, building to building. Even with a district-wide policy supporting participation and collegiality, variables, such as leadership at the building level, can adversely affect the implementation of a well-intentioned policy.

Administrators commonly claimed that they solicited information from teachers prior to reaching decisions about school policy, but such consultation was not clear to their teaching staff. For such forms of participation to be perceived as genuine by teachers, they had to believe there was an intent by the administration to use the advice solicited. If teachers regularly were consulted and if their input were respected and regularly used, teachers then perceived themselves as participating in decisions. When consultation was sporadic, however, or teachers' contributions used selectively, the sincerity was questioned. Consultation should not be excluded or undervalued as a form of participation, but it is often ambiguous and perceived differently by various participants.

Even with a district-wide policy supporting participation and collegiality, variables, such as leadership at the building level, can adversely affect the implementation of a well-intentioned policy.

Factors Which Affect Participation

Two other factors also affected the opportunities for teachers to participate in decisionmaking and to develop collegial relations. School size was one. The ten schools rated highly on collegiality and participation had somewhat smaller student enrollments than the others in the sample. Size seems to be related to both perceived opportunities for participation and collegiality. The existence of formal structures for participation and time for staff to work together may partially, but not totally, offset the effects of large size.

Time also was an important factor. Teachers reported they had little time to do much of anything outside of their classroom teaching. The daily schedule was full. If

was not provided for teachers to meet within the

The existence of formal structures for participation and time for staff to work together may partially, but not totally, offset the effects of large size.

workday, collegiality suffered. Weekly or monthly department or staff meetings did not seem to compensate for the lack of time within the ordinary workday. In some cases, teachers used time before or after school or during lunch to talk to colleagues, but that was seldom seen as adequate.





How are teachers evaluated?

“The process is only a formality; no one can evaluate me in ten minutes.”

7

SUPERVISION, PROFESSIONAL GROWTH
AND REWARDS

The password for recent rounds of education reform has been accountability. Certainly the spotlight of policy has lingered more than a few moments on ways to make sure teachers are doing what they should. Often supervision, professional growth and rewards take on an aura of "policing" a delinquent workforce, identifying deficiencies, withholding rewards and requiring training. Yet each of these activities plays a critical role in motivating teachers, building personal and professional skills, and developing commitment to the instructional program.

Supervision is the primary means of control over instruction, and research emphasizes the importance of frequent and effective supervision. State and local policies emphasize supervision and evaluation; however, emphasis has often been placed on evaluation. Supervision has been used to assure compliance with policy and minimum standards of performance, and the focus has been on the elimination of poor teachers rather than professional growth. As a consequence, supervision is not a frequent, meaningful nor effective activity.

In order to work, supervisory relationships must be built on trust, open communication, commitment to individual and organization learning, and visibility for evaluation. Effective supervision requires follow-up work. However, principals, overworked with administrative duties, often find it difficult to do more than the prescribed minimums of supervision. Time and energy must be committed to improving any noted deficiencies, but most leaders, if they have the time, lack the skills for clinical work.

These tensions—between assistance and policing, commitment to the process and pro forma activity—are underscored in our findings. Observation of teachers was infrequent, little time was spent, and the feedback was not useful. Administrators felt they had little time to commit to it and were burdened by the process. Teachers felt the activity was of little use to them. New teachers were left to "sink or swim" on their own. Generally, teachers

... teachers believed the process should be more collegial and helpful, while some administrators wanted less paperwork and more teeth.

believed the process should be more collegial and helpful, while some administrators wanted less paperwork and more teeth. The fact that three of the five districts we visited had recently introduced new evaluation systems, developed jointly with the teachers' union, should raise questions about accountability and its usefulness.

"A necessary evil"

Overall, the staff in 18 schools judged supervision in their schools to be inadequate. A few felt the process was threatening. As one said: "Teachers do not trust the evaluation process; they don't believe that someone wants to help them. They see evaluation as punishment." An angry teacher described the process in her school as "tough . . . a no win situation for teachers." Most, however, described it as benign, even trivial:

Apparently if your kids are good and there are no complaints, you are OK.

It is a necessary evil and we suffer through it.

It's pro forma, done to meet the requirements.

Table 7:1 summarizes assessments of the supervision and evaluation processes in the schools. The unexpected finding is that high school teachers have significantly lower opinions of the procedures in their schools than do elementary and middle school teachers. In only one high school was supervision judged adequate. Because all high schools had department chairs or subject matter specialists involved in the evaluation process, this finding

TABLE 7:1

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION (N = 31)					
Level of School	Teacher Assessment				
	High	Moderate High	Moderate	Low Moderate	Low
Elementary	0	1	7	2	1
Middle	0	1	4	3	2
High School	0	0	0	10	0
Total	0	2	11	15	3

is somewhat surprising. It may be explained by the generally poorer relationships between high school administrators and teachers in this sample of schools or perhaps is reflective of poor morale among high school teachers.

The assessments by teachers and administrators of supervision in their schools are compared in Table 7:2. The data show that while administrators held more favor-

TABLE 7:2

COMPARISON OF TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR ASSESSMENTS OF SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION (N = 349)					
	Percent of Respondents				Total
	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	No Data	
Teachers	4	45	30	22	100
Administrators	1	64	16	16	100

able opinions of current practices than did teachers, almost no one thought the processes more than adequate. Three of the districts recently had introduced new evaluation procedures, each one developed in collaboration with the teachers' association, that were intended to be fairer, more rigorous, and more helpful. Many respondents describe these new procedures as improvements, but only a minority of the teachers gave them passing marks. Two districts provided that teachers be placed on performance appraisal and be observed by teams, but these measures seldom were used.

Observation: "Only a formality"

Observations were made, although not always regularly or frequently, in all of the schools. The minimum required generally were conducted—no more, no less. Their infrequency and short durations prompted teachers to judge the process inadequate:

I think it is a big farce, the observation of tenured teachers once a year is a waste of time.

... The process is only a formality; no one can evaluate me in ten minutes.

There also were a handful of extreme cases:

I have been in this school for nine years and have been visited twice.

In some schools, there was considerable informal observation, and principals frequently were in the classrooms:

... the principal is in my room a lot. He brings in new teachers from other buildings to observe, loves to participate and see what the kids are doing.

My cluster coordinator is great. ... he is always popping in. He'll see what's good and let me know. He points to my growth.

Feedback

Feedback was provided to staff in all of the schools except one. However, a majority of responses did not consider the feedback as useful. Many felt they received suggestions only because supervisors were supposed to provide them. Most teachers described feedback with terms such as "limited utility," "frivolous" or "fuzzy." The more positive comments on feedback tended to come from staff in schools where the supervisors had been trained in clinical evaluation: "The feedback is helpful because it is so detailed, so specific—it made me realize where I need improvement," said one teacher.

The more positive comments feedback tended to come from staff in schools where the supervisors had been trained in clinical evaluation.

Assistance: "All I have to do is ask"

The question about assistance brought similar responses. In all but one of the schools, the majority of staff said that assistance was available for teachers with problems. Most of it was informal, arranged and delivered by school personnel. The burden of taking the initiative often seemed to rest with the teacher: "Everyone is willing to help; all I have to do is ask," said one. "Assistance is given from other teachers; not from administrators, they are overburdened with discipline," commented another.

The most common forms of administrative initiative were post-observation conference discussions, provision

of materials or arrangement for informal support from other teachers. Observing other teachers was mentioned by teachers in six schools, and one high school required each teacher to make five classroom visitations, including two in another school and at least two in a different subject area. The school used staff development funds to pay for the released time.

Some schools provided professional growth plans mutually developed by the teacher and the supervisor. However, the quality and seriousness of these efforts depended upon the supervisor.

"Sink or Swim"

New teachers frequently needed help but received little in most cases. They often had special needs, particularly with classroom management, but it was apparently "sink or swim" in most of the schools. When asked about assistance, one said "... from the administration, no; but we understand that it is because of time constraints and that new teachers have to sink or swim." A second described the orientation as "... and here is your room." Still another explained:

There was no orientation for first-year people. I heard about the requirements from a friend. There was no guidance from the principal. He said he knew nothing about it ... You pick things up from other people.

Several principals admitted that teachers who needed help had resigned or been let go without receiving it. Two districts used academies to provide training and assistance to new teachers and teachers having problems, but these programs generally received mixed reviews both from people who had attended programs and those who had not.

One district had a new mentoring program which was described favorably by most teachers and less favorably by administrators (two principals spoke strongly in favor of the plan). One teacher said, "The mentoring program has been undercut by the principals—they are saying 'hands off.'" But others spoke of the help mentors had provided.

"If I could change this process . . ."

All administrators, building representatives, and selected teachers were asked how they would change the process of supervision and evaluation. Not unexpectedly their answers differed. The most common responses by administrators concerned time, paperwork, and standards. Most of them stressed the sheer number of evaluations they had to complete and the paperwork associated with them. "There are too many steps, too much red tape and paperwork; you find yourself doing the bare minimum," said one. A number suggested reducing observations and reports on effective teachers so they could concentrate on those with problems. A typical comment: "The whole process is cumbersome, it treats all teachers the same, which they are not". This problem was particularly acute for those supervising large numbers of non-tenured staff. "You don't need to evaluate them for five years to certify them out of the probationary stage," was one observation.

"The whole process is cumbersome; it treats all teachers the same, which they are not."

Quite a few felt the process should have more teeth. A middle school principal said: "We need to be clearer about what is excellent or superior." Some wanted to alter the forms or the indicators.

Teachers felt the process should be more collegial, more helpful, and more positive. One expressed the views of most:

If I were an administrator, I'd try to spend more time viewing the teacher, informally. I'd have more visibility and make supervision a priority.

About one-fourth suggested peer evaluation or mentorship as desirable alternatives. Typical comments were: "Mentor teachers are good, helpful because peers are competent, understanding" or "new teachers should be paired with mentor teachers," and "peer evaluation would eliminate the stress and anxiety for teachers." There also were a few opposed to mentors because they feared divisiveness. About an equal number felt that more frequent observations would be better. And a handful believed there should be rewards associated with good performance.

Professional Development—Not a High Priority

Research suggests that mastery of new skills is a strong motivator for employees and contributes to job satisfac-

tion. Furthermore, staff development is important for school improvement and more effective when delivered at the local level and related to staff needs.

Yet, 18 of the schools gave less-than-adequate ratings to professional development opportunities. The quality of programs and teachers' access to them varied across schools and districts. As Table 7:3 reveals, staff in elementary schools generally reported greater satisfaction with the opportunities available to them than did their colleagues teaching in the higher grades.

TABLE 7:3

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (N = 29)					
	Good	Good-Adeq	Adequate	Adeq-Inad	Inadequate
Grade Level					
Elementary	0	2	5	2	2
Middle	0	1	1	7	1
High					3
Schools	0	0	2	3	
Total	0	3	8	12	6

The data from the study suggest several reasons for this difference. First, elementary schools were more likely to plan and implement their own inservice training programs. Second, their teachers were more likely to be involved in both the planning and the training. Third, the district staff development academies or teacher centers were viewed more positively by elementary teachers; academy courses seemed to be more suitable and more acceptable to elementary than to secondary teachers.

Involvement as "Knowledgeable Professionals"

Teacher assessment of professional development opportunities was positively related to the amount of teacher input into the planning of inservice training, the provision of programs at the school site, and the use of teachers as workshop leaders. Staffs in 12 of the schools said they influenced the planning of inservice activities in their buildings. This varied from being consulted to actually designing and conducting programs. "Teachers felt they had a part in making the program a success and felt they were treated like knowledgeable professionals," said one. Staff in eight of these schools rated their oppor-

TABLE 7:4

**TEACHER ASSESSMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING
(N = 29)**

	Good	Good-Adeq	Adequate	Adeq-Inad	Inadequate
Teacher Involvement					
Yes	0	3	5	4	0
No	0	0	3	8	6
Total	0	3	8	12	6

tunities as adequate or better. This is clearly not a random pattern.

There were nine schools in which the staff reported little or no inservice training at the school; six of these were in two districts. In eight of these schools the staff rated the professional development opportunities as inadequate or split between inadequate and adequate.

Time and Timing: "Everyone is Tired"

Conversely, having programs in the building appeared to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for a positive assessment by the staff. One teacher said: "It [inservice training] comes from downtown or the school; I prefer the latter. Downtown complicates it, things are suggested that are of no particular importance."

However, not all building level efforts earned positive ratings from teachers. "The programs are Mickey Mouse and don't meet our needs" was one comment.

Such responses most often occurred in buildings in which time constraints and limited resources affected the quality of the programs. "We are limited to two hours after school; everyone is tired," said one teacher, and another added, "We have one or two released days a year; it is not enough."

Time for inservice training was a problem across the five districts. The time available ranged from two half days a year to four half days plus two hours a month after school. In some cases, school-level programs were run after school and participation was required; others were conducted during one-hour staff meetings. Some programs were conducted on weekends. Teachers complained that it was "hard to get involved; you get tired

"Downtown complicates it; things are suggested that are of no particular importance."

and your family needs you." Released time was provided for some teachers in a few schools to attend district workshops or attend conferences. One principal "provided coverage herself" to encourage people to go to workshops. Professional days also were available, but while these mechanisms gave individuals opportunities, they did not provide experiences for teams or departments that would alter their work norms or their methods. Large blocks of time for focused activities were seldom available.

Large blocks of time for focused activities were seldom available.

