DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 949 EA 022 437

AUTHOR Faber, Charles F.
TITLE Local Control of Schools: Is Local Governance a Viable Option? Policy Issues.
INSTITUTION Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, WV. Policy and Planning Center.; Kentucky Univ., Lexington. Policy Analysis Center for Kentucky Education.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Aug 90
CONTRACT 400-86-0001
NOTE 60p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Board of Education Role; Boards of Education; Effective Schools Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Government; *Federal State Relationship; *Governance; Leadership; *Local Government; Public Support; School Based Management; *School District Autonomy; School Districts; School Restructuring; State Action; State Aid
IDENTIFIERS *Kentucky

ABSTRACT

The historical and current balance among the federal, state, and local levels in the control of education is reviewed in this report, with a focus on effective schools research and the management of change. Five policy instruments are described, which include mandates, inducements, capacity-building, system-changing, and leadership. A conceptual framework for policymaking and implementation of public education involving national, state, and local levels is presented, followed by a discussion of school-based management as a tool for decentralization. Successful school-based management programs are reviewed, and 13 implications for policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels are offered. (79 references) (LMI)

POLICY ISSUES

LOCAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS: IS LOCAL GOVERNANCE A VIABLE OPTION?

BY
CHARLES F. FABER
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

A PUBLICATION OF:

POLICY AND PLANNING CENTER
APPALACHIA EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

AND

POLICY ANALYSIS CENTER FOR KENTUCKY EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

AUGUST 1990

FUNDED BY
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Policy Issues are prepared by the Policy and Planning Center at the Appalachia Educational Laboratory in response to specific requests from state-level policymakers. The Center's purpose is to provide information to decisionmakers as they consider issues. The papers synthesize current thinking and practice on the particular topic. They typically provide a definition of the problem/ issue area, discuss what is known from research, review what other states are doing, and discuss implications for policy.

The **Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc.**, works with educators in ongoing R & D-based efforts to improve education and educational opportunity. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. It also operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL works to improve:

- professional quality,
- curriculum and instruction,
- community support, and
- opportunity for access to quality education by all children.

Information about AEL projects, programs, and services is available by writing or calling AEL, Post Office Box 1348, Charleston, West Virginia 25325; 800/624-9120 (outside WV), 800/344-6646 (in WV), and 347-0400 (local); 304/347-0487 (FAX).

The **Policy Analysis Center for Kentucky Education (PACKE)** is a non-partisan, independent educational policy research center sponsored by the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation, College of Education, University of Kentucky. The Center works to provide timely information about and analyses of the educational policy concerns of legislative and other policymakers in Kentucky. Information about PACKE is available by writing PACKE, College of Education, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0001; or by calling 606/257-3178. Dr. Charles F. Faber is professor of education in the Department of Administration and Supervision, College of Education.

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, under contract number 400-86-0001. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U. S. Government.

POLICY ISSUES

LOCAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS: IS LOCAL GOVERNANCE A VIABLE OPTION?

BY
CHARLES F. FABER
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

A PUBLICATION OF:

POLICY AND PLANNING CENTER
APPALACHIA EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

AND

POLICY ANALYSIS CENTER FOR KENTUCKY EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

AUGUST 1990

FUNDED BY
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Please Help AEL Serve You Better by completing and returning this

Reader Survey Form

Instructions:

(1) Lift gently on this form to remove it and the red dot from the attached report.

(2) Unfold this form and write in your responses to the survey items.

(3) Refold the form and secure its edges together by bending the red dot around them.

(4) Place first-class (25¢) postage on the reverse side as indicated and mail.

Thank you! The responses you and others provide help us improve the services of AEL's Policy and Planning Center.

Issue Paper Feedback Form

Please remove this form and return it to AEL.

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Information was useful	3	2	1
Challenges existing practice	3	2	1
Raises new issues or perspectives	3	2	1
Includes implications for policy	3	2	1

Do you plan to use the information contained in this report? ____Yes ____ No

If so, how?

Name (optional)

Address

Thank you.

Please fold and mail.

LG/89

Place
Postage
Here

TO: AEL Policy and Planning Center
P. O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325

7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Complete local control of the schools is a myth. Federal and state involvement in public education goes back to the nation's beginning. Over the past 40 years, both state and federal control have increased. Certain nationalizing influences and court decisions have greatly increased federal involvement. As states have assumed a larger share of the costs of financing public schools, the role of the state in policymaking has grown. Especially during the reform era of the 1980s has there been an unprecedented surge in state control, growing out of the accountability aspect of the school reform movement. More than ever before, states have been mandating reforms and monitoring the implementation processes. They seemingly have lost faith in the capacity or will of local districts to improve education. In this context, the continued viability of local control is being challenged.

This paper reviews the historical and present balance among federal, state, and local levels in the control of education. Research on effective schools and on the management of change is also reviewed. Five policy instruments are described: mandates, inducements, capacity-building, system-changing, and leadership. The efficacy of each of these instruments is assessed in relation to the proposition that the goals of schooling can be achieved only through pupils interacting with their teachers, instructional materials, and fellow students. Because of the counter-productive effects of adversarial relationships, leadership and capacity-building are identified as preferred instruments, with

inducements and mandates being less desirable. System-changing is rejected as being unnecessary at this time. Public education with federal, state, and local participation is viewed as still viable. A conceptual framework for policymaking and implementation is proposed.

The use of school-based management as a means of bringing decisionmaking closer to the scene of the action is discussed. The twin tests of relevance and expertise are proposed as means for determining who should participate in making decisions within the local school-site's area of jurisdiction. Literature relating to systems that have successfully implemented school-based management is reviewed and implications are drawn.

Finally, the paper presents implications for policymakers at the national, state, and local levels as they seek to forge appropriate relationships for the 1990s and beyond. These implications are summarized below:

1. The national government has an important, but limited role in education.

2. Each state legislature is responsible for providing a system of common schools.

3. State policymakers will want to follow the research on change, especially the research showing the problems inherent in top-down, mandated changes.

4. State policies mandating certain programs and leaving the implementation to local districts are more likely to be successful, if training and financial support are provided and sufficient time for implementation by the local district is permitted.

5. State policymakers who want to apply pressure to local school districts to secure the adoption of a reform are more likely to see positive results if pressure is applied interactively rather than unilaterally.

6. State policymakers who mandate certain local actions need to recognize situational factors, special contingencies, and the historical, social, and cultural context of local communities.

7. National, state, and local policymakers will want to consider the effects of a proposed change on the organizational culture of a school and the school climate.

8. State education department personnel need to recognize local school teachers, administrators, and board members as colleagues and work with them as allies engaged in a mutual effort to improve education. Adversarial relationships tend to be unproductive.

9. State and national policymakers are more likely to be successful if they use leadership and capacity-building as preferred policy instruments. Inducements and mandates are less likely to produce the desired results.

10. Local control would be less controversial and more viable if associations of local superintendents and local school boards would develop and enforce codes of ethics among their respective members.