Building Level: "Less money and time to get things done"

Resources for staff development also were a problem. Only high schools in two districts actually had staff development funds allocated by the district. These were controlled by the principals. The other schools depended on their own talents and ingenuity or what the district staff could provide. One principal, noting that funding had significantly decreased over recent years, said: "There is less money and time to get things done; opportunities for workshops are reduced." Some used money from fundraisers for in service training programs. Money also was a problem for the teachers. There were many complaints about lack of compensation for after-school workshops or programs held in the evenings. Teachers also were concerned about the rising cost of college credits. In at least one of the districts, state law required teachers to take college credits every five years, and they had to pay the tuition.

Academies: "I have been to the Academy; it was fair"

In the four districts with academies, this comment from a building representative in an elementary school expressed the mixed reactions of many teachers to centralized staff development centers. Several factors produced the lukewarm attitude: limited access, not useful to veterans, more useful to elementary teachers, programs not useful at the school site. In one case, the access for teachers was extremely limited because "attendance is voluntary and released time is not easy to get." Participation took individual initiative and some administrative support. Few of the respondents even mentioned

the program. In another district, the program was new and few teachers had yet participated, but there was some enthusiasm for the concept: "The Center is a beginning; other than that, there has never been much," was one comment.

In the other two cases, teachers were very aware of the programs offered by the academies and mentioned them frequently, and critically. The positive and negative comments were about equal in number. The vast majority felt the programs offered were most useful to new teachers, but of less or no value to "veterans." Both offered special programs for new teachers, and a few people suggested these gave them the image of "... serving rookies." Still others were unhappy with the content of the offerings. "For some reason, classes of elementary teachers are taught at an elementary level as if we are children," complained a teacher. Others criticized the academies as "... just a cheap way to earn credits" or that the programs were so "heavy on jargon and had little relevance to teaching." One said: "... it is seen as something that is done to you." The academies had their supporters as well; they were less specific in their comments. They praised the choices offered and the fact they did not have to pay university tuition to get good training.

"For some reason, classes of elementary teachers are taught at an elementary level as if we are children."

Two of the academies provided substitutes to release people for programs. That may be one reason why teachers complained the programs filled up quickly and were hard to get in. In the other, district staff indicated they were no longer using the academy and that its programs were being cut back (in the other district the program was expanding). In both sites, elementary teachers were more likely to be positive about the academies than secondary teachers. This difference may be due to the programming. Secondary teachers complained there was seldom anything in their content fields, or they preferred to take university courses.

Teacher Rewards and Recognition

In the workplace reform literature, recognition and rewards are a fundamental part of employee motivation and staff-employee relations. Rewards which are helpful are most often connected to professional work, are public and have a value. Yet little to nothing is done to

reward effort in these urban schools, according to a majority of teachers in 28 of the 31 schools.

As indicated in Table 7:5, the rewards for teaching are clearly seen as inadequate by the teachers in 17 of the 31 schools, and inadequate to barely adequate in eleven

TABLE 7:5

TEACHER RECOGNITION BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL (N=31)					
School Level	Assessment of Teacher Recognition				
	Good	Adequate to Good	Adequate	Adequate to Inadequate	Inadequate
Elementary	0	0	1	6	4
Middle	0	0	2	3	5
Secondary	0	0	0	2	8
Total	0	0	3	11	17

schools. In only three schools did respondents assess teacher recognition as adequate. And none was rated good. There was virtually no evidence in most of the schools of any formal reward system, outside of the normal paycheck. Notes in mailboxes, small tokens or presents, annual faculty luncheons, and announcements at staff meetings or in teacher bulletins about special deeds and accomplishments about sum it all. These informal gestures heavily depended on principal leadership style. Teachers reported being acknowledged through professional development opportunities, extra release or planning time, or additional compensation in very few schools.

As one principal said: "Teachers get informal appreciation from me. It's not as effective as it should be; I don't have the time I need. I try to recognize three teachers each faculty meeting. Formal recognition is poor, poor, poor. No release time, professional development, or summer work." One frustrated teacher noted that "teachers are rewarded by being assigned the most difficult students." Or as another teacher said, "They leave you alone if you are doing an excellent job."

Teachers don't perceive the informal and typically infrequent "pats on the back" by principals as being meaningful recognition. Some teachers even see them as favoritism on the part of principals. One teacher said that

... There was virtually no evidence in most of the schools of any formal reward system, outside of the normal paycheck.

"teachers feel there are ulterior motives to recognition. It causes jealousy. If you win something or have talented students, then you get recognized. But not for doing a good job, day after day." In one high school with a low level of collegiality and morale the principal gave a "trophy for perfect attendance." It was his only attempt to recognize teachers. Teachers found it insulting to be rewarded in the same way as students.

Most principals believe that rewards are adequate to good in their schools.

There is a major difference in the data, however, when principals are asked about the adequacy of rewards. Most principals believe that rewards are adequate to good in their schools. In only a few schools did the principals agree with the perceptions of teachers. As one principal said, "We don't do too well with recognizing teachers. A few efforts are underway, but there is a lack of day-to-day appreciation. It undermines satisfaction."

One of the four schools rated adequate, a middle school, provided a marked contrast. The principal described her efforts as "giving both informal and formal appreciation, everyone gets something. No favoritism or pets. I opened up academy positions to all teachers. I write about 20 letters each year to teachers who have gone beyond the call of duty." Another principal used the school-based substitutes whenever possible to provide extra release time for teachers.

In the absence of formal recognition, teachers frequently mentioned the importance of teaching's intrinsic rewards. "Many staff feel as I do; there's no prestige in teaching. There is gratification from student gains, but when they're absent, there's no reward," said one. Other teachers shared their views: "I feel good if I have a year where most of the kids are successful" and "The rewards of teaching are intrinsic; you are not going to get flowers or speeches about yourself. The satisfaction of taking a student from one point to another is the reward of teaching."

The lack of teacher recognition was even more apparent at the district level. In 19 of the 31 schools, respondents reported they weren't aware of any district, union or community recognition of teachers. In the other 12 schools, teachers pointed to "Teacher of the Year Awards," which only acknowledged a handful of teachers, or Teacher Appreciation Week luncheons. Overall the public is seen as unsupportive of teachers' efforts and the

media as negative. "We always get negative feedback, the public is always finding fault. They never show the achievements we've made; we're always downed by the public," said one teacher bitterly. Another expressed this sentiment: "There's no recognition for being an outstanding teacher. I am not even talking about monetary rewards, but at least public recognition in newsletters or in downtown documentation." Another teacher shared, "Never any recognition for a job well done. I've received outstanding evaluations every year but have never gotten the district commendation I'm supposed to get. Teachers would strive harder if there was some recognition." Unions also did little to recognize individual teachers, although they promoted recognition for teachers as a group through publications and other public relations efforts.

On the other side, respondents in 14 schools reported sanctions. Typically, there are informal and formal reprimands for such things as excessive absences or lateness, missed duty periods, or being ill-prepared for classwork. Principals use letters of warning, letters of reprimand, a formal evaluation process, or suspension without benefits. Most teachers felt some sanctions were appropriate, especially in cases of incompetence. The main concern about sanctions was unjust or public reprimands where teachers were confronted in the middle of the office, over the public address system, or through announcements in bulletins. Teachers in one school said, "We are mostly punished, ostracized over the intercom for not turning in a form. The principal has no rapport with teachers. She confronts teachers in front of the students or other teachers. She is vindictive and grudging. Never a thank you for your work."

Summary

Supervision, professional development and rewards were rated as inadequate in most of the schools that IEL studied. Tensions clearly existed between administrators and teachers over the purpose of supervisory relationships. Teachers felt the process should provide them with useful advice; administrators tended to see the process as a mechanism for eliminating bad teaching. Both felt the supervisory process was not useful. Teachers were frustrated by pro forma observation; administrators com-

"The satisfaction of taking a student from one point to another is the reward of teaching."

plained that they should not have to waste their time on annual evaluations of experienced teachers.

Staff development also was judged inadequate. Elementary teachers had higher opinions of the inservice training than other teachers, and many teachers said that the programs appeared to be geared to elementary teaching. The districts did not appear to have programs in place for induction of new teachers, and a "sink or swim" attitude prevailed. Academy programs got mixed reviews in the four districts where they existed. School based programs planned by teachers got somewhat higher evaluations, but these were few and far between.

In 28 of the schools we examined, teachers said nothing was done to reward effort and in 19 of the schools, teachers said they were unaware of any district, union, school or community recognition program of teachers.



**What is the role of an
administrative leader?**

**“You can disagree with the
principal without fearing for your
life.”**

8

LEADERSHIP: VISIONARIES, MANAGERS AND DESPOTS

School leaders must do five things. They must guide operations so that schools run smoothly—a technical function. They must cultivate the human potential of the organization, providing growth opportunities to the staff—the human function. They must bring expert knowledge as an educational leader to counsel teachers and support and oversee the instructional program—the educational function. They must provide symbolic leadership, representing the school's important values—the symbolic function. And they must build a strong professional culture to guide staff—the cultural function.

Effective leadership played a critical role in shaping the working conditions in the schools examined in the IEL study. Teachers almost unanimously cited the work of school principals and department chairs as a major and essential force shaping the environments in their schools.

Leaders were able to influence the conditions or to buffer their impact on teachers. Typically, it was the principal who was seen as providing, or failing to provide, good conditions for teaching. School leaders were described as major forces in initiating improvements and in supporting, encouraging, and integrating faculty cooperation and performance. They set the tone in the schools and were the prime forces in creating positive climates for teaching and learning. While school administrators often were hampered or constrained by district policies and lack of resources, the best leaders still made a difference.

Teachers almost unanimously cited the work of school principals and department chairs as a major and essential force shaping the environments in their schools.

School Leadership—"It all depends on the principal"

There was rich, detailed information on leadership in almost all of the schools. Generally, references to management and leadership identified the school principal as the key figure. There were also references to assistant principals and department chairs. This information was

analyzed with particular attention to the quality of technical, human, and educational leadership: the results then were compared to reports from the IEL interview teams for validation. The skills and the attributes of principals seen as important by teachers were confirmed. Often these were expressed in qualitative terms, e.g., "good communicator," "terrific fundraiser," "poor supervisor."

Based on this information, a general assessment was made of the quality of leadership in the buildings. The results of this assessment are in Table 8:1. A clear pattern emerges—leadership in elementary schools is more positively assessed than for the other two levels, followed by leadership in the middle schools. Leadership in five of the high schools was deemed ineffective. This might be explained by the larger size and more bureaucratic nature of high schools. Staff simply have less personal contact with administrators on a daily basis than those in the lower grades.

TABLE 8:1

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP (N = 31)				
	Effective	Adequate	Ineffective	Insufficient Data
Elementary	5	4	2	0
Middle	3	3	4	0
High Schools	1	3	5	1
Total	9	10	11	1

However, analysis of the data from the five high schools where leadership was perceived ineffective reveals other factors to be at work as well. Three principals were near retirement (at the end of the year) and were described as cynical, indecisive, and arbitrary. Staff said they were disrespectful of teachers, ignored teacher input, and played favoritism. In all three cases, supervision was perceived as weak and the administration uninvolved in instruction. In sum, the human and educational functions of leadership were not being performed effectively.

In the other two high schools with ineffective leadership, the principals were new but perceived as relatively weak and inconsistent. In both cases, teachers com-

plained about problems with discipline in the school and said the administration had little interest in curriculum and instruction. In these cases, none of the three essential leadership functions were being executed satisfactorily.

In five of the six other schools where leadership was considered ineffective, a common pattern emerged—a weak administrator who was inaccessible, disorganized, inconsistent at enforcing rules for staff and students, permitted no debate or dissent, was seen as vindictive and harassing, and did not support teachers. In these five cases, the school leadership failed to perform any of the essential functions well. The sixth school had experienced considerable turnover in leadership, and staff felt the new principal, while technically competent, was also seeking promotion by being tough and rigid about rules, going by the book. In this case, too, teachers complained about poor discipline, undeserved reprimands, and lack of input into school decisions. Human leadership was sorely lacking.

Where school leadership was perceived to be adequate, a more mixed pattern was found. In all ten cases, the administrators were seen as technically competent. However, their educational and human leadership skills varied in quality.

Four were described as traditionalist, strong, decisive, respected but bureaucratic, and directive. They ran "tight ships" but provided for little teacher input and were not motivators. Their greatest virtues in the eyes of teachers were their predictability and emphasis on order.

In three other cases, the leaders were complimented for good communications with staff, working well with students, and being effective at representing the school externally. They were not participative managers, but they were respected. However, faculty members complained that the principals were not involved in instruction and curriculum, nor were they regarded as strong supervisors or disciplinarians.

The situation was different in the final three schools with adequate leadership. In each case, an aggressive principal was attempting to raise standards and improve the quality of instruction. All were skilled at clinical supervision and were promoting staff development activities to improve teaching. They encouraged collegiality and involved faculty in school decisionmaking. There

was, however, considerable faculty resistance, and their staffs had divided opinions about the quality of their leaders. Accusations of unfairness, manipulation, lack of respect, stubbornness, and lack of warmth showed up. Conversely, other staff members praised them for high standards, energy, and efforts to improve the school.

The three principals faced different situations. One had taken over an integrated elementary school whose children came from extremely poor families. Test scores were low, and there was racial tension among the students and faculty. Morale was low. The principal, a first-time administrator, was trying to motivate the faculty through staff development and participatory planning, with little district support. Half of the teachers were responding enthusiastically. Others felt the principal was too "strong-willed" and too "aggressive," and resented the efforts to change the school. Success of the principal's efforts was in doubt because of inadequate resources, staff resistance, and fatigue.

In the second case, the school's student achievement was lower than others that served similar populations in the district. The principal had been appointed to make improvements and was strong, visible, and positive. Team planning was being emphasized and electives were being reduced to direct more attention to the academic core. This generated resentment among the teachers of electives and some support from the core teams. The short-run result was divisive. An experienced trainer, the principal also was providing staff development and rewarding those who responded. Most staff members felt the principal was trying to improve the school, but some saw teachers being manipulated and the principal trying to advance professionally by "getting poor teachers." The principal was receiving support from the district, however, and morale appeared to be improving.

Most staff members felt the principal was trying to improve the school, but some saw teachers being manipulated and the principal trying to advance professionally by 'getting poor teachers.'

The third case was a high school with a reputation for high levels of academic achievement. Most staff had been together for some time and held high expectations for both teachers and students. The principal was trying to maintain these standards but was meeting resistance from teachers new to the school who felt they were being asked to do too much. Clinical techniques and staff participation were being used to maintain the school's professional culture. Yet, some teachers saw the principal

as cold and unfair, and reported repeated trivial problems with the administration. Both the principal and the union representative felt the situation was improving.

In all three schools, the principals had been in their positions for less than two years. They had good technical skills and expert knowledge of education. They were respected for their expertise. They also were attempting to cultivate the human potential of their staffs and, certainly, they were all seen as strong symbolic leaders. Their problems arose from the cultures of their schools and resistance from some of their staffs who did not share their professional norms. The absence of strong rewards and incentives for the staff and the lack of time to meet with teachers made the task of altering staff behavior difficult. Leadership in these schools was more difficult to assess. It was not clear whether the leaders were overzealous and ineffective human leaders or whether they were simply dealing with difficult, recalcitrant teachers.

Leaders in nine of the 31 schools received almost universal praise from teachers. They appeared to be technically competent, good with people, and strong instructional leaders. They differed in style—five fostered democratic decisionmaking, while four were described with adjectives such as “good listener,” “responsive,” and “decisive.” Table 8.2 lists the common characteristics of these school leaders as perceived by their staffs. One teacher, speaking of a new principal, said: “My reward is how the principal runs this school.”

Principal as Boundary Spanner

Perhaps the most striking data in our study are commentaries on the myriad roles principals play in urban schools. Instructional leadership was important to teachers in our study. But principals often were cited because of their ability to advocate for their schools, to get around rules and bureaucracy, to find ways to keep control of their buildings through “aggressive complaining.”

Principal leadership was key to:

- Getting repairs made
- Keeping up maintenance in the building
- Getting control over hiring the custodian
- Assuring an atmosphere where cleanliness is impor-

It was not clear whether the leaders were overzealous and ineffective human leaders or whether they were simply dealing with difficult, recalcitrant teachers.

TABLE 8:2

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF COMPETENT SCHOOL LEADERS	
ATTRIBUTE	COMMENTS
High expectations	"He gives the best teachers to the slowest students. A teacher would not be teaching here [with] negative attitudes about students."
Takes initiative	"A mover—people work for him."
Encourages collegiality	"...she allows disagreement, allows innovation and risk taking. A good listener, allows input, a fair person."
Respects teachers	"You can disagree with the principal without fearing for your life. 'Treats us like professionals.'"
Focused on instruction	"I am glad to finally get an administrator who knows curriculum and interacts with teachers about teaching"
Supportive supervisor	"She provides assistance, she was a teacher herself and she gives practical advice."
Gives extra	"This principal takes the lunch duty so we can have an hour lunch..."
Respected externally	"The principal is assertive and influential... has some leverage downtown."
Secures additional resources	"Anything we need this principal will get, he will take the time to run all over the city. He is well-liked downtown and he gets what he wants"

• Countering 'red tape' for repairs at the district level

In resource poor buildings, principals had to take on supply problems by:

- Buying toilet paper from their paychecks
- Fighting to get needed instructional resources
- Developing resources by parent involvement, fund-raisers, and participating in pilot projects
- Dealing with area superintendents and district personnel to get additional resources.

Interceding with district personnel, involving parents and community, supporting staff development, and engaging teachers in building decisionmaking—all of these activities won principals high praise from their staff. Clearly, these leaders are one of the keys to moderating working conditions.

Conclusion

The quality of leadership varied widely across the schools and across the five districts. Elementary teachers

were somewhat more positive about the leadership in their schools than their colleagues in the secondary schools. Middle school teachers were more positive than their high school counterparts. This consistent correlation between staff-administration relationships and the level of schooling suggests school size and organizational complexity may affect teachers' perceptions of leaders, or the actual performance of leadership functions, or both. The key issue may be the frequency and character of the interactions between teachers and administrators.

While leadership styles in the schools varied, the leaders viewed most positively by teachers seemed to be effective at the technical, human and educational aspects of their jobs. They were not necessarily democratic managers, but they were attentive to teacher concerns and perceived as caring, responsible, and responsive. Less effective leaders often were perceived as ineffective in either the educational or human dimensions of their work. If a school leader was ineffective in both of these areas, teachers were highly critical and often alienated from the administration. They seemed to be willing to accept some weaknesses in their leaders if competence was demonstrated in other areas.

• **What are the most important working conditions issues in this district?**

“Downtown is not behind the teachers; they don’t respect our concerns. ”

9

THE DISTRICT SETTINGS: A LONG WAY 'DOWNTOWN'

The previous sections reported the perceptions of teachers and administrators as to the conditions of teaching and the impact they have on teachers. These data have been examined by level of school and analyzed to identify patterns in "good" and "poor" worksites. Working conditions, it is evident, are shaped by policies, practices, and conditions at the building level. Schools operating within the same district exhibited widely varying working conditions for teachers.

However, because district leaders set goals, policy, and expectations for the system, they certainly influence working conditions in the schools. This section examines the influence of the school district on working conditions from the perspectives of both teachers and central office personnel. Finally, initiatives to alter working conditions undertaken by the five districts included in the study will be described briefly.

Schools operating within the same district exhibited widely varying working conditions for teachers.

District Leadership and Policies

During the past three decades there has been a steady drift of authority away from the school building to the district office as a result of collective bargaining and federal and state regulations. It is probably more accurate to think of schools as being co-managed by district and building administrators, although the balance of power and authority in this partnership varies enormously from district to district.

Even in situations in which some form of school-site management prevails, districts typically exercise enormous influence on school conditions—creating the accountability mechanisms, setting priorities for construction and maintenance, defining resource and time allocation, determining the latitude of principals, negotiating teacher workload and responsibilities, and defining criteria for student success or failure. District leaders—the board of education, the superintendent, and the cen-

tral office staff—play critical roles in shaping the conditions that this study has shown are important to teachers.

District leaders also are in the best position to initiate actions to improve conditions, or obstruct them: they have the opportunity to plan and coordinate; they control critical resources; and, ultimately, they decide whether schools, their leaders, and their staffs are successes or failures.

Teachers and administrators were asked directly about major problems affecting teaching in the district. They were asked about district policies relevant to the major dimensions of school working conditions and questioned about communication with district personnel. Central office personnel and key decisionmakers, including the board president, superintendent, and president of the teachers' organization, were interviewed. All of the interviews were coded for references to district leadership policies, practices, initiatives, and problems.

Teacher Perceptions of Workplace Problems

The data show that most of the issues upsetting teachers require district action.

The data in Table 9.1 show that most of the issues upsetting teachers require district action. Problems such as the quality of school leadership, lack of public respect for teaching, large class sizes, lack of planning time, and lack of materials and supplies, which teachers perceive to be obstacles to their success in the classroom, cannot be resolved at the school level. Other issues such as student discipline, student attendance, and staff collegiality can be addressed at the building level, but their resolution often depends upon the adequacy of resources—a factor controlled by the district.

When the issues are examined by level of school across the five districts, some common themes are apparent. In the elementary schools, the major issues concerned workload, class size and the lack of preparation time; elementary teachers feel overloaded with work. Other issues emerge, but they are specific to each district.

In the middle schools, there also was concern about class size, but poor student discipline emerges as the dominant issue. In the high schools, concerns shifted strongly to student behavior. Poor discipline, motivation, and attendance were the common concerns.

TABLE 9:1

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF MAJOR WORKPLACE ISSUES BY DISTRICT AND LEVEL OF SCHOOL			
District	Level of School		
	Elementary	Middle	High School
A	Lack of prep time Poor school leadership Poor discipline influence	Poor discipline Lack of public respect Lack of staff	Poor school leadership Poor discipline Lack of collegiality
B	School duties Lack of prep time Lack of parent support leadership	Class size Lack of supplies and materials Poor discipline	Lack of supplies and materials Student apathy Poor school
C	Discipline Lack of district support Lack of parent support	Discipline Lack of district support Lack of parent support	Discipline Student attendance Student apathy
D	Class size Lack of prep time Lack of supplies and materials	Discipline Quality of teachers Lack of staff influence	Lack of supplies Student apathy Student attendance
E	Lack of respect by district leaders Lack of public respect Heavy workloads	Poor discipline Lack of respect by district leaders Lack of public respect	Student attendance Poor discipline Poor facilities

There also was variation across the districts. In district C, for example, strong concern was expressed in all of the schools about student discipline. "The kids are hard to control; I am tired of being a Scrooge every day," said one teacher. In district E, the lack of respect for teachers and teaching by the district leaders and the general public were the dominant issues.

In district B, on the other hand, the major concerns were the more conventional ones of class size, materials, adequate time, and student behavior.

Lack of parental support also was an issue in several districts, but it was closely associated with the question of discipline. Busing in two districts had made it difficult for parents to come to the schools and widened the gulf between the home and the school.

In district D, the only common themes were the lack of materials and discipline. In general, the major working conditions issues concerned the lack of resources.

Finally, in the last of the five districts, there were two common and closely related issues—leadership and discipline. “Some rather serious offenses to teachers are not remedied, . . . it is a flaw at the district level,” said one teacher. And another: “Weak leadership—and extremely poor leadership—these are the issues.”

Comparative Perspective on Workplace Issues

Teachers and school administrators saw the problems similarly, as Table 9:2 shows. The central issues for teaching staff, cutting across the five districts, were discipline, class size, student attendance, lack of teacher influence over school policies and decisions, and the lack of respect for teachers by district leaders. These issues ranked high in at least three of the five districts. With the exception of student attendance, school administrators mentioned the same issues.

Central office administrators provided more diverse responses. The most frequently mentioned issues were large class sizes, teacher salaries, and lack of teacher influence. Salaries were given lower priority by the staff in the schools. Discipline and attendance were not seen as major issues by district leaders, and lack of respect was only mentioned in one district.

Discipline and attendance were not seen as major issues by district leaders, and lack of respect was only mentioned in one district.

The perspectives of district leaders on working conditions issues are likely to differ somewhat from those of school staffs because of their responsibility for accountability to the public, fiscal responsibilities, and the pressure of interest groups. It is not surprising that they identify issues with fiscal implications, such as salaries and conditions of facilities as the major issues, whereas school personnel are particularly concerned about nitty-gritty issues such as discipline, preparation time, and quality of school leadership. Both groups expressed concern over class size.

Teacher Perceptions of District Administration

Teachers generally did not hold high opinions of the central administration or leadership in their districts, and some were cynical and bitter. They believed, for exam-

TABLE 9:2

COMPARATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF MAJOR WORKPLACE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES			
District	Central Office Administration	School Administration	Teachers
A	Inadequate facilities Class size Relations with school administrators Lack of teacher influence Paperwork	Discipline Inadequate prep time Lack of respect for teachers Lack of teacher influence Lack of collegiality	Discipline Quality of school leadership Lack of prep time Class size Lack of teacher influence Lack of district support/respect
B	Lack of materials and supplies Class size Teacher salaries Quality of school leadership Poor facilities	Class size Lack of materials and supplies Paperwork Student apathy Teacher recognition	Lack of materials and supplies Discipline Inadequate facilities Class size Lack of teacher influence
C	Class size Discipline Student mobility Teacher influence over curriculum Teacher salaries Quality of school leadership	Discipline Student attendance Lack of teacher influence Lack of parent support Class size	Discipline Lack of district respect/support Student attendance Lack of parent support Teacher salaries Lack of teacher influence
D	Safety Class size Lack of teacher influence Lack of materials Student attendance	Class size Prep time Lack of teacher recognition Lack of trust Paperwork Student motivation	Class size Lack of supplies and materials Discipline Student attendance Inadequate prep time
E	Teacher salaries Lack of public respect/support Student attitudes Lack of district respect/support Teacher stress Class size	Lack of district respect/support Lack of public respect/support Lack of teacher influence Parent support Class size Discipline	Lack of district respect/support Lack of public respect/support Discipline Quality of building leadership Student attendance Class size/workload

ple, that the central offices did not respect them. As evidence, they cited low salaries, lack of input into decisions, lack of support for teachers, and negative statements about teachers by district officials. "Downtown is not behind the teachers; they don't respect our concerns," said one teacher. They complained about inequities in treatment. "If you are not involved with athletics or on the glory road, you don't count." Low morale, teacher turnover, absenteeism, and a loss of efficacy were attributed to this gulf between teachers and the district

"If you are not involved with athletics or on the glory road, you don't count."