11. Local control is most viable when local school boards and administrators strive to make schools more responsive to the needs of all of the residents of the community, actively involve parents, and conduct school affairs openly.

12. State policymakers who desire educational reform will need to involve local districts in the change process to secure local commitment to the substance of the change.

13. Policymakers at national, state, and local levels will be more successful if they understand the limitations of their policies: THE GOAL OF SCHOOLING CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY THROUGH PUPILS INTERACTING WITH THEIR TEACHERS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND FELLOW STUDENTS.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Public education in the United States is primarily a function and responsibility of the individual states. The Constitution of the United States provides that powers not delegated to the national government nor prohibited to the states are reserved to the states or to the people. Inasmuch as education is nowhere mentioned in the Constitution, it is assigned by implication to the states. Education is, therefore, a state responsibility, and control of the education system within each state is legally a function of state government.

State legislatures have full power to determine the scope and organization of the public school system and the agencies through which the system is to be made effective. Most states assign general leadership, supervisory, and regulatory functions to a state board and department of education. Much of the responsibility for actually conducting education programs has been delegated to local school districts, governed by local boards of education. Legally these local school districts are agents of the state, created in accordance with state law, for the purpose of implementing the state's responsibility. Nevertheless, local control of education has a long historical tradition in the United States--a tradition whose viability is being questioned as we enter the 1990s.

The Emergence of Local Boards of Education

Local control of education is exemplified by the existence of local school boards. The local school board is an American invention, which

accompanied the emergence of the district system of education. First developed in the New England colonies, the district system evolved from the special geographical and ideological circumstances of the colonial experience. Local districts developed partly because of geographic isolation and difficulty of transportation and communication in the early colonies, but chiefly because of an intense belief in the value of local control and opposition to centralized authority. The early forerunners of school boards, committees of selectmen, were appointed in colonial town meetings to study and supervise the town schools. At first, the school committee was an agency of town government. Gradually, school districts became separate from municipal government, and the school committee became a distinct governing body. By the early 19th century, the board of education--separate and distinct from other governing bodies of a city or town--was the rule in Massachusetts. Other states adopted this system of education governance, and gradually the system became universal throughout the United States.

Has this system served us well? Some critics who think its time has come and gone question whether local control is still a viable concept in the 1990s. They ask: In what ways, if any, should local control of schools be constrained by higher levels of governance?

Such questioning is not new. Horace Mann described the Massachusetts Act of 1789, which granted legal rights to school districts, as the most unfortunate legislation on common schools enacted in Massachusetts.[1] Historian Edwin Dexter says, "The really disastrous legislation came, however, in 1801, granting the district the power to raise moneys by

taxation, a right which had heretofore been vested in the larger social unit, the town. In actual practice, the district proved too small to be entrusted with final legislation in money matters...."[2] But most people must have thought the system worked, because local districts were established nationwide. Campbell, however, suggests that local control was more folklore than fact.[3] He points out that the public schools have always operated within a framework established by the various states, and that federal influences of some kind have always been present. Writing in 1959, he suggested that, in recent decades, state controls have been strengthened and federal activities have multiplied. The decades since 1959 have surely witnessed an intensification of the trends Campbell noted. Perhaps the most outspoken of the critics was Lieberman, who wrote in 1960: "Local control of education has clearly outlived its usefulness on the American scene. Practically, it must give way to a system of educational controls in which local communities play ceremonial rather than policymaking roles: Intellectually, it is already a corpse."[4]

The Growth of State Control

A brief review of education history provides convincing evidence of the existence of the trends toward increased state control. All states have had compulsory school attendance laws throughout most of the 20th century. (Some states repealed such laws during the school desegregation of the 1950s and 1960s; most have since reinstated them.) Pupil admission standards are established directly by statute in most states, including age, residence, and immunization requirements. In all states, the local district must offer a curriculum approved by the state.

The degree of control exercised by the state differs from state to state, but even in states where local districts retain some discretion, course offerings must meet state guidelines. Most states permit local school districts to select their own textbooks, but they usually must be chosen from state-approved lists. Virtually every state requires certification of public school teachers, and most states have teacher-tenure statutes and laws that govern the employment, transfer, dismissal, or demotion of teachers. State laws authorizing or requiring collective negotiations proliferated during the 1960s and early 1970s. The first such law was enacted in Wisconsin in 1959; by 1975 a majority of the states had enacted negotiations statutes.[5] Except for negotiations legislation, state control in the areas of compulsory attendance, curriculum, certification, and employment did not increase greatly at the expense of local control during the decades immediately preceding 1980.

The decade of the 1980s, however, witnessed a surge of state control of education under the banner of reform. During the years 1982-1986, at least 11 states passed omnibus reform laws.[6] Most of these acts were in the nature of more rigorous academic standards for students and higher standards for teachers. Between 1980 and 1986, 45 states altered their requirements for earning a standard high school diploma.[7] These changes have almost invariably involved increases in the number of required courses. Since 1980, the age span of compulsory school attendance has been increased in 15 states.[8] The length of the school year has been increased in 11 states since 1983.[9] On the other hand, the length of the school day has not undergone a major shift as a result of state

mandates. However, some states--such as Kentucky--have reinterpreted existing regulations to ban certain nonacademic activities during the school day. Restrictions on students' athletic participation--no pass, no play--have been imposed in 14 states,[10] and restrictions on students' driving privileges have been imposed in five states.[11] The latter usually takes the form of revoking drivers' licenses of school dropouts.

In the area of stiffening teacher requirements, the most usual course has been to require prospective teachers to pass a state-mandated competency examination prior to initial certification. Between 1975 and 1986, legislation mandating such testing was enacted in 33 states.[12] By 1989, passing a competency examination was required in 45 states.[13] Career ladder plans have not been nearly so pervasive. Two states--Florida and Tennessee--have such plans in place, and several other states have enacted legislation or field-tested such plans. However, some career ladder legislation is permissive, rather than mandatory.[14]

Perhaps the most intrusive state intervention in local school district affairs arises in conjunction with academic bankruptcy plans. Nine states now have provisions for state intervention into the operation of school districts that are performing poorly.[15] The best-known such law is probably that of New Jersey, which permits state officials to take complete control of a district for up to five years; school board members and top administrators can be dismissed. The state's takeover of the Jersey City school district was widely publicized. A Kentucky statute permits the state superintendent to intervene in the operation of local school districts and limit the authority of the local superintendent and

local board when identified deficiencies are not corrected. However, the state's intervention in the Whitley County system was invalidated because of the vagueness of the regulations for state intervention and the arbitrary manner in which those regulations were applied.[16]

Some believe that recent court cases challenging the constitutionality of state school aid formulas have also led to some diminution of local control. Starting in 1971 with the Serrano v. Priest decision in California,[17] the formulas have been challenged across the country under "equal protection," "uniform system," or "thorough and efficient system" clauses. In at least eight states, constitutional violations have been found, requiring legislative action. In some cases, this has resulted in prohibitions against local districts raising more than a set amount of local revenue for the schools, even if the local citizenry want to levy such taxes. Others argue that providing additional funding for poor districts increases their options, and, for them, enhances local control--assuming the increased funds are made available without strings attached.