Many expressed anger about accusations by citizens and public officials that the teachers were racist. They blamed the district administration for contributing to the negative image of teachers and, therefore, to the lack of public support. "We are treated as non-persons by the district," said one. Added another: "There is a blame-the-teacher syndrome systemwide."

A teacher spoke of a dilemma confronting teachers in urban areas:

The more you care, the more you give—and sometimes it is stressful—the more it hurts when you fail to meet the expectations of parents, administrators, the local board. Teachers are caught in the middle. There is no appreciation from the parents, the community.

Another frustrated elementary teacher said:

Parents here are not supportive in any way. They seldom give teachers praise, and they try to run the school. They will not get involved with the whole school, they are concerned only about their child. They immediately run to the building administration when a problem occurs. . . . Central administration . . . immediately sides with the parents.

Teachers expressed frustration in particular about the perceived lack of support in dealing with students. "The principal tries to be fair-minded about serious disciplinary incidents . . . but there is never any support from downtown," observed one teacher. A middle school math teacher summed up feelings of teachers in her district when she said:

The number one problem is discipline, the number two problem is discipline, and the number three problem is discipline; downtown doesn't support discipline at the building level.

A perception of lack of support surfaced in other areas. Teachers complained about how long it took to process simple paperwork. They saw the systems as big, impersonal and unresponsive to their needs. For example, teachers and administrators in all five districts described how long it took to get basic maintenance and repairs

done. This particularly was a problem in two districts. People knew that maintenance was underfunded, but the lack of response was still annoying. "The bureaucracy is unreal; it takes many requests," commented one teacher.

Part of the problem appears to be poor communication. Building level staff did not perceive themselves as having much input into district policy decisions or even having access to district officials. Said one frustrated teacher: "Those clowns never come to our schools, so they have no understanding of the problems we face." Another explained that "there are no communication channels between teachers and the central office, no avenues to discuss practice." One teacher observed that "It's downtown and politics; I have feelings of hopelessness when I have no say."

"It's downtown and politics; I have feelings of hopelessness when I have no say."

In two districts, teachers and building administrators in several schools complained of inequities in the distribution of resources and opportunities across schools. They said that what a school received depended upon the principal's clout and ability to manipulate the bureaucracy. Examples of the frustration:

The district doesn't recognize the inequities in the system; they create showpieces and then point to their success.

It depends on the principal's clout with downtown; our principal doesn't have it because he has other priorities.

The 'silk stocking' schools get better teachers, better students.

Principals who have direct contact with central office administrators and school board members receive more than others.

Finally, teachers questioned the legitimacy of some districts' initiatives. Changes came and went, quickly. "They [the central office staff] read an article, whip out an acronym, and off we go," said one teacher. "The board is constantly changing its priorities and the superintendent follows their whims," commented another. And "Just when you are used to it, they change it again; there is a lack of direction and stability." Teachers expressed support,

however, for changes affecting their work environment positively, such as policies to reduce class size or the use of school-based mentors and school-based inservice training programs. They were not opposed to change per se but wanted to have a voice in shaping it and wanted to understand the rationale underlying it.

These perceptions of lack of support, inequities, and lack of direction may not accurately describe policies in the five districts, but they are an accurate reflection of

District Role

Districts typically exercise enormous influence on school conditions by:

- setting priorities for school construction, renovation, and maintenance;
- defining patterns of resource and time allocations;
- selecting and assigning staff;
- determining the quantity, quality, and fit of instructional materials;
- negotiating teacher workload and responsibilities;
- defining the amount of authority they give to principals and the degree of latitude they give teachers with curriculum;
- creating the accountability mechanisms, such as testing, that are used;
- setting the tone for the organization and shaping the expectations and work norms of their staff;
- providing time and structures for staff to work together;
- providing the time and the funds for professional development;
- allowing opportunities for staff to shape district and school policies;
- designing the recognition and rewards given to teachers;
- developing student attendance areas; and
- defining the criteria for student success or failure with promotion standards, attendance requirements, disciplinary codes, and local graduation requirements.

how many urban teachers feel. The systems are large, and the teachers feel isolated, ignored, and powerless to influence the system-wide decisions that affect their work.

Top Down Improvement Initiatives

Recent improvement initiatives in many urban districts negatively affect teacher working conditions. Their general intent is increased central office control over instruction and tighter coupling between the classroom and the district. At least three of the five districts examined in this study have undertaken such policy changes in supervision, curriculum development, and monitoring of curriculum.

The underlying assumption appears to be that teachers are not doing an adequate job and need tighter supervision and accountability to raise their level of effort, keep them on track, and improve coordination. This search for tighter coupling often results in new policies and improvement programs designed in the district office with little, if any, teacher input, and implemented in a top-down fashion.

Considering the pressure on district leaders to raise test scores, certain top-down policies are understandable, particularly if local policymakers believe such approaches will produce quick gains in achievement and hold off public criticism. But such gains may be short-lived and the unanticipated consequences costly. Tighter coupling to achieve effective schools may simply produce increased bureaucratization and a higher level of mediocrity.

The data from the IEL study suggest that increased uniformity combined with stricter controls over teacher work may lower morale, level of effort, and professionalism among the teaching staff. Stronger accountability measures without compensating steps to enhance teacher discretion and participation may raise the levels of conflict among teachers and administrators and lead to a "work-to-rule" attitude. The press toward efficiency is not necessarily bad; it may even be essential in some districts, but it is unlikely to build a foundation for long-term improvements unless accompanied by other measures that produce and protect strong, professional cultures in the schools.

The underlying assumption appears to be that teachers are not doing an adequate job and need tighter supervision and accountability to raise their level of effort, keep them on track, and improve coordination.

An Alternative View

There are alternatives. Districts can take steps to help building leaders develop school cultures that promote and support goal consensus, cooperation, achievement orientation, problem-solving, and high discretionary effort among their staffs. In this view, people and the resources they bring to their jobs are the major assets of a good school. Good school managers, then, are those who create conditions under which people perform at their best.

... the role of the district shifts from control to the encouragement, support and nurturing of desired work cultures in schools ...

Three of the districts studied have initiated changes that increase teacher influence over decisions and strengthen professional cultures in the schools. One is a strong initiative designed to restructure the schools, the other two are more limited efforts that are highly dependent on the style of leadership in the building. Nevertheless, all three districts, recognize that long term improvement depends upon altering the working conditions and the roles of teachers.

From this perspective, the role of the district shifts from control to the encouragement, support and nurturing of desired work cultures in schools and to the recruitment and development of the talent needed for improvement. Emphasis is placed on encouraging school level responsibility rather than on gaining greater control and uniformity. School staffs are asked to identify and clarify school problems, develop and implement plans, make decisions about assignment of resources, and plan staff development activities.

The district's role in this approach is to provide direction and resources. These include moral support, incentives for participation, time, funds, and technical assistance. The district, of course, continues to set the parameters within which school-based improvement occurs by setting overall goals, defining indicators of quality, reviewing plans, and monitoring implementation. District leaders have both the authority and the responsibility to create the conditions for optimal school effectiveness. The issue facing them is how best to do this.

District Improvement Initiatives

Like most urban school districts, severe fiscal constraints hampered the efforts of the five districts studied

by IEL to improve the quality of their programs. The severity varied across the districts.

Nevertheless, all of the districts had tried to improve the quality of their schools. They had developed new policies and programs and, in some instances, made deliberate efforts to alter the working conditions of teachers. Examples of these initiatives are described below.

Class Size Reduction

Three of the districts had reduced class sizes for the early grades. In one case, the reduction was for pre-K and kindergarten only; in the other two, it was for first and second grades. In both cases, the districts reduced the average class to 20 or 21 students. Two of the districts had adopted specific formulas for the allocation of para-professionals to assist with large classes.

These efforts were appreciated by teachers in the elementary schools, but secondary teachers felt the reductions had been made at the expense of their workload. Actually, student loads were lower in the secondary schools, but there were enormous inequities within the secondary schools, leaving some teachers with large numbers of students.

Control of Curriculum

None of the five districts was happy with their management of curriculum. Two districts were moving to increase teacher involvement in curriculum development and decentralize curriculum management, after an earlier attempt to centralize control. One district was moving in exactly the opposite direction. None seemed to have found the balance between accountability and teacher commitment and ownership that they sought.

Nor were the districts pleased with their procedures for monitoring curriculum implementation. District officials generally felt teachers had too much discretion over what was taught. Three districts were relying heavily on local tests of basic competencies to ensure some uniformity, and one was moving in that direction. The development of these tests was seen as one way of relaxing reliance on specific curricular guidelines.

None seemed to have found the balance between accountability and teacher commitment and ownership that they sought.

Improving Staff Collegiality

Leaders in all districts expressed concern about improving staff collegiality in their schools, but only two had taken any action. One district was moving rapidly toward the adoption of school-site management, and the other had introduced a packaged "effective schools" program which purported to strengthen collegiality. None of the districts, however, had been able to address the fundamental obstacle to strengthening collegiality, lack of time, because of their fiscal problems.

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Supervisor of Instruction

All districts had revised their approach to supervision within the past two years. Four of them had developed new instruments and were training administrators to do clinical supervision, but implementation was uneven and obstructed by lack of time and too much paperwork. One district was implementing a mentoring system using teachers to help others having difficulty.

Professional Development

All districts had taken steps to improve the amount and quality of staff development available to teachers, but, again, they had moved in different directions. One decentralized some responsibility and funding for staff development after a decade of strong centralization of training programs in a district academy. Two districts recently had opened academies, as well as three teacher centers, two of which were union initiatives. Two districts had been able to negotiate more non-contact days and increase the time available for inservice training.

Only one district provided management development programs for principals. Two districts were hoping to participate in academies for principals being opened in their area. In the two remaining districts, administrators had only sporadic access to professional development.

School Management and Teacher Influence on Decisions

In two districts, the administration and the union leadership had been discussing school-site management with strong teacher involvement in decisionmaking. Both of

these districts had some experience, though not always successful, with participatory mechanisms in the schools. One effort was about to be implemented although the details were not clear, while the future of the other initiative was in doubt due to growing tensions over contract negotiations and teacher concerns about salaries. In a third, an “effective schools” program provided some opportunity for teacher input into setting goals and priorities and development of building plans, but no commitment had been made to permanent structures for teacher participation. The other two districts had not addressed the issue.

Three of the districts were engaged in some collaborative planning and decisionmaking with union leaders at the district level.

Three of the districts were engaged in some collaborative planning and decisionmaking with union leaders at the district level. These efforts appeared to be fragile but had produced some significant successes: adoption of school-site management and a mentoring program in one case, and class size reduction in another.

Teacher Recognition and Respect for Teaching

Only one district was really addressing the issue of rewards and incentives for teachers. It had adopted a new career ladder model that offered professional advancement for teachers. The others had addressed the issue only in a token manner.

Possibilities of Improvement

The opinions of leaders in the districts ranged from extremely optimistic to quite pessimistic about the possibilities of improving conditions for teachers and school effectiveness in the next few years. In fact, they were about equally divided in all districts except one. Optimism reigned in the one district undertaking radical reforms. The pessimism was based on forecasts of fiscal constraint, the optimism on the hope that reforms being put in place would work without additional resources.

Summary

Teachers identified a number of workplace problems that required district action. However, they expressed little confidence in the ability of the districts to address and resolve school problems. They felt they were not selected and had little input into district deliberations.

They complained about lack of support from district officials. At the same time, district officials were undertaking initiatives to address some of the issues such as class size and teacher participation in decisionmaking.

District officials tended to identify issues with fiscal implications, such as facilities and salaries, as the major problems confronting them, whereas teachers identified issues such as discipline, availability of preparation time and the quality of school leadership. District size and decisionmaking structure have an impact in these districts, as teachers feel isolated and at great distance from the central office. Even where districts had initiatives underway to change conditions, teachers perceived that the changes were top-down, constantly changing, and not designed to assist them at the school level.



**What is the impact of
working conditions on
teachers?**

// | compare this to a business office. Why doesn't the community recognize us as a profession and see our shortages of supplies and pay? **//**

10

THE EFFECTS OF WORKING CONDITIONS ON TEACHERS: THE CRITICAL MASS

What impact do working conditions have on teachers or on schools? Do they affect teacher attitudes and behaviors? Are some conditions more critical to teacher behavior than others? Do these conditions influence the quality of instruction and/or the quantity of services provided to students?

The IEL data suggest some answers to these questions. They provide a foundation for the development of some strong hypotheses about how working conditions affect teachers and, consequently, students and overall school effectiveness.

Previous research linked working conditions in schools and teacher perceptions of their working conditions to their attitudes and behaviors in the classroom. According to the research, the most vital resources in effective schools were the effort, commitment, and involvement of their teaching staffs and leaders.

Our data on teacher attitudes and behavior confirm these findings. Teachers interviewed felt the working conditions in their schools had significant effects, positive and negative, on their colleagues. The most frequently

TABLE 10:1

TEACHER BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES POSITIVELY AFFECTED BY WORKING CONDITIONS						
Level of School	Teacher Attendance	Level of Effort	Classroom Efficacy	Sense of Community	Morale	Job Satisfaction
Elementary (N = 11)	7	7	4	7	4	3
Middle (N = 10)	3	2	3	7	2	2
High (N = 10)	1	2	2	5	2	3
(N = 31)	11	11	9	19	8	8

cited negative effects were absenteeism, reduced levels of efforts, lowered effectiveness in the classroom, low morale, and reduced job satisfaction. The most commonly mentioned positive effects were on attendance, level of effort and a sense of community. Tables 10:1 and 10:2 show these effects by school level.

TABLE 10:2

TEACHER BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY WORKING CONDITIONS						
Level of School	Teacher Attendance	Level of Effort	Classroom Efficacy	Sense of Community	Morale	Job Satisfaction
Elementary (N = 11)	3	0	4	1	3	3
Middle (N = 10)	2	6	4	0	6	5
High (N = 10)	5	5	5	0	5	5
(N = 31)	10	11	13	1	14	13

Teacher Attendance

In 11 of the 31 schools, working conditions had positive effects on the attendance of the teaching staff. Seven of these were elementary schools. Teachers in an additional 10 schools reported that working conditions had little or no effect on staff attendance. However, respondents reported negative effects on attendance in the remaining 10 schools. In the majority of schools, teachers reported that attendance was good and that few teachers used the maximum number of sick days. The answers about staff attendance are consistent with the statistics provided by the districts. Actual staff attendance rates ranged from 85 percent to 98 percent. Schools perceived as having no problems generally had 96 percent staff attendance or better. In those schools with staff absenteeism rates higher than 5 percent, respondents generally perceived attendance to be negatively affected by working conditions.

Schools perceived as having problems generally had 96 percent staff attendance or better.

The reasons most frequently cited for low absenteeism among teachers were positive relations with students, strong collegiality among the staff, good school physical conditions, and good leadership. As one teacher said,

"You want to come here each day because of the students, rapport among staff, and positive principal attitude." The opposite was true in schools where teachers felt the need to take "mental health days" due to stress and fatigue. Absenteeism was related to stress caused by poor discipline, overcrowding, heavy workloads, lack of administrative support, or poor physical conditions in the school. As one teacher said, "Every now and then days are taken just for rest."

Effort Level

Teachers' levels of effort were negatively affected in 11 of the schools. None of these were elementary schools, so school level and organization, and possibly the age and attitudes of the students, again seemed to be significant factors. The same factors that affected attendance affected level of effort. In addition, teachers frequently said their efforts were taken for granted. "Some see no reason to work hard; it doesn't matter and no one appreciates it," said one teacher.

Responses in the 11 schools in which teachers said they were motivated to work harder suggest that students often were the major motivating factor in maintaining high levels of effort in spite of other working conditions issues. As one principal stated, "The teachers are professionals and give 110 percent. They want the children to do better." One teacher shared, "There are times when you want to say the heck with it. Then a little shining light emerges, and you think maybe things are alright after all."

"There are times when you want to say the heck with it. Then a little shining light emerges, and you think maybe things are alright after all."

The assessments of overall staff effort by the teachers and administrators were consistent with the data on hours of extra work reported by individual respondents in the elementary schools and middle schools. That is, if the respondents in a school generally reported high levels of extra effort, they also thought others were working hard, too. Or conversely, if individuals reported relatively low levels of discretionary effort, they also reported negative effects from the working conditions.

However, high school teachers generally reported they put in more time and effort than their colleagues. They often were critical of others for no longer giving their best effort because of the working conditions in the building.

Effectiveness in the Classroom

The respondents were very clear about the impact of conditions on teachers' feelings of effectiveness in the classroom. The majority of those interviewed in 13 schools felt the classroom effectiveness of the staff was affected negatively by conditions in their school.

Staff of an additional nine schools reported that working conditions, no matter how inadequate, had little or no impact on their effectiveness. They shut their doors and did their jobs. There were no significant differences across the levels of schools. One teacher's comment summarizes many: "This is a very high-stress job. I feel wiped out, not burned out. Exhausted. But every 30 minutes I have to present the most dynamic lesson possible."

"This is a very high-stress job. I feel wiped out, not burned out."

Teachers singled out different aspects of working conditions as lowering their effectiveness, but the major problems were lack of resources, poor physical conditions, large class sizes, and lack of supportive principal leadership. As the union president in one district stated, "The most important issues facing teachers are reduction in class size, planning time, physical plants, and sufficient materials. Morale is low. No salary raises and teachers are locked out of decisionmaking at the school level. Most teachers feel unable to be effective." A teacher commented: "I compare this to business offices. Why doesn't the community recognize us as a profession and see our shortages of supplies and pay."

Sense of Belonging

The staff of only one school reported negative effects on the sense of community among the staff. At first, this appears to contradict other data suggesting that collegiality, cooperation, and communication were less than adequate in many schools. However, respondents understood the question to refer to a sense of belonging in an informal, social sense. They distinguished this from the patterns and opportunities for professional communication and collegiality within a school. In addition, while respondents seemed quite willing to criticize the work effort, attitudes, and effectiveness of their colleagues, they were seldom willing to suggest the school was anything but one large happy family. One teacher stated, "When I get tired, I'm going to quit. If I didn't enjoy the job, I wouldn't be here."

Morale

Yet in 14 of the 31 schools teachers felt working conditions had negative effects on teachers' morale. This was especially true at the high school level where working conditions at 5 of the 10 schools were reported to have negative effects on morale. Of all the teacher attitudes, morale appears to be the one most affected by working conditions and the one teachers are most willing to admit. As one superintendent said:

Working conditions affect teacher morale mainly. There has been no significant pay raise in eight years; salaries were just getting competitive but now are falling behind. The district does not have the resources to give teachers the support services needed to deal with student problems. Most teachers probably feel they are able to be effective only due to the fact that they can close the door and are in an isolated island.

One principal said:

We're all very strapped and strained in this school. We bust our butts all day and go home feeling we're barely doing an adequate job. The frustration builds up constantly—the higher the standards, the worse the strain.

Lack of building leadership contributed to low morale. "We do have a morale problem due to lack of support at every administrative level. Faculty in general feel the principal is not a strong leader," said one teacher. "The hardest thing for me to cope with is the morale of the people I work with. The morale problem stems from the leadership in the building—from them [administrators] not communicating with each other and them [administrators] not communicating with the faculty," said another.

In at least three of the districts, the primary culprits causing low morale were not school-level factors. One teacher said morale was not affected in the classroom with students, "but it's downtown policies, feelings of hopelessness when I can't control and have no say."

In schools where morale was positive, respondents pointed to the staff and administrators as making the critical difference. "Morale is good here in spite of every-
thing. We have a fair principal, participation in decisions,

"Things don't work, the facilities are inadequate, the students come from diverse neighborhoods. Yet we seem to overcome the problems and succeed."

and a nice climate," said one teacher. Another elaborated: "Morale is good, this is a strange school. Things don't work, the facilities are inadequate, the students come from diverse neighborhoods. Yet we seem to overcome the problems and succeed. The school works in spite of the difficulties due to the staff." The IEL data show that such schools are the exception rather than the norm; generally higher morale was associated with both positive leadership and teaching climates and good physical working conditions.

Job Satisfaction

The majorities of the staffs in 13 of the 31 schools reported their job satisfaction adversely affected by working conditions in the schools. There were no differences among the school levels. Effects on overall job satisfaction did not correlate highly with responses concerning morale or classroom effectiveness. "I don't really think of myself as a professional, no respect or money. If it were not for the kids, I would not do it at all," explained one teacher.

To check the impact of these conditions across the districts, we compared data on teacher perceptions of conditions and teacher attitudes/behavior from pairs of schools serving the same grade levels in each district. Fourteen of the 15 pairs comprised schools whose working conditions, as perceived by their staffs, differed. We found strong support for the contention that working conditions in schools affect teachers' attitudes and behaviors. In 12 sets of paired schools the data show similar positive correlations between working conditions and reported teacher attitudes and behaviors. In these cases, better working conditions appear to be consistently associated with more positive attitudes, higher levels of work effort, and a greater sense of efficacy. In the other two cases, the comparisons showed that better conditions were *not* associated with more positive teacher attitudes and behaviors. The full analysis of these pairs can be found in Appendix 4.

The "Best" and "Worst" Work Sites

Data on 10 dimensions of working conditions in the 31 schools were compiled into an index and the schools were then ranked from best to worst.

The top five schools are described in Table 10:3. Coincidentally, there was at least one school from four of the five districts. Perhaps not so coincidentally, three of the five were elementary schools. Elementary schools are smaller and have a less differentiated workforce, higher goal consensus, and more frequent contact between teachers and administrators. The schools varied widely in the social and ethnic backgrounds of their students and in the size of their enrollments, but all schools enrolled more than 60 percent minority students.

When specific working conditions were examined, these five schools had some similarities. All were rated as adequate or better by the staff interviewed on four dimensions: physical plant, collegiality, participation in decisionmaking, and administrative leadership. Four of the five had similar positive ratings on teacher influence over curriculum and instruction. On the other six dimensions of the quality of school worklife, however, there was considerable variation.

When the total sample of schools was ranked in terms of the staff's perceptions of teacher attitudes and behavior, the five schools described in Table 10:3 were among those with the most positive ratings.

Three of the five schools described in the table had team teaching and three had councils for faculty participation in decision making. When all schools were ranked by staff perceptions of teacher attitudes and behavior, five of the top ten schools had teaming and seven of the schools had permanent councils.

The schools perceived as having the worst overall working conditions, using the dimensions studied by IEL, were examined similarly. The five lowest rated schools are described in Table 10:4. These schools were characterized by poor resources, heavy workloads, low collegiality, poor supervision, low teacher influence over school decisions, low rewards, and poor leadership.

When all schools were ranked by staff perceptions of teacher attitudes and behavior, five of the top ten schools had teaming and seven of the schools had permanent councils.

TABLE 10:3

WORKING CONDITIONS IN HIGHEST RATED SCHOOLS					
Dimension	Schools				
	Elementary	Middle	Elementary	Elementary	High School
Physical Conditions	Good plant Safe, clean, school. Priority of principal.	Good plant A/C, clean. Pride in condition.	Good plant clean, pride in school. Priority of principal.	Good plant Clean, safe, but crowded. Lacks meeting space.	New plant Attractive and clean. Cooperation to keep it up.
Resources	Adequate staff. No problems w/ supplies.	Adequate staff. No problems w/ supplies	Inadequate staff, need specialists/ counselor. Supplies rationed.	Inadequate staff, need counselor/ AP. Need nurse. Short on supplies.	Well-equipped, needs remedial staff.
Workload	Classes 28 + High level of extra effort. No duties.	Classes 27 + Variable extra effort. Minor duties.	Classes 25 High extra effort, duties.	Classes 20-25 High effort. Duties.	Classes 25-30. High extra effort. Duties.
Students	800 +	1200 +	300	300	1900
% Minority	99%	90%	60%	65%	99%
% Poor	45%	85%	50%	30%	50%
Comments	Discipline good. Good parent involvement. Mostly positive comments about students. Absenteeism a problem.	Minor concern with discipline. Mostly positive comments about students. Fair parent involvement Low absenteeism.	Discipline good. Little parent involvement. Largely positive comments about students. Low absenteeism.	Minor concern with discipline. Low parent involvement. Mixed comments about students Good attendance.	Discipline good. Low parent involvement. Largely positive comments about students. Attendance problems.
Classroom Influence	High level of autonomy. No real monitoring.	Moderate autonomy. Lessons reviewed	High level of autonomy Tests act as monitors.	Moderate autonomy, lesson plan review	High level of autonomy No real monitoring.

The schools reporting the most negative effects on teacher attitudes and behavior also were examined. The most consistent effects were on teacher effort, classroom effectiveness, morale, and job satisfaction—adversely impacted the schools at the bottom of the ranking. In addition, the five schools perceived as having the worst overall conditions were among those having the most negative effects on teacher attitudes and behavior.

TABLE 10:3, continued

Dimension	Schools				
	Elementary	Middle	Elementary	Elementary	High School
Collegial Relations	Good, but teachers create the opportunities.	Teaming. Common time to plan.	Adequate. Grade level meetings and shared in-service.	Good, but no time to meet.	Adequate. Active committees and department.
Supervision	Frequent observation. Assistance provided. Too much paperwork.	Process followed, pro forma. Too much paperwork. Lack of time.	Clinical approach. Time a problem, but process seen as helpful.	Frequent observation. Process seen as helpful. Paperwork a problem.	Process followed, seen as pro forma.
Professional Development	Principal encourages it. Some activity at school staff meetings.	School level program, but planned by the principal.	School level program with teacher input. Use district resources.	Use district programs and principal plans school activity.	Use district programs. No school activity. Little teacher input.
School Influence	Principal seeks input. Committees are active. High level of influence.	Teams are major vehicle. Staff has moderate influence.	Staff council and staff meetings are effective. Moderate influence.	Largely informal. Principal initiates. Moderate influence.	Departments and committees provide vehicle. Moderate influence.
Rewards and Recognition	Adequate, informal rewards used well.	Adequate. Informal appreciation	Inadequate. Not much formal but some informal recognition.	Inadequate. No formal and weak informal recognition.	Inadequate. Some informal recognition.
Administrative Leadership	Well-liked. Handpicked staff, openly involves staff. Focus on collegial relations.	Strong, even autocratic. Takes input and gets extra resources for the school.	Energetic, supportive clinician. Respected. Democratic. Out of the school a lot.	Well-liked. Handpicked staff. Open, involves staff. Good clinician.	Visible, new principal. Encourages participation. Brings in resources.