Perhaps the most far-reaching decision has been that of the Supreme Court of Kentucky, which declared not merely the finance plan, but the entire school system of Kentucky constitutionally deficient, because it did not meet the mandate of an efficient system of common schools throughout the state.[18] The court was outspoken in its opinion: "The sole responsibility for providing the system of common schools is that of our General Assembly.... The General Assembly must not only establish the system, but it must monitor it on a continuing basis, so that it will

always be maintained in a constitutional manner. The state must carefully supervise it, so there is no waste, no duplication, no mismanagement, at any level."[19] The opinion went on to say that the obligation to provide an adequate education to every child in the Commonwealth "cannot be shifted to local counties and local school districts."[20]

The General Assembly accepted the Court's mandate to re-create and re-establish a system of common schools within Kentucky that will provide substantially uniform schooling through the state. The Governor and legislative leadership created a Task Force on Education Reform with committees on curriculum, finance, and governance, which presented recommendations to the 1990 session of the General Assembly. Many of the task force recommendations were designed to strengthen state control.

The Changing Federal Role

At the same time the states were increasing their control over local schools, the role of the federal government changed, too. Despite the constitutional provisions noted earlier, the national government has always had some involvement and influence in the educational affairs of the nation. The early constitutional theory that each level of government was to be independent of the others in both its responsibilities and functions has not held up in practice. Responsibilities have always been shared among national, state, and local governments. National government participation in education ranged from early land grants and distribution of surplus funds for the establishment of common schools to special purpose grants for the establishment of land-grant colleges in the 1800s. The early 1900s brought federal funds for vocational education,

followed by school lunch programs, impact aid, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Federal statutes did not, in a legal sense, deprive school systems of local control. In most instances, states and/or local districts were free to accept or reject federal funds, but the acceptance of funds was contingent upon acceptance of the conditions imposed ir federal guidelines. As a practical matter, states and local districts simply could not afford to turn down the federal funds, so they suffered the loss of control that accompanied the funds.

Some argue that federal initiatives do not always diminish state and local control. For example, state departments of education were strengthened by the availability of federal capacity-building funds from ESEA Title V. Any discretionary funds included in federal grants may enhance state or local capacity. That argument has diminished since Title V was eliminated in 1980. Furthermore, the federal share of financial support of public education has dropped from about 8.9 percent to approximately 6.7 percent.

In certain policy areas, states and local districts had no option but to accept federal control. Since the desegregation decision of 1954,[21] the federal courts have been heavily involved in enforcing constitutional rights of students, particularly under the 14th Amendment and to a lesser extent under the First and Fourth Amendments.[22] Some local districts reacted by fighting school desegregation with every weapon at their disposal. Other federal control initiatives came from

Congress, which passed civil rights legislation, outlawing discrimination based on race, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, and similar characteristics. Particularly burdensome, in the view of some local school administrators, have been provisions of the Education of the Handicapped Act (Public Law 94-142). Districts were required to abide by many of these requirements, even if they did not accept federal funds.

In addition to the official actions of the federal government as represented in legislation and court decisions, there are many other nationalizing influences on education. Elmore asserts that, contrary to conventional wisdom, education is neither a state or local function nor a federal one but a national one.[23] By this he means that the education system that emerged in this country during the period 1840 to 1900 was remarkably homogeneous in curriculum content, grade structure, staff credentialling, financing, and governance. State systems did not differ greatly nor were there tremendous variations in local districts. Instead, there was great uniformity. A national agreement had begun to emerge on the form and content of public schooling. Yet, Elmore maintains, this was a period of little formal policymaking and even less intervention from federal and state levels on local decisions on curriculum, finance, and organization. In spite of the absence of federal and state control, local districts did not greatly differ from one another because of the nationalizing influences of the leaders of the common-school movement. Since 1900, these nationalizing influences have increased in number.

A study conducted in 1961-62 at the Midwest Administration Center identified more than 50 organizations that have the power to influence schools nationwide. These included governmental agencies, religious organizations, foundations, professional associations, accrediting bodies, business organizations, and others. The Illinois high school principals who participated in the study identified the major influences on the high schools in their state as two nationwide testing programs (the College Entrance Examination Board and the National Merit Scholarship Program), one quasi-governmental program at the federal level (the National Science Foundation), and one federal program enacted by Congress (the National Defense Education Act of 1958).[24] These programs were manifestations of national influences. The programs themselves may have been a reflection of more basic forces; they did not sprint full-blown into existence on their own volition. Reports such as Conant's study of the American high school, the Rockefeller report on education, the White House Conference on Education, and the intense lobbying that accompanied passage of the National Defense Education Act surely had a major impact. Philanthropic foundations, such as Carnegie, Ford, and Kellogg; professional educational organizations, such as the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators; and other organized special interest groups were certainly influential. An even more basic influence was the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union, politically and technologically.

Reflecting on the national scene some 30 years ago, Campbell wrote that schools, like other institutions in our culture, are affected by

basic social, economic, political, and technological developments. These basic forces are not local in character; they are nationwide or worldwide in scope. In response to these forces, political activity occurs. Participants in this activity include not only educators and government officials, but members of the lay public and of special interest groups. The role of the mass media may be very important. Eventually, these political activities culminate in an official expression of policy, such as the passage of a National Defense Education Act.

Campbell depicted his views in a flow chart[25] (see Table 1):

Table 1

A Flow Chart on Policymaking in Education

I	II	III	IV
Educational policy results from.....	basic social, economic, political, and technological forces, often national and world-wide in scope, which produce.....	political activity, extralegal in nature. Many groups debate and seek information, and school leaders exert influence. These activities, usually interrelated at local, state, and national levels, culminate in.....	formal, legal expression of policy which represents the value choices of influentials who participated in the process.

Campbell's flow chart seems as apt in 1990 as in 1960. Substitute economic competition with Japan for the Cold War; replace the reports of the late 1950s with those of the 1980s, following A Nation at Risk; change the names of some of the individual actors, but note that some of the foundations, professional organizations, and special interest groups remain the same; and the parallel between 1960 and 1990 is clear. The major difference is that, under the new federalism of Reagan and Bush, we no longer look to government for the formal enactment of new national policy, but to extra-legal groups, such as the Carnegie Forum or the Holmes Group. In a radical departure from past practice, the National Governors' Association supports the creation of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for national teacher certification. The increased mobility of teachers and administrators adds to the pressure for national certification and retirement programs.

In summary, during the past 40 years, both state and federal control have increased with a corresponding decrease in local control of the schools. State control has surged especially during the reform era of the 1980s. Federal and state involvement in the control of schools is not new, however; the involvement goes back to the nation's very beginnings. Complete local control of education is a myth. What is new is the way the balance of control has shifted among the three levels, with the local level exerting an ever-decreasing amount of control. Certain nationalizing influences on education, plus the necessity for the federal government to enforce antisegregation and antidiscrimination policies, ensure continued federal involvement, despite some decrease of

activity during the Reagan and Bush administrations. Court decisions concerning student rights and due process of law also assure continued federal involvement. At the state level, legislatures have assumed a larger portion of the financing of public schools, so the role of the state in policymaking has grown. But the most intrusive encroachment of states upon local control has been through the accountability aspect of the school reform movement. States have mandated reforms and monitored the implementation processes, challenging the continued viability of local control of schools.

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT RESEARCH

Policymakers would be well-served if researchers could provide them information about the relative effectiveness of local, state, and federal control. Unfortunately, such research information does not exist. School governance includes elements of all three types of control in all of the states' public school systems with the possible exception of Hawaii. Therefore, the effects of total state control cannot be compared to total local control. True, states can be classified according to the degree of state control, but any such categorization is bound to involve a certain amount of subjective judgment.[26] Even if school quality could be computed, based on whatever measures of education quality one wished to use, there are so many intervening variables that no reputable researcher would be willing to assert a cause and effect relationship between the degree of state control and school quality. It might be noted, however, that students in states classified as "decentralized" by

Van Geel tend to do much better than students in "moderately decentralized" states on such traditional measures of school success as graduation rate and SAT scores, while students in "moderately decentralized" states outperform students in "centralized" states by a wide margin--for whatever reason.[27]

Factors Related to Effective Schools

Some writers believe that the viability of local control may depend on the size of the local district. Their view is that districts that are too small to offer a variety of education services do not have the capacity to exercise meaningful control.

A great deal of research has been done on school district size. The best of this research seems to indicate that the optimum size of a school system is from 10,000 to 20,000 pupils.[28] Districts smaller than 10,000 may need to join an educational cooperative or receive services from an intermediate unit to serve the needs of their pupils. Districts larger than 20,000 (and certainly those larger than 50,000) may need to develop some type of internal decentralizing arrangements to avoid becoming too unwieldy and cumbersome. States may need to take assertive action to encourage the reorganization of small districts or to establish intermediate units, but once that is done the districts can operate with whatever mix of state/local control is deemed appropriate for other reasons. The size of districts is not a factor in determining the appropriate degree of state and local control.

Based on the view that the appropriate unit for analysis of successful education practices is neither the state nor the school district but

the individual school building unit, considerable research has been done on identifying and describing effective schools. A review of the effective schools literature may enlighten the debate over state versus local control.

One of the earliest and most quoted of the effective schools researchers, Edmonds, listed the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools: strong administrative leadership, expectation of high achievement by all students, a positive school climate, an emphasis on basic skills, devotion of school energy and resources to fundamental objectives, and frequent monitoring of pupil progress.[29] Other writers have tended to list similar indicators, sometimes adding others such as parental involvement in the schools. The research does not show that the existence of these indicators is or is not related to local and/or state control. These indicators may be related, though, to school-site management, which in turn can be either facilitated or impeded by the local school system and/or the state. In fact, Purkey and Smith, after an extensive review of the school effectiveness literature, listed

school-site management first among the most important organization-structure variables, followed by instructional leadership, staff stability, curriculum articulation and organization, schoolwide staff development, parental involvement and support, schoolwide recognition of academic success, maximized learning time, and district support.[30]

In addition, Purkey and Smith reported four process variables that define the general concept of school culture and climate: (1) collaborative planning and collegial relationships; (2) sense of community among

students and staff; (3) clear goals and high expectations commonly shared; and (4) a seriousness of purpose communicated by order and discipline. According to these researchers, the four process variables collectively form the dynamic of the school, creating an atmosphere that leads to increased student achievement.[31] The variables cannot be commanded into existence by administrative fiat, from either the state or school district level.

What type of control is most likely to encourage change in ineffective schools? An enormous amount of research has been done on planned change in education and other organizations. One bibliography lists 915 entries for the period 1960-1985.[32] A synthesis of a number of these studies identified seven elements of the change process:

(1) School improvement takes place over two or three years.

(2) The initial stages always produce anxiety and uncertainty.

(3) Ongoing assistance and psychological support are crucial to help people cope with anxiety; the assistance must focus on the precise nature of the concern.

(4) Change involves learning new skills through practice, feedback, and coaching; change is incremental and developmental.

(5) Breakthroughs occur when people understand why a new way works better.

(6) Organizational conditions within the school (peer norms and administrative leadership) and outside it (central office support and external facilitators) make change more or less likely.

(7) Successful change requires pressure--but pressure through interaction.[33]

Based upon the knowledge of effective schools and of effective change processes, Odden draws some implications for state policymakers:

> States cannot mandate effective schools: the essence of an effective school is a strong culture, which derives from a strategic independence. Yet, states can help create and sustain effective schools in at least seven ways: (1) providing symbolic leadership to raise the status of education; (2) articulating clear state educational goals; (3) building awareness of the school effectiveness research; (4) developing system incentives that recognize and reward school effectiveness; (5) providing technical assistance to schools; (6) altering training and certification requirements; and (7) strengthening state data gathering.[34]

Local school districts could take actions on their own to encourage effective schools. Indeed, our history is replete with examples of "lighthouse" districts and of successful schools within undistinguished school districts. The state is in a far better position than local districts to engage in most of the activities listed by Odden. Many of these things could be done without diminishing local control, although they do bespeak a more proactive stance on the part of the state. If policymakers and educators take school effectiveness research seriously, they will expect to see goals reached differently from school to school. Effective schools need freedom to develop some of their own strategies for growth, although they can be held accountable for meeting uniform state standards and can benefit immensely from enlightened state leadership.

State Educational Reform Strategies

In the fervor for educational reform following publication of A Nation at Risk, most states have been unwilling to wait for schools to

become effective one-by-one. Almost all states have engaged in some type of statewide reform effort. States have used approaches that range from giving aid and encouragement to local districts with no usurpation of local control all the way to transfering most decisionmaking from the local level to the state level. Does research tell us anything about the most desirable approach for states to take in the reform of local schools?

Timar studied the strategies used in three states (Texas, California, and South Carolina) to manage both the substance and process of education reform. In his view, the three distinct implementation approaches used by these states represent all available strategies for comprehensive school reform.[35] Timar identified the Texas approach as rational planning, based on the assumption that there are single, best policy solutions and that the right answers can be discovered through rational planning. This strategy relies on top-down mandates, centralized authority and decisionmaking, and standardization and uniformity in both substance and process. This approach obviously removes much autonomy from local districts and increases state control--an approach that is not working well in Timar's view. His research suggests that rational planning and state regulations are crude policy instruments for effecting change. They are, he concludes, insensitive to the complexities of schools as social and political organizations.