Ten schools in which staff reported the most negative effects had four common characteristics: poor resources, low collegiality, low rewards, and low levels of teacher influence on school decisions. Six of the 10 had poor leadership; in three of the other four cases, the principals were new to the school and were rated as adequate by their staffs. Characteristics of the schools with the lowest combined ranking are described in Table 10:4.

TABLE 10:4

Dimensions	Schools				
	Middle	Elementary	Middle	Middle	High School
Physical Conditions	Inadequate. Lack of classroom space. Not clean, in poor repair. Security problems.	Adequate. Generally well-kept. Lack of meeting space.	Inadequate. Dirty and crowded. Many repairs needed. Some vandalism.	Adequate. Old, but well-kept. Security a problem.	Inadequate. Unclean, in poor repair. Litter. Some vandalism. Security a problem.
Resources	Inadequate staff. Need teachers & counselors. Lack substitutes, supplies & equipment	Inadequate staff. Need counselors & specialists. Lack supplies.	Inadequate staff. Need teachers & specialists. Lack supplies.	Inadequate staff. Need counselors and elective staff. Lack supplies & equipment	Inadequate staff. Need counselors and teachers. Lack supplies & equipment.
Workload	Classes 30+. Low level of extra effort. Duties.	Classes 27+. Aver. level of effort. No duties.	Classes 30+. High level of effort. Light duties.	Classes 28+. Low level of extra effort. Duties.	Classes 25. Low level of extra effort. Light duties.
Students					
Number	550	550	1200	350	600
%Minority	99%	60%	70%	99%	99%
%Poor	90%	45%	80%	45%	70%
Comments	Poor discipline, low parent involvement. Absenteeism high.	Serious discipline problems, low parent involvement. Attendance fair.	Some discipline problems, low parent involvement. Absenteeism high.	Serious discipline problems, low parent involvement. Absenteeism high.	Discipline problems, low parent involvement. Absenteeism high.
Classroom Influence	Low autonomy. Tight review of lesson plans	Low autonomy. Pacing system and tests	Low autonomy. Pacing system and tests.	Average. Review of lesson plans.	High. No regular monitoring.

TABLE 10:4, continued

Dimensions	Schools				
	Middle	Elementary	Middle	Middle	High School
Collegial Relations	Inadequate, no time and friction among the staff. Low cooperation.	Inadequate, no time and few meetings. Split between old and new staff. Low cooperation.	Inadequate, split administration. Low cooperation.	Inadequate, no time and few meetings. Low cooperation.	Inadequate, varies with departments. Few meetings and little contact across departments.
Supervision	Compliance w/ process, but not seen as helpful.	Compliance, but seen as pro forma. Little value.	Compliance, but seen as pro forma. Little value.	Compliance, minimal done.	Compliance, seen as helpful to new staff.
Professional Development	Inadequate, limited to 2 district workshops per year. No school activities. No staff input.	Adequate, school & district programs. Staff input.	Adequate, school & district programs. Staff input.	Inadequate, district program afterschool, no school activity. No staff input.	Inadequate, limited to 2 district workshops per year. No school activities, no staff input.
School Influence	Low staff influence, committees inactive.	Low staff influence, faculty divided & principal doesn't seek input.	Some have influence through committees. Principal cooperates w/ older staff.	Low staff influence. Principal makes all decisions.	Low staff influence on school, some input in some departments.
Rewards and Recognition	Few informal and no formal rewards or recognition. No positive feedback.	Few informal and no formal rewards or recognition. No positive feedback.	Few informal and no formal rewards or recognition. No positive feedback.	Few informal and no formal rewards or recognition. No positive feedback.	Few informal and no formal rewards or recognition. No positive feedback.
Administrative Leadership	Inaccessible principal, seen as incompetent & autocratic. Not active in program. Weak on discipline.	Weak and incompetent principal. Seen as vindictive & dishonest. Not involved in program. Weak on discipline.	Autocratic principal, keeps order but has little involvement in program.	Inaccessible autocratic principal. Seen as incompetent, overbearing. Weak on discipline.	Weak leader, vindictive. Little involvement in program. Weak on discipline.

Summary

The data support the hypothesis that working conditions affect teacher attitudes and behavior, particularly their level of effort, attendance, sense of efficacy in the classroom, morale, and job satisfaction. The data also suggest that some dimensions of working conditions have more effect than others on teachers. If a school has good physical working conditions, high levels of teacher influence, good leadership, and high levels of collegiality, other deficiencies, while still important, may not have serious negative effects on the staff. Under such conditions, teachers feel more positive about their work and more effective in their classrooms, make extra efforts, and have higher morale and higher attendance. In the worst schools, none of the critical conditions were present and resources were terribly inadequate. Under such conditions, teachers became frustrated and discouraged. Their morale sank to low levels and their work effort and attendance were affected. They felt they were ineffective in their classrooms as a consequence of conditions in the schools.

In between these extremes were schools with a mix of strengths and weaknesses. Some of them had good leadership but terrible resource deficiencies, had extremely difficult student populations, or lacked good collegial relations due to conflicts among the staff. Others had high levels of collegiality and teacher influence, but lacked good leadership or had terrible physical working conditions. The patterns varied. The point is that if they did not have the entire gestalt of positive factors, teachers found them to be inadequate workplaces, and their attitudes and behaviors were affected accordingly. In these schools, teachers coped but were unable or unwilling to give their best efforts.

These data suggest several levels of conditions. Resource adequacy and at least some other positive factors are necessary to keep a school functioning. However, to make a school function well, a combination of factors is required.



Do working conditions have meaning for school leaders?

“Good physical working conditions, high levels of collegiality, high levels of teacher influence on school decisions, high levels of teacher control over instruction and strong, supportive leadership were consistently found in the schools most highly rated by teachers.”

The findings from *Working in Urban Schools* paint a bleak picture of the conditions of urban teaching. These findings are consistent with national and state teacher surveys, but urban conditions are worse. (See Appendix 1 for comparisons.) If the general findings are compared to the ideal model emanating from the workplace reform and the effective schools research, it is clear that these urban schools have a long way to go. Unsupportive leadership, lack of respect, low participation in policymaking, limited opportunities for collegiality, lack of recognition and inadequate professional development opportunities seem to be the norms of teaching rather than the exceptions. In urban areas, however, these issues take on a different and debilitating scale given the resource problems, the bureaucracy, and the special needs of students.

Two factors of working conditions—supervision and professional development—did not appear consistently related to the teachers' assessments of their schools or to the data on teacher attitudes and behavior. This may be because teachers generally felt that both supervision and staff development were weak or irrelevant, and that other opportunities for professional growth were assessed as mediocre at best. With the remainder of the conditions, better conditions had more positive impact on teachers' behaviors and on their attitudes, and vice versa.

The Effects of the Good Workplace

The common characteristics of the schools receiving the most positive comments were:

- Strong, supportive principal leadership
- Good physical working conditions
- High levels of staff collegiality
- High levels of teacher influence on school decisions
- High levels of teacher control over curriculum and instruction

These working conditions were positively related to higher levels of teacher attendance, higher levels of dis-

In urban areas, however, these issues take on a different and debilitating scale given the resource problems, the bureaucracy, and the special needs of students.

cretionary effort, higher morale, and a greater sense of efficacy in the classroom.

Furthermore, these characteristics appeared as a gestalt. Schools with two or three of the characteristics didn't have as high ratings as those with all five characteristics. For example, schools with high levels of collegiality and teacher control over curriculum still had negative impacts on teacher morale because of the lack of leadership, or the lack of space, poor physical conditions and inadequate maintenance in the buildings.

Conversely, the worst sites were consistently characterized by:

- Inadequate staff and materials
- Low collegiality
- Low levels of teacher influence on school decisions
- Low rewards

Furthermore, six of the 10 schools in this category had poor leadership as well, and the principals were new to the remaining four schools.

What is clear once again, however, is the role that resources play in establishing minimally acceptable conditions. The schools rated "best" in the study were not necessarily resource-rich. However, they had decent physical working conditions (enough space, reasonable maintenance and physical surroundings), teachers had time for collegial relationships with their peers, they were involved in decisionmaking, and they felt that the administrative leadership in the building respected them and set the tone for teaching and learning.

Having adequate resources helped schools in the middle compensate for other problems. While teachers described concerns, these concerns did not seriously affect their behavior or morale. All schools at the bottom, however, were resource poor, and their lack of resources—staff, materials, equipment, funds—had a definite impact on the staff behavior and morale. Many of the teachers in these schools were simply going through the motions. They showed up, they taught their classes. They did not put in much extra effort. Most of them did not expect to be successful given the conditions under which they were working. In the four schools where there were new administrative leaders, the schools could be on the way back up to acceptable functioning. But in the remaining schools in which there were poor working

... schools with high levels of collegiality and teacher control over curriculum still had negative impacts on teacher morale because of the lack of leadership, or the lack of space, poor physical conditions and inadequate maintenance in the buildings.

conditions, there were few factors that made the buildings good for teachers, and consequently, for students.

Administrative leadership is key to how building conditions, policies and practices affect teachers. For all of the most highly rated schools, strong administrative leadership was an important factor. And, in several cases of schools in the middle grouping, good administrative leadership had a mediating influence on particularly poor conditions, such as the lack of resources and materials or poor physical conditions. The leaders in these schools were not always democratic, and not always instructionally strong, but the buildings operated efficiently.

These data suggest there are minimum conditions below which teacher morale and effort suffer and school conditions deteriorate. These minimums include tolerable school leadership, sufficient staff and materials to keep the school operating day-to-day and adequate facilities. Under these conditions, teachers will cope with large classes, accept autocratic management or tolerate isolation from their colleagues. To raise morale and effort levels, however, schools must have strong, visionary leadership, provide opportunities for collegial interaction, provide teachers influence over policy and some control over curricula, and have adequate and attractive work space.

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Recent Reforms and Working Conditions

The reform recommendations in the Carnegie Forum's report, *A Nation Prepared*, and the National Governors' Association's report, *Time for Results*, and the experiments they have stimulated are responsive to the desires of teachers for increased participation in decisionmaking, more frequent interaction with their colleagues, more respect and support. They also are dependent upon changes in structure and policy in public schools that will take time to implement.

The message of the IEL report in this context is several-fold. **First, the findings of *Working in Urban Schools* confirm the importance of reform recommendations for a professional and creative work environment.** The conditions in schools rated highly in our study all include broad involvement in decisionmaking, collegial work environment and control over classroom activity. Thus, these long term changes affecting

... there are important interim changes that will affect the day-to-day working lives of teachers that can be made by urban leaders without major restructuring.

teacher roles, professionalism and school decisionmaking are as important for urban schools as any others.

Second, there are important interim changes that will affect the day-to-day working lives of teachers that can be made by urban leaders without major restructuring. These changes include altering resources and physical environment, as well as more conventional methods of involving teachers in decisionmaking. For example, elected school councils, or ways to engage teachers in instructional tasks with their peers, such as team teaching and planning, have been tried and implemented in schools in the past. They work, and, as is certainly the case in team teaching, they have clear benefits for students. These changes can be made at the building level, and they can be enhanced by district policy and resources. They offer an interim and incremental change in urban schooling which, according to our data, would have major positive effects on teacher attitudes and behaviors, and thus, teachers' willingness to commit time and energy to their work. And they can be a starting point for broader, more radical change.

But participatory structures will not work without district support, commitment of resources, and monitoring. A signature of nearly every district initiative was lackluster implementation—on academies, on school councils, on other participatory structures. The existence of participatory structures does not guarantee that teachers will be involved in decisionmaking or work with their peers. These structures did not work in schools where administrative leadership wasn't actually supportive, or where there were actions to sabotage the working structures. Nearly every district had some initiative underway to involve teachers in decisionmaking. But, in many instances, these efforts were not real. That is, no time or resources were committed to implementation by the central office. District officials were preoccupied with budgets, contract negotiations and school politics, and simply did not devote enough attention to these teacher issues. There is a caution here for districts undergoing more radical restructuring. Monitoring time needs to be invested and resources need to be available if changes are to result in more discretion to teachers and principals.

The districts have directed their effort, energy, resources and monitoring time to conformance with

basic skills teaching, testing and pacing programs. These are in place in every district and often produce complaints from teachers that they have little control over what they are teaching, and even how they are teaching it. Given the importance placed on teacher influence over curriculum and instruction in the IEL data, how to allow discretion over what and how to teach while still assuring that all students meet academic goals is a major issue. Clearly, district goals are important and critical to basic minimum academic achievement. But once the schools are in order and student performance is improving, this area may be one where districts need to look for balance—enough discretion to get a teaching staff committed to their work and to ensure that students continue to gain academically. **Again, here the district role in implementation may have to cede some ground once the programs are operating in the interest of providing teachers with more control over what and how to teach.**

Third, nothing is clearer in our study than the fact that resources and the management of resources matter. Making changes in these areas would make the lives of teachers easier, lighten their workloads, and strengthen their commitment to their jobs. These include such basics as enough textbooks and materials, adequate counseling staff and teachers' aides to provide individual attention to needy students, and maintenance procedures that aren't cumbersome and meet the needs of the building.

Urban teachers should not have to choose between salaries and adequate working conditions. Yet many of the schools we visited were resource poor. Poor buildings, too little space, little in the way of building budgets, inadequate textbooks and teaching materials, too few support staff—the list goes on and on.