California, on the other hand, uses what Timar calls a market incentive strategy, an approach that concentrates policy development at the state level, but allows implementation to be bargained over at the local level.[36] Although rules and regulations are proclaimed by the

state, adherence is a matter of local choice. Organizationally competent schools in California may take advantage of his reforms, but Timar argues that the organizationally weak schools have no idea how to integrate them into their own programs. Timar's research on implementation of California's reform measure led him to assert that "it is difficult to point to changes in the structure and organization of schooling that will substantially improve the quality of the state's educational system." Centralized policy formulation combined with a laissez-faire implementation strategy may lead nowhere.

The third approach identified by Timar is, what he calls, the political interaction model, exemplified by South Carolina.[37] In contrast to the other strategies studied, Timar asserts that this approach shifts the policy perspective from reliance on formal control and regulation by a central authority to informal devices that rely on delegation, discretion, and dispersal of authority. The interaction model of decisionmaking establishes a process for problem solving instead of proposing a single, best solution to a problem. The state mandates certain programs, but permits local schools to determine the best way to organize those programs. The state does not allow the local districts the latitude to decide <u>whether</u> or not to adopt specified reforms; local districts, however, can determine <u>how</u> to adopt them. Timar's research shows that the reform effort has been more successful in South Carolina than in the other two states studied. He concludes that the interaction model works not because it relies on local control or state control, but because it recognizes the need for balance between state accountability

and local autonomy. Authority and responsibility must be distributed across the entire system of education.

Timar's account of the school reform movement in South Carolina demonstrates the validity of Fullan's seven elements of the change process cited above. The question that remains, however, concerns the efficacy of the state-mandated reforms. Given that South Carolina has been successsful in securing adoption of the reform package, what difference has it made? Are South Carolina's schools more effective than before? Are South Carolina's students learning more of what are considered to be the right things? Are goals for schooling in South Carolina being met to a higher degree?

A recent review of research on South Carolina reforms present mixed results.[38] South Carolina's own analysis of the effects of the reform legislation indicates that achievement test scores have improved; services for preschool, remedial, gifted and talented, and vocational students are better; and teacher salaries are higher.[39] Although a national study by Carnegie reported that teachers throughout the nation are frustrated with much of the reform effort, teachers in South Carolina were less dissatisfied than others. Even so, 43 percent stated that morale had declined as a result of reform, 40 percent indicated it had improved.[40] Scholars at the South Carolina Educational Policy Center concluded that "many teachers and principals feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the mandates.... Despite their support for the reform initiatives, these educators are crying out for changes in education policies."[41]

Although districts were given wide latitude in determining how to implement reforms, a policy highly praised by Timar, many South Carolina educators perceived the spirit of the reforms as too prescriptive. This point has been recognized by the state's leading policymakers, including the governor and state superintendent, both of whom have called for a loosening of state regulations for certain districts.[42]

In addition, two studies authorized by the South Carolina Educational Policy Center show that the state's educators support the idea of reform, but its implementation is troubling to many of them. One study, an assessment of the state's Principal Evaluation Program, found support for the concept of evaluating principals. However, the principals were quite dissatisfied because they felt that the state program's pre-set criteria failed to take into account situational factors, contingencies, or context in evaluating principals' performance.[43] The second study focused on working conditions of teachers, teacher burnout, and the impact of reform in South Carolina. Data on these topics reinforced the concerns raised in the Carnegie study, which concluded, "We are troubled that the nation's teachers remain so skeptical. Why is it that teachers, of all people, are demoralized and largely unimpressed by the reform actions taken?"[44]

The findings from these two South Carolina studies were indeed discouraging. More than 50 percent of the teachers said they believe morale is worse as a result of reform; nearly 85 percent find the burden of paperwork greater; nearly 70 percent said they must handle certain things differently than they believe these things should be handled; and

over two-thirds said they have to work on unnecessary tasks. A teacher burnout scale yielded emotional exhaustion scores for South Carolina teachers about 50 percent higher than the national average.[45]

Individual interviews with teachers indicated that they are devastated by the impact of curriculum mandates, testing, paperwork, and evaluation--all artifacts of the reform legislation. These feelings are revealed by some quotes from the interviews:

> "We teach to the test now, but there are so many things we are leaving out."
>
> "It seems like we don't care about children anymore."
>
> "We just want passing scores.... The tests made a lot of teachers lie."
>
> "I am being made into a machine and my students are being made into machines."[46]

Obviously, a great deal of frustration exists among South Carolina teachers. Is this important? The purpose of public schools is not to provide easy, pleasant employment for teachers. If teacher dissatisfaction reflects normal resistance to change, an unwillingness to work harder, or rejection of accountability, should policymakers be concerned about teacher feelings? South Carolina has made a great deal of progress in certain areas as a result of its reform movement. Is teacher dissatisfaction too high a price to pay? Do negative feelings by teachers and principals mean the reform is not working? Ginsberg and Berry assert that improvements in such indicators as test scores have begun to level off in South Carolina.[47] They posit that the initial momentum of the reform movement may be beginning to run down and that perhaps the teachers' feelings of frustration are beginning to take their toll. If

this is true and the reforms become counterproductive, teacher frustration may indeed be too high a price to pay.

Timar and Kirp, who analyzed the reform movement in several states, gave South Carolina high marks for its approach. They said, "The most important conclusion we can draw from state reform efforts is that a major shift in policy needs to occur. Policymakers must focus their attention on making schools better places in which to work and generally more satisfying places for those who are associated with them."[48]

Judged by this criterion, the South Carolina reform effort can hardly be deemed a success. As Ginsberg and Berry found, South Carolina teachers are tired, frustrated, and have lost the joy of teaching. They also complain that reforms have made their schools much more rigid and demanding places in which to work.[49] This organizational culture described by teachers differs considerably from the positive climate desired by the South Carolina Department of Education.[50] Thus, Ginsberg and Berry raise the question, "Can emotionally exhausted teachers and principals provide the energy, wisdom, and spirit needed to continue with the reforms and develop organizationally mature schools?"[51] If they cannot, the state may be undermining its own reform efforts by failing to deal with the concerns of teachers and principals.

The South Carolina experience serves as a reminder of the vast quantity of research literature that demonstrates the difficulty of achieving improvement by top-down mandates. Those whose lives are most vitally affected by change cannot be ignored with impunity by policy-makers and leaders who try to impose the change.

Public Support for Local Control

There appears to be no real possibility that the local school district will disappear completely from the American educational scene within the foreseeable future. The local school system is too well-entrenched by tradition and too well-accepted into American culture for this to happen.

A 1986 study from The Institute for Educational Leadership concludes that there is "strong support for maintaining the basic institutional role and structure of the local school board."[52] If schools are to maintain public support, however, they must remain responsive at the local level. Grassroots political support depends on this. Local school boards, the study says, "are essential mechanisms of representative democracy."[53]

Even in Kentucky, where the entire system of common schools was ruled unconstitutional, local school districts will remain intact. As part of the task of restructuring the state system of public schools, the Committee on Governance had considered six preliminary models that included radical departures from present practices such as adopting a unitary district plan (one school district for the entire state), creating larger operating districts, and combining educational services with other kinds of human services into districts of "well-being."[54] However, the committee recommended the model called "Fine Tuning the Present System," which called for minimal adjustments from the status quo and proposed no changes in the number of classifications of school districts.[55]

While leaving local boards intact, the committee did recommend complete restructuring of educational governance at the state level, the creation of regional service centers, and some relatively minor restrictions on the power of local school boards.[56] Further, the committee recommended modifications in the process for declaring a district educationally deficient, an action that became a necessity in light of Judge Graham's decision in the Whitley County case reviewed above.[57] Other recommendations addressed perceived problems related to a lack of accountability, undue political influence in personnel decisions, and nepotism.[58] After a brief, but spirited, debate the general assembly adopted essentially all of these recommendations in the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990.

In summary, research on effective schools and on the mangement of change indicates that leadership is more effective than regulations in achieving improvements in practice. Yet, swept up in the fervor of the reform movement, states have mandated changes from the top down, sometimes with counterproductive results, because they have lost faith in the will or capacity of local districts to improve without state mandates. Nevertheless, local school districts seem too firmly entrenched by tradition and too well-accepted into American culture to disappear from the scene.

THE FUTURE OF LOCAL CONTROL

Some amount and type of local control of the schools will survive. The precise nature of the federal-state-local relationships will continue

to evolve as the nature of local communities changes and as the national and state interest in education increases.

Changing Communities

At one time in this nation's history, communities were small and simple of the type sociologists call Gemeinschaft. A Gemeinschaft society is one where (a) the tie between persons is largely a matter of kinship, (b) there is little division of labor, (c) there is general absence of special-interest groups, (d) each person knows most of his neighbors, (e) conformity is brought about mainly through informal controls, (f) the community is self-sufficient, and (g) persons have a strong sense of community identity. In cultures of the Gemeinschaft type, appropriate behavior is usually well defined both for the individual and for those with whom he comes into contact. General agreement on mores and manners, with limited outside influences, makes for a high degree of integration. The different segments of the community tend to be consistent and to reinforce one another. In the United States today, there are small, isolated, rural communities that fit this description. They grow fewer as the years go by.[59]

In Gemeinschaft communities with homogeneous populations, all members tend to accept and adhere to a common set of norms and values. The very homogeneity and mutual consistency of values and codes make for a well-integrated whole. While most people find such arrangements comfortable, independent thinkers would find the conformity stifling. Religious beliefs and practices are shared. The school system is an integral part of the life of the community. The religious, economic, and political

institutions of the community are integrated. Indeed, in some instances the superintendent of schools may be the dominant figure in all aspects of community life. In many rural counties, the school system is the largest single employer. A superintendent can build a power base by controlling who gets jobs. The superintendent's control of employment may not be limited to the schools, but may extend to other jobs in the county. School board members are nominally elected by the voters, but they may be, in fact, selected by a local power structure headed by the superintendent. In some instances, the superintendency has become virtually a hereditary office with father passing the fiefdom along to his son upon retirement. Situations of this type are extremely rare, but they cannot be permitted to continue.

Gemeinschaft societies are going to cease to exist. Communities no longer will remain homogeneous. New residents move into the community. People are exposed to outside influences through the mass media. Different viewpoints must be accommodated. Local control of schools can no longer be perpetuated through hereditary offices. Isolated rural communities are not going to acquire all of the characteristics of a Gesellschaft[60] society overnight, but there is an inevitable movement in Western culture toward such a pattern.

Making Schools Responsive to Communities

If local control is to remain viable in changing communities, it must accommodate those changes. Local school officials must learn to recognize and acknowledge differing values and the cultural diversity of modern society. All members of the community, especially parents of all

backgrounds, must feel that the schools are theirs, for them, and responsive to them. In very large cities with diverse populations, such as New York and Chicago, the effort to be responsive to the people has led to the transfer of some decisionmaking authority from the central office to smaller geographical areas within the city and the transfer of some authority from professional educators to community councils.

Some districts have transferred that authority to the local school, creating a system called school-based management, another mechanism for achieving responsiveness. In 1989, Hawaii became the first state in the nation to move toward statewide use of school-based management. Local schools in Hawaii may set their own timetable for adoption of the plan, but all schools are expected to participate within the next few years.[61] In Kentucky, the Education Reform Act of 1990 requires, with certain exceptions, that at least one school within each district implement school-based decisionmaking by July 1991, and by 1991-92 any school in which two-thirds of the faculty votes to do so may implement school-based decisionmaking. These schools would form a council of three teachers, two parents, and the principal, with the option of expanding its membership proportionately. A majority vote of the membership would be required for making decisions. The new law also sets forth procedures whereby local schools may seek approval of alternative structures for school councils.[62]

Two crucial issues arise in relation to site-based management: (1) how teacher and parent members of the council should be selected, and (2) how the range of decisions to be made by the council should be

determined. Particularly important is the method of selecting parent members of the council. Can two parents be broadly representative of the community? As we move from a Gemeinschaft to a Gesellschaft society, this question becomes more important. If parent members are elected by parents, how can we assure that minority viewpoints will be represented? (Parents elected by majority vote would tend to be from the more popular, influential, and/or articulate segment of the community.) If parent members are to be appointed, by whom would the appointments be made? How could we assure that appointed members would not be rubber stamps for the appointing body? To raise these questions is not to impugn the value of parent membership or a school council. It is, rather, to point out that merely providing such membership does not in itself guarantee achievement of the objective, which is to get equitable, meaningful, and appropriate parent involvement in the management of the local school. Involvement should be equitable in the sense that all parents (regardless of social class, race, political persuasion, or previous involvement in civic affairs) are involved; meaningful in the sense that the parent members actually do influence important decisions that make real differences in the education of boys and girls; and appropriate in that the decisions made by parents are those proper for parental influence.

The question of who should be involved in what decisions is one that has been discussed extensively in the literature. Moon reviewed and synthesized the literature on teacher participation in decisionmaking and proposed a conceptual model for appropriate decisionmaking at the public school site.[63] Although Moon's study focused on teacher participation,

his model would apply to parent participation, as well. Moon suggested that the individual school staff have jurisdiction only over those decisionmaking areas that are assigned to them.[64] Therefore, the first criteria of appropriateness requires the school to have the legal authority to make the decision. The school council must be given clear and accurate information about its area of jurisdiction; otherwise, participation would lead to frustration. Within its area of jurisdiction, a school council should apply two tests in determining whether and how to participate. These are the tests of relevance and expertise.[65] The test of relevance asks whether the individual has a personal stake in the decision. The test of expertise asks whether the individual has the knowledge necessary to contribute to wise decisionmaking.