These factors do matter. They have an impact on teachers and they have an impact on teaching. Some administrative leaders were able to pull their buildings above the limits of their resources because they were visionaries, they fought for their buildings, they found ways to make do. Too, resources were not controlling factors if the physical conditions were good, leadership was good, teachers worked together and had control over what they taught. But the lack of resources creates environments that over time are stressful, difficult to

Administrators can make buildings work for teachers when not much else seems positive.

bear—and that undermine the efforts of energetic administrative and teacher leaders.

Fourth, the roles played by administrative leaders are very important. Administrators can make buildings work for teachers when not much else seems positive. Teachers gave highest ratings to principals and other building leaders who they felt respected them. But they also were supportive of autocratic leaders who performed leadership roles, effectively kept the building in order, and created conditions in which teachers could teach.

Given the critical importance of these leadership roles, more attention needs to be given to the use of performance-based criteria for selection and evaluation of administrative leaders. Urban districts that are not now using assessment centers or performance-based selection processes should consider instituting them, as an investment with a potentially high payoff. Teachers should be involved in the selection process serving as members of selection committees and interviewing candidates. Evaluation of building administrators should include their ability to motivate staff, promote cooperation, and build a strong professional climate.

One point that came to our attention during our visits to the 31 schools was the lack of involvement of teachers in decisionmaking and leadership positions. Particularly in areas close to the classroom and curriculum, teachers' leadership abilities should be tapped to help address many of the critical education issues in urban schools.

Fifth, it is necessary for districts to look at these reforms as a package, not as a piecemeal fix. In all of the schools rated highly in the IEL study, physical conditions, involvement in decisionmaking, control over the classroom and leadership appeared as a package. Trying to "fix" one part of the puzzle won't work. Comprehensive integrated change is necessary.

Finally, it would be hard to miss the message conveyed by the impact of district policy on teacher attitudes and behaviors. Teachers feel great distance from district administrators. They believe central offices do not respect them. They see district policies as quickly changing, often in conflict, and having punitive impact. Given the reported impact on teacher morale, turnover,

absenteeism and loss of effectiveness, district administrators and school board members should take this to heart. The IEL interviews confirm tension and lack of trust between teachers and the district offices, much of it the result of accountability pressures. It will be impossible to make major changes in the way urban schools run without high expectations of the administration, the staff, and the students. Treating teachers as valued and well-educated professionals will be the only way to make these improvements. To do this—as in any other area of employment—we must improve the conditions under which they work.

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APPENDIX 1: IEL FINDINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

There are six surveys which have examined working conditions factors: a national survey, referred to as the Conditions and Resources of Teaching (CART) survey, conducted for the National Education Association (Bacharach, Bauer, and Shedd, 1986); the 1986 Metropolitan Life survey (Harris and Associates), a national survey conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching (Wirthlin Group, 1987); an Eagleton survey of New Jersey teachers (Center for Public Interest Polling, Rutgers, 1986); a survey conducted of California teachers carried out by the Policy Analysis Center for Education (1986); and interviews of North Carolina educators carried out for the Public School Forum of North Carolina (Navran Associates, 1987).

IEL STUDY	CART SURVEY	METROPOLITAN LIFE SURVEY	EAGLETON POLL	PACE SURVEY	CARNEGIE FOUNDATION SURVEY	PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM (NORTH CAROLINA)
Physical Conditions						
Three of the 31 urban schools were judged good and nearly 1/3 rated as inadequate. Teachers seemed resigned to very poor conditions.	—	—	—	—	Majority of urban teachers rated their buildings as below average in cleanliness (51%), heating (54%), and cooling (71%), 46% said the overall physical condition of the school was below average	Disparity in school plant; most school plants were inadequate. Basic maintenance budgets were the first to go when cutting costs.
Space						
Schools were crowded; some teachers in 10 schools did not have classrooms of their own. 16 of 31 schools had serious space problems.	Close to half the teachers reported occasional problems with space.	—	—	—	—	Meeting space a premium, classes taught in temporary buildings. Professionals in schools do not take for granted adequate space and supplies.
Safety						
Most teachers interviewed did not find safety a major issue. Safety problems were reported in only 8 of the 31 schools.	—	—	—	—	54% of the urban teachers rated their schools as below average on security.	—

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IEL STUDY	CART SURVEY	METROPOLITAN LIFE SURVEY	EAGLETON POLL	PAGE SURVEY	CARNEGIE FOUNDATION SURVEY	PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM (NORTH CAROLINA)
Supplies and Materials						
65% of urban schools had shortages of instructional materials.	15% of the teachers had frequent problems with supplies and workbooks.	—	28% of urban teachers had shortages of supplies and materials.	25% reported shortages of supplies and materials.	—	Schools are relying on technologies that are 10 and 20 years old. Most have little access to telephones.
Staff						
27 of the 31 schools reported staff shortages (87%), especially need for counseling staff.						Counseling personnel too limited.
Class Size						
Class size was over 25 in 20 of the 31 schools in the IEL study.	—	68% were dissatisfied with class size. Median size was 25.	32% of urban teachers were dissatisfied with class sizes.	74% of elementary teachers had class sizes more than 25. 26% of secondary teachers faced 150 or more students.	Class sizes large and too few teacher aides.	
Hours						
Teachers reported an average of 13 hours outside of class in elementary schools, 9 hours in middle schools and 17 hours in high schools in the IEL study. Average contract workday was 6.5 for elementary and middle schools; 7 for high schools.	—	—	25% of the teachers reported 20 extra hours or more per week.	50% reported 11 hours or more.	—	Teachers average 50 hours per week, 25 hours of which is in direct student instruction or counseling.— 25% overtime.
Planning Time						
Teachers were dissatisfied with time for in-school planning and paperwork.	48% of teachers had difficulty finding planning time.	—	Lack of planning time and paperwork was the most frequent source of job dissatisfaction, cited by 28% of the teachers.	35% of California teachers reported no scheduled planning time.	—	—

IEL STUDY	CART SURVEY	METROPOLITAN LIFE SURVEY	EAGLETON POLL	PACE SURVEY	CARNEGIE FOUNDATION SURVEY	PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM (NORTH CAROLINA)
Students						
Student discipline and motivation has a major impact on teachers. In schools with good working conditions teachers seldom mentioned students as a problem.	—	—	—	—	53% of urban and 30% of non-urban teachers said disruptive behavior was a problem; 25% said undernourishment was a problem in urban schools compared to 13% elsewhere.	—
Classroom Autonomy						
Teachers in 58% of the schools reported low to moderate control over content, pacing and sequence. Teachers generally reported high control over methods	Teachers had control over instructional methods, and less over content.	—	Only 1 teacher in 20 was dissatisfied about control over what and how to teach.	—	36% of urban teachers said they had no control over selecting textbooks; 29% said no control over course content; and 17% said no control over setting goals for students.	—
Collegial Work						
Opportunities for cooperation were inadequate in 16 of the schools (52%), but were higher in schools where there was team teaching.	—	56% wanted time to observe peers teaching; 61% wanted time to talk to colleagues.	80% of the teachers were satisfied with opportunities for interaction.	Only one in seven teachers reported structured time to work with colleagues.	—	—
Decisionmaking						
Teacher influence was generally low in IEL study, although it was higher in one district because of participatory management.	Teachers reported limited opportunities for involvement except on what textbook selection and how to teach.	Only 50% said they were involved in decisionmaking. 70% wanted more influence.	Only 1 in 7 teachers was happy with level of involvement.	—	—	—

IEL STUDY	CART SURVEY	METROPOLITAN LIFE SURVEY	EAGLETON POLL	FACE SURVEY	CARNEGIE FOUNDATION SURVEY	PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM (NORTH CAROLINA)
Supervision						
Supervision was viewed as helpful in 42% of the schools; weak, annoying and threatening in the other 58%. This is consistent but more harsh than surveys.	27% of teachers reported problems with feedback from administrators more than occasionally.	—	38% felt their last evaluation was unhelpful; 27% helpful.	54% felt the process was fair. Less than half felt they got useful feedback.	—	Evaluation systems are too inflexible.
Professional Development						
Training opportunities were weak and inadequate in 18 schools.	Only 12% rated inservice training as effective.	—	—	—	64% of the teachers said they were not involved in planning staff development programs.	—
Rewards						
Rewards were reported as non-existent in most of the 31 schools.		—	—	—	—	Few tangible rewards to encourage performance.
Leadership						
Teachers in only 9 schools rated administrative leaders as effective. 11 of the schools had ineffective leadership. Leaders who were cited as ineffective were disorganized, bad administrators and ineffective in handling people.	More than 50% of the teachers said they had infrequent contact with administrators and 2/3 said they seldom talked to administrators about educational content or performance.	—	18% of all teachers mentioned problems with administrators, such as lack of administrative support, ineffective school policies and ineffective discipline policies. 29% said administrators were inaccessible.	A majority felt they received too little professional support. 42% cited lack of assistance with parents and students.	54% of urban teachers said administrators were below average in eliminating red tape for teachers and 40% said they were below average in providing support for teachers.	—
Respect						
Lack of respect by parents, students, administrators and community was perceived as a serious problem by teachers.	—	—	11% of teachers cited lack of respect as the most important reason for leaving teaching. More than half felt respect was a problem.	—	—	—

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CONCLUSIONS

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APPENDIX 3: CONDUCTING THE STUDY

The Teacher Working Conditions Project collected descriptive information on teaching conditions in 31 schools in five urban school districts. Collaborating on the project was the Council of the Great City Schools, and members of its Human Resources Subcommittee formed the core of our advisory panel. In addition to developing a rich description of actual conditions in these urban schools, we examined the relationships between district and school policies/practices and teacher efficacy, commitment, morale and job satisfaction.

The Research Questions

The project set out to address five questions about teaching in urban school districts:

- 1) What are the conditions of teachers' work in the selected schools and school districts?
- 2) How do workplace conditions in these urban schools vary and what appears to explain the variations?
- 3) What workplace conditions most affect the morale, job satisfaction, and commitment of teachers in urban districts?
- 4) Are specific district and school policies and practices associated with positive work environments for teachers?
- 5) What implications do these data have for policy changes at the district and school levels?

The Conceptual Framework

The IEL research design is based on research and common sense that tell us that teachers' efforts, commitment and involvement are perhaps the most vital of school resources.

Various studies and national teacher surveys have documented high levels of teacher dissatisfaction, often with disturbing results. For example, only 23 percent of teacher respondents in one national survey, The Condition and Resources of Teaching (CART), indicated they would choose teaching again, if given the choice. Other surveys show that scarcity of materials, lack of funding,

and lack of administrative and parental support contribute to teachers' low regard for their professional role.

The CART survey, sponsored by NEA, identified teacher dissatisfactions with their ability to communicate with building-level administrators. Moreover, teachers only occasionally discussed critical topics such as needed resources, school goals, training needs, and classroom performance with administrators. This lack of interaction contributed to their overall sense of professional isolation.

According to surveys conducted by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) and Metropolitan Life, teachers are more satisfied and more effective when they are permitted to exercise professional judgment and choice in school matters, such as organizational policies, academic and curriculum issues, student discipline problems, and teaching assignments, including teacher selection. Yet only 30 percent of urban teachers appear to have significant decisionmaking authority in academic curriculum matters. Teachers interpret exclusion from decisionmaking as a lack of respect, personally and professionally.

Existing research also links teacher perceptions of their working conditions to their attitudes and behaviors in the classroom. According to Lortie, teachers view their work in terms of their ability to affect student growth and development. It is this sense of impact which brings teachers to commit themselves to the challenges of teaching, and involves them in exercising judgement. If teachers continually experience failure and frustration, the effort they must put in is too "costly" and consequently leads to withdrawal of effort, absenteeism and, ultimately, attrition.

These factors influencing teachers are similar to those identified in the broader organizational literature as the key components in determining a high quality of work life—efficacy, satisfaction, control, belonging, recognition, congruence of values, and level of effort.

The 12 factors listed below were identified for examination in the IEL study:

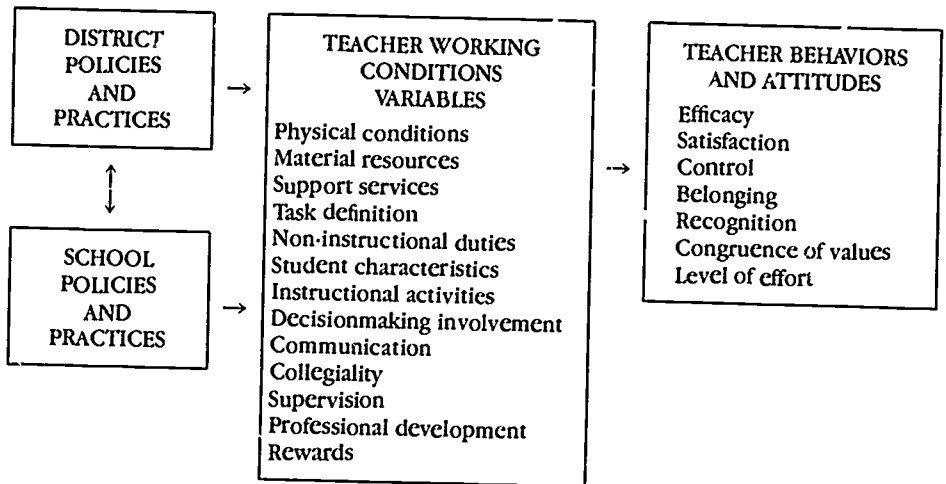
- Condition of physical plant and safety
- Material and human resources
- Task definition and workload

- Student characteristics
- Autonomy/discretion in instruction
- Professional collegiality/cooperation
- Influence and decisionmaking involvement
- Supervision/evaluation
- Rewards/recognition
- Professional development
- Leadership behavior in the schools
- District leadership

These factors and the research design are shown in the Project Framework, Table A3:1.