If an issue fails both tests, i.e., members of the council ha ' no personal stake in the outcome or any expertise to lend to the decision-making process, then the council should have no role in making the decision. Others who have the interest and expertise would make the decision. On the other hand, if council members have both a personal stake and competency in the decision area, they should have maximum involvement in making the decision. In such cases, it would be important to ensure that the minority view has a fair hearing. Between the two extremes of either meeting or failing both tests, are those decisions for which council members may meet one, but not both, criteria. For example, they may have a high personal stake in the decision but a low potential for contributing significantly to the quality of the decision. In such a case, the involvement of the council should be limited. Perhaps the

principal should present them with alternatives, along with the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. In other cases, council members may have no personal stake in the decision, but have a high potential for contributing important knowledge. In such cases the principal might strive for a way to tap into this knowledge without requiring the members to spend a lot of time on matters they may deem irrelevant.[66]

One of the problems with school councils of the type to be implemented in Kentucky is that frequently teachers and parents have different interests and competencies. Applying the tests of relevance and expertise could well yield different results for the two groups. This problem could be solved by creating two different councils. One would be a management team consisting of the principal and other professional personnel. The other would be an advisory committee consisting of parents and other lay citizens. The Monroe County, Florida, school system has been cited as a successful example of school-based management.[67] School-based management procedures were phased in slowly over a five-year period, during which the principals received extensive and intensive training in team-management and decisionmaking skills. In this system, the schools are operated by teams that usually consist of the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, department heads, and other inhouse personnel. Each school also has an advisory committee composed of parents, teachers, students (at the secondary level), and other citizens. These committees consist of 15 to 25 members, thus allowing for a diversity of representation. After hearing the advice of the two groups, principals approve a consensus decision or make decisions of their own.

After reviewing numerous examples of school-based management systems that work, Lindelow and Heynderickx reached four conclusions:

(1) Successful implementation requires extensive retraining of central office and school site personnel.

(2) It also requires strong support from the school board and superintendent.

(3) The authority given to the school site and to its teams and councils should be decided in advance.

(4) Successful implementation requires a great deal of trust and commitment.[68]

Because school-based management clearly requires much advance planning, it can hardly be mandated by a state legislature one year and successfully implemented statewide the next.

A RATIONALE FOR FEDERAL-STATE-LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

Research has not yet provided a definitive answer to the question about the most effective role for each of the three levels in education governance. The desirable federal-state-local relationship remains a political issue. Policy analysts can shed light on this issue, however, by providing conceptual analyses and conducting research.

For example, McDonnell and McLaughlin, have developed a conceptual framework and used it to study the implementation of federal programs in states and local districts.[69] Their model assumes that federal policy will inevitably be transformed as it moves through each level of government--from Congress to the U. S. Department of Education to the states to local school districts. Further, each level of government has its own goals and viewpoints about federal program objectives and imposes

its own set of organizational and political constraints on program implementation. As a result of these differences, procedural changes as well as substantive modifications are to be expected, as federal policy moves through the three levels of government.[70] These analysts addressed two dimensions of federal policy implementation--compliance (the extent to which states adhere to federal program regulations) and programmatic development (the ways in which federal policy goals have been implemented).[71] Logically, the same model could apply to implementation of state policy by local districts.

Another conceptual framework, also developed by McDonnell and Elmore, categorizes alternative policy instruments.[72] From existing theories about governmental actions and observed patterns in the choices of policymakers, they constructed four policy instruments: mandates, inducements, capacity-building, and system-changing.[73] For each instrument, they specified its primary elements, expected effects, costs, and benefits.[74]

Mandates rely upon rules and regulations to secure compliance or behavior consistent with what the regulations prescribe. Inducements use transfer of money to secure the performance desired by policymakers. Capacity-building involves investment of money to enhance the recipients' ability, skill, or competency in the designed areas. System-changing shifts the authority for policy implementation from one institution to another.

Mandates are based on the assumption that the required action is something that all individuals and agencies should be expected to do and

that the required actions would not occur in the absence of explicit regulations. Because mandates assume an adversarial relationship between enforcers and objects of the enforcement, the major responsibility for assuring compliance rests at the level that makes the policy. Most mandates set minimum standards for compliance, a practice which, McDonnell and Elmore assert, discourages exceeding those standards. Inducements are based on two assumptions: (1) in the absence of additional money, certain actions would not be accomplished; and (2) in the absence of investment, certain long-term benefits regarded as important by policymakers will not be realized by society. System-changing instruments are based on the assumptions that existing institutions cannot produce the results that policymakers want and that altering the distribution of authority among institutions will enable the policymakers' desires to be met.[75]

McDonnell and Elmore did not explicitly address the question of which level of government can best use each of the four instruments, but it seems that all instruments could be used by federal and state policymakers, while the model has little relevance at the local level.

Omitted from the McDonnell-Elmore formulation is any mention of leadership as a possible instrument of change. This is a serious omission, since administrative theory and research both support the view that the power to elicit human behavior in the service of some goal requires both authority and influence. McDonnell and Elmore focused on authority and ignored influence, which comes through the exercise of leadership. Particularly important is the concept of leading through

articulating a vision, defined as "a stand regarding a 'preferred future,' one that is strategic and lofty yet compatible with customers and colleagues."[76] Leaders can also influence others through persuasion based on logical reasoning that shows the benefits of particular policies, through personal prestige that has been earned by demonstrating personal expertise or commitment, and through many other well-researched techniques. To rely on authority alone is to be half-powerless.[77]

The use of mandates carries with it some negative consequences. Coercion is required, and adversarial relations are created. The normal resistance to change is intensified in the "us vs. them" atmosphere. The coercers are viewed as not understanding the local situation and as not being truly interested in what is best for "our kids." When national- and state-level policymakers rely entirely on formal authority to institute educational reforms, local school leaders are likely to find ways to circumvent rules and procedures that they view as inappropriate for their situations. Brady described a number of games local leaders play when implementing directives--not because they are evil or opposed to education reform, but because they view the welfare of the school as being more important than any rule, policy, or person.[78] Local leaders recognize the following: THE GOALS OF THE SCHOOLING CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY THROUGH PUPILS INTERACTING WITH THEIR TEACHERS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND FELLOW STUDENTS. That is why the vision of national and state leaders needs to be compatible with that of local leaders.

Research seems to indicate that leadership is the preferred way of seeking and implementing change. At times, leadership needs to be

supplemented by capacity-building. Inducements in the form of financial incentives are not as coercive as mandates, but have some of the other negative consequences, such as, an abundance of rules, regulations, directives, and paperwork. Mandates should be used only when the will to comply cannot be elicited through other means, leaving no other choice but to use coercion. System-changing, the final policy instrument proposed by McDonnell and Elmore, is rejected by the present writer as being an unacceptable alternative. Changes in the public school system are needed, but these changes can be made within the existing institutions. New institutions need not be created.

In arriving at a suitable balance of national, state, and local controls, policymakers need to confront questions, such as which decisions can be better made at which level and which policy instrument works best with each policy. Although providing a comprehensive answer to these questions is beyond the scope of the present paper, a framework for policymaking and implementation is presented (see Table 2).

Table 2

Framework for Policymaking and Implementation

Policy Issue	Policymaking Level	Instrument	Expected Results
Nondiscrimination	National	Mandates	Compliance
Equitable funding within state	State	Mandates	Compliance
Bilingual education	State	Inducements	Implementation of program by some districts
Experimental programs	State	Leadership	Development of new programs by some districts
Teaching methodologies	Local	Leadership	Adoption of teaching methodologies most appropriate to local conditions
Need to improve mathematical skills of high school students	National	Capacity-building	Research on effectiveness of mathematics curricula and teaching techniques; recruitment of promising candidates into profession

Even though the proper balance of federal-state-local control is a political question, it need not be settled on the basis of political ideology alone. Research indicates that the best decisions are made closest to the scene of the action. In education, the scene of the action is the classroom and the school site. Therefore, one can argue that as much control as possible should remain at that level and that other levels of governance--further from the scene of action--should intervene only when local schools lack the capacity or the will to make or implement acceptable policy. Take, for example, the need for equitable school financing. Many local communities simply do not have the tax base, regardless of the amount of local effort, to fund their schools at the level easily attainable in a wealthier district. If we believe that children living in poor districts are entitled to educational opportunities equal to those living in the wealthier districts of the same state, policies regarding school finance must be made at the state level. Local districts do not have the capacity to do this on their own. Similarly, if we believe that equal educational opportunities should be available throughout the nation, the federal government must be involved in school finance.

Capacity is one of the variables; will is the other. The Constitution of the United States has been interpreted as making racial segregation in the schools unconstitutional. Following the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, many states and local communities made it abundantly clear that they lacked the will to desegregate their schools. Therefore, the federal government mandated

school desegregation. Coercion was required; adversarial relationships developed between the national government and some states as well as local communities. But a significant amount of school desegregation was accomplished that otherwise would not have occurred. Some assert that most states lack the will to provide appropriate services for special needs students,[79] hence federal mandates such as Public Law 94-142 were necessary.

In summary, the question of the desirability of a particular policy remains a political issue, however, policy analysts can offer guidance on the appropriate locus of policymaking. Generally, given the capacity and will to act in a way that would bring about the desired result, policies should be made and implementation procedures should be determined at the level closest to the classroom.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

A review of the related research and an understanding of the place of schooling in the nation's culture suggest the following implications for national, state, and local education policymakers who seek to forge appropriate national-state-local relationships for the 1990s and beyond.

1. The role of the national government is limited to:

    a. Ensuring that the constitutional rights of all participants in education are honored.

    b. Ensuring equal opportunity for all to participate in public education, regardless of race, sex, religion, national origin, socioeconomic status, physical or mental handicaps, or other characteristics such as age, which might be a basis for discrimination.

c. Articulating national goals for education, providing the leadership, and setting a favorable climate for the achievement of these goals.

d. Providing the financial support that is necessary for fulfillment of its role. (If equality of educational opportunity throughout the nation is determined to be desirable, the federal role in funding must expand greatly.)

e. Using mandates in the above areas only when states and local communities have failed to demonstrate the will and/or capacity to act.

2. The role of the state government should continue to be that of providing an efficient and effective system of common schools throughout the state. To carry out this role, the state should delegate operation of the schools to local districts, but the state must retain responsibility for seeing to it that local schools are effective, efficient, and equitable.

In fulfilling this responsibility, the state department of education engages in leadership, regulatory, and service functions. Leadership involves, among other things, setting appropriate goals for the state's schools; setting high standards; developing a statewide climate supportive of education; and engaging in research, planning, and evaluation. Regulation involves not merely seeing that schools comply with minimum standards, but encouraging them to achieve excellence. Holding schools accountable for compliance with state laws and with ethical practices is a part of the regulatory function. The service function not only includes providing direct services, such as data processing or test scoring for local districts, but also providing inservice training to improve the competency of school personnel, to

acquaint local educators with state requirements, and to mutually work out best ways for state and local educators to implement new programs. Anything that the state-level agency can do to facilitate the work of local schools would fall within the service category.

3. State policymakers should be guided by the research on change in exercising their leadership, regulatory, and service functions. Top-down change efforts tend to be ineffective. Certain philosophies of change and particular techniques have been more successful than others in overcoming resistance to change. State-level personnel should understand these philosophies and utilize these techniques. Research has shown, for example, that those who implement changes should have an opportunity to participate in the formation of the changes proposed. The state needs to provide such opportunities.

4. If the state mandates certain programs and leaves the implementation details to local districts, the state should help the local districts through training and financial support. Also, adequate time must be allowed for effective implementation. Time has two meanings in this context. First, it means lead time--the time it takes to prepare to implement a reform mandate once it is announced. Depending upon the nature of the reform, one or two years or more of lead time may be necessary. Second, time means the number of hours per day or per week that local school personnel have to spend to implement a particular program. When new programs are mandated, existing programs normally must be continued. Seldom are the existing demands on time modified. If the amount of paperwork (or any other kind of work) imposed by the new

program is perceived as overwhelming, and if the additional work must be fitted into an already full schedule, something is going to suffer--the new program, existing programs, the morale of local school personnel, or all of the above.

Furthermore, unduly hasty implementation may convert a good idea into bad practice. School-based management, for example, may be a good idea, but successful implementation cannot occur immediately statewide. Implementation needs to happen in stages. Questions about the selection of school council members and delineation of their areas of jurisdiction must be addressed. Workshops must be conducted in which these issues will be debated. Training in how to implement the concept must be provided. Otherwise, a potentially helpful innovation will prove to be a failure.

5. If state policymakers feel pressure must be applied to local school districts to secure adoption of a reform, they should apply that interactively. One way to do that is to conduct a workshop or other problem-solving situation where the reform is presented as something that everyone--the state and local levels--must work together to implement. Thus, the question becomes how can we best do it rather than what must you do? Even so, it will still be difficult for local school people to overcome the feeling that they are being forced to do something by an outside agency that is not as close to the classrooms. For this reason, it is extremely important that, whenever possible, teachers be given input in setting goals and not be limited merely to deciding how to achieve goals set by the state.

6. State policymakers who mandate certain district actions need to recognize situational factors; special contingencies; and the historical, social, and cultural context of local communities.

7. Attention must be given to the organizational culture of the schools. If a reform negatively affects the school climate, it is likely to be ineffective. Research has demonstrated the importance of a positive school climate to effective schools.

8. State department of education professional staff need to recognize that local school teachers, administrators, and board members are colleagues and work with them as allies engaged in a mutual effort to improve education. Any reform based upon the premise that teachers are foes or incompetent is bound to fail