TABLE A3:1

PROJECT FRAMEWORK



Data were collected from teaching staff and administrators in a sample of schools in each of the five urban districts. These districts were selected to be geographically diverse, to have diverse student characteristics, and to be representative of both major national teacher unions. Most critical of all, however, district leadership was interested in being involved in the study, a necessary condition for our data collection. Presumably, this cooperation may skew results to reflect districts with more positive working conditions. But that is only a guess.

The Districts

The five districts were selected with the cooperation of the Council on the Great City Schools and are members of that organization. They represent different regions of the country and vary in their size, ethnic composition, and resources. The population of the five cities ranged from 250,000 to slightly over one million, and student enrollments varied from slightly over 30,000 to nearly 200,000. The ethnic composition of the cities also varied. Two had black majorities. One had a large Hispanic minority. On average, over 40 percent of their populations were minority in 1980. However, in 1985-86, four of the five districts had predominantly minority school populations. In two of the districts, nearly 90 percent of the students were black and in another district nearly 40 percent were Hispanic.

Large numbers of students in these five districts were from poor families. The 1980 census data show the percentage of children from families below the poverty line in the five districts to have ranged from about 20 percent to slightly over 50 percent. These figures provide a conservative estimate of the problem and obviously are outdated.

The number of teachers employed in the five districts in 1985-86 ranged from about 1,500 to nearly 3,500. In two of the districts teachers were represented by affiliates of the NEA, and in the other three they were represented by AFT affiliates.

The districts also varied in their wealth and in their support for public education. Per pupil expenditures varied in 1985-86 from under \$3,000 to over \$5,000. Local tax effort also varied. In 1985, the effective tax rates in the five districts ranged from less than \$1 per \$100 assessed valuation to over \$4 per \$100.

The schools are above average, average, or below average in achievement. This categorization is based on test data provided by the district and reflects the schools' relative standing among similar schools within the district. Precise comparisons of student achievement are not possible because the districts use different tests and different types of test scores.

The Schools

In each district, at least two elementary, middle, and high schools were examined. The schools selected are typical of the district, neither the best nor the worst in terms of physical conditions or measures of performance. They are not special schools, such as magnets, or schools with selective admissions policies. They were chosen by school district leadership using these criteria and checked with union leadership to ensure agreement that these were typical schools. Table A3:2 displays the characteristics of the 31 schools.

Their enrollments vary widely. The elementary schools range in size from 300 students to 900; the mean enrollment is 605. The middle schools and junior highs range from 300 to 1,200 with a mean size of 650. The high schools enroll from 600 to 1,900 students with a mean enrollment of over 1,100. Only two of the high schools have enrollments under 1,000.

Data Collection

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected at both the district and school levels, using semi-structured interviews and data collection forms. School data was collected through observations, review of documents, and interviews with school administrators and teachers. Eight to 15 teachers (depending on the size of the school), the building representative for the teachers association, and building administrators were interviewed at each school. The interview team recorded its own observations of conditions at each school. In addition, the district was asked to provide statistical information on student and staff characteristics, resources, and school performance.

District officials, leaders of the teachers' organization, and board members also were interviewed. Additional district data were collected through review of documents. Document review was especially important because of the possibility of discrepancies between written policies and actual practice in the schools. In addition, other factors such as management-labor relations, provisions of the bargaining agreement, teacher/pupil ratios, classroom space, and number of in service training days were examined because of their potential bearing

TABLE A3:2

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS						
Schools	Grade Level	Enrollment	Percent Minority	Percent Poor	Attendance (ADA)	Student Achievement
District A						
1	7-12	1400	45	25	85	Above Average
2	7-12	900	67	32	86	Below Average
3	7-12	2200	70	80	86	Below Average
4	7-12	1100	82	56	87	Below Average
5	K-6	700	94	40	92	Average
6	K-6	650	60	45	93	Average
District B						
1	9-12	600	99	70	83	Below Average
2	9-12	1300	99	62	89	Below Average
3	6-8	1200	90	85	92	Above Average
4	6-8	600	99	90	89	Below Average
5	K-5	600	83	80	95	Above Average
6	K-5	900	100	83	95	Below Average
District C						
1	9-12	1300	58	38	84	Average
2	9-12	1500	47	50	86	Average
3	7-8	600	43	59	83	Average
4	7-8	1000	43	60	82	Above Average
5	K-6	500	32	74	93	Average
6	K-6	300	64	30	95	Above Average
District D						
1	9-12	1900	99	47	83	Average
2	9-12	1500	99	52	80	Average
3	6-8	350	99	45	82	Above Average
4	6-8	600	97	45	83	Average
5	K-5	300	99	45	87	Above Average
6	K-5	500	57	29	86	Average
District E						
1	9-12	1300	49	18	88	Above Average
2	9-12	1500	51	13	85	Average
3	7-8	500	55	19	93	Average
4	7-8	400	50	38	89	Average
5	K-6	300	60	50	94	Below Average
6	K-6	800	74	24	96	Below Average
7	K-6	500	81	69	97	Below Average

Note: Numbers have been rounded in order to protect the identity of the schools. Also, the listing for District A includes four grade 7-12 junior/senior high schools. Two of these were treated as high schools and two as junior high schools for the study. Only staff and students from the appropriate grades were included in the analysis.

on how specific policies and practices were implemented within schools.

Overall, a total of 420 interviews were conducted and thousands of pages of notes analyzed.

APPENDIX 4: COMPARISON OF SCHOOL EFFECTS

School Conditions as Predictors of Effects

To determine whether particular conditions have a stronger or more consistent effect on teacher working conditions, data from the two elementary, middle and high schools in each of the districts were compared. By examining the data from these pairs of schools, the effects of variations in working conditions stemming from differences in policy environments, funding levels, collective bargaining agreements and district professional cultures were minimized.

The Elementary Schools

The elementary schools data reveal a clear pattern; relatively better working conditions are related to relatively more positive teacher attitudes and behaviors and the converse also is true. This is seen in the school pairs

TABLE A4:1

WORKING CONDITIONS AND EFFECTS ON TEACHERS ANALYSIS OF MATCHED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS									
School Pairs	SES (%)	Working Conditions	Teacher Leaders	Attendance	Effort	Efficacy	Community	Morale	Job Satisfaction
A1	50	Good	Good	+	+	0	+	+	0
A2	24	Poor	Adeq	-	0	-	+	-	0
A3	69	Poor	Good	-	+	+	0	+	0
B1	69	Good	Good	+	+	+	+	+	+
B2	30	Poor	Adeq	+	0	0	0	0	0
C1	74	Poor	Adeq	-	0	-	-	-	-
C2	31	Good	Good	+	+	+	+	+	+
D1	79	Adeq	Good	+	+	+	+	0	+
D2	83	Poor	Poor	+	+	-	+	0	-
E1	41	Adeq	Adeq	+	+	0	+	0	0
E2	44	Poor	Poor	0	0	-	0	-	-

The schools in each set are from the same district. The SES data are based on the percentage of students eligible for free lunch. The working conditions column represents an index created from ten indicators and summarized as Good, Adequate and Inadequate. The leadership column reflects a similar general assessment. The effects data is summarized using pluses (+), minuses (-), and zeros (0) to represent the aggregate assessment of effects made by respondents.

labeled B, C, D and E in Table A4:1. Set A included three schools from a single district, and there were clear differences in both working conditions and effects between A1 and A2. Good leadership in A3 appears to have partially compensated for less adequate physical working conditions.

One significant aspect of the data is that the socio-economic status (SES) of the students appears not to have as consistent an effect on the teacher attitudes and behaviors as school working conditions. In sets A and B, schools enrolling larger percentages of students with low SES show more positive teacher data than the paired schools. This pattern does not hold up in set C, and there is little variation in the SES of the students in the paired schools in sets D and E. Many studies contend the SES of students is the primary predictor of achievement, but these studies seldom controlled for teacher working conditions. If better working conditions produce more positive teacher attitudes and higher levels of effort, the improved conditions might positively affect the levels of achievement in urban schools.

The Middle Schools

The data on working conditions in the middle schools are presented in Table A4:2. Three sets of schools appear to support the general hypothesis of a positive correlation between teacher working conditions and teacher attitudes and behavior. The schools in the other two sets, C and E, are not strikingly different and show somewhat similar patterns of teacher effects. School A1 was described as having stronger administrative leadership than A2; this may explain the more negative pattern in the effects data for the latter site. However, this relationship between stronger leadership and the effects data is not found in set E in which the two schools were described as having similar differences in leadership. In the other two sets of paired schools, B and D, differences in working conditions show strong positive correlations with the teacher effects data. In both sets, the schools are serving similar student populations, yet appear to have strikingly different sets of teacher attitudes and behaviors.

TABLE A4:2

WORKING CONDITIONS AND EFFECTS ON TEACHERS ANALYSIS OF MATCHED MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOLS									
School Pairs	SES (%)	Working Conditions	Teacher				Community	Morale	Job Satisfaction
			Leaders	Attendance	Effort	Efficacy			
A1	19	Adeq	Adeq	0	0	+	+	-	0
A2	38	Adeq	Poor	0	-	-	+	-	-
B1	43	Poor	Poor	0	-	0	0	-	-
B2	45	Adeq	Adeq	+	+	+	+	+	+
C1	59	Adeq	Good	-	-	-	0	0	0
C2	60	Adeq	Good	+	0	0	+	0	-
D1	85	Good	Good	+	+	+	+	+	+
D2	90	Poor	Poor	-	-	0	0	-	-
E1	83	Poor	Adeq	0	-	-	+	-	0
E2	57	Poor	Poor	0	-	-	+	-	-

The schools in each set are from the same district. The SES data are based on the percentage of students eligible for free lunch. The working conditions column represents an index created from ten indicators and summarized as Good, Adequate, and Inadequate. The leadership column reflects a similar general assessment. The effects data is summarized using pluses (+), minuses (-) and zeros (0) to represent the aggregate assessment of effects made by the respondents.

TABLE A4:3

WORKING CONDITIONS AND EFFECTS ON TEACHERS ANALYSIS OF MATCHED HIGH SCHOOLS									
School Pairs	SES (%)	Working Conditions	Teacher				Community	Morale	Job Satisfaction
			Leaders	Attendance	Effort	Efficacy			
A1	18	Adeq	Adeq	0	0	-	+	0	-
A2	13	Poor	Poor	-	-	-	0	-	-
B1	47	Adeq	Good	+	+	+	+	+	+
B2	52	Poor	Poor	-	-	-	+	0	0
C1	38	Adeq	Adeq	0	0	0	0	-	-
C2	51	Poor	Poor	-	-	-	0	-	-
D1	74	Poor	Poor	0	+	+	+	-	-
D2	83	Adeq	Adeq	-	-	-	0	-	0
E1	33	Good	Adeq	+	+	0	+	+	+
E2	44	Poor	Poor	-	0	0	+	0	-
E3	32	Poor	Poor	0	-	0	0	0	+

The schools in each set are from the same district. The SES data are based on the percentage of students eligible for free lunch. The working conditions column represents an index created from ten indicators and summarized as Good, Adequate, and Inadequate. The leadership column reflects a similar general assessment. The effects data is summarized using pluses (+), minuses (-) and zeros (0) to represent the aggregate assessment of effects made by the respondents.

The High Schools

Data from four sets of the high schools, A, B, C and E, presented in Table A4:3 clearly support the hypothesis that teacher attitudes and behavior vary directly with working conditions. The data from set D do not support this conclusion. The major differences in the working conditions are in the quality of the physical plants and leadership in the two schools, and it may be that better physical facilities and leadership do not adequately compensate for the resource problems that beset both schools. There is, however, no adequate explanation for this inconsistency in the high school data. The high schools in set B are particularly interesting because the schools have roughly similar student characteristics but dissimilar working conditions and teacher attitudes.

APPENDIX 5: PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

WORKING IN URBAN SCHOOLS ADVISORY PANEL

Maurice Caba
Legislative Liaison
Portland Public Schools

Paula Cozart
Principal, Breithaupt Vocational Technical
Center
Detroit Public Schools

Joseph Fernandez
Superintendent
Dade County Public Schools

Tom Franklin
Consultant
Council of the Great City Schools

Rachel Hedding
Member, Board of Education
Rochester City Schools

Sam Husk
Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools

Susan Moore Johnson
Assistant Professor
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Marsha Levine
Associate Director/Education Issues
American Federation of Teachers

Edward Meade
Senior Program Officer
The Ford Foundation

Mary Nicholsonne, Principal
Hartford Heights Elementary School
Baltimore City Schools

Ellen Pechman, Associate Director
The Center for Early Adolescence
University of North Carolina

Justo Robles
Professional Associate - IPD
National Education Association

James Scammon
Denver Public Schools

Leontine D. Scott
Associate Superintendent
Philadelphia Public Schools

Gaya Shakes
Teacher
Rochester Public Schools

Joseph B. Shedd
Organizational Analysis & Practice
Cornell, New York

Gary Sykes
Michigan State University

Gary Thompson
Columbus, Ohio Public Schools

Vera White
Principal
District of Columbia Public Schools

Irene Yamahara
Associate Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified Schools

John Yrchik
Research Specialist
National Education Association

STAFF

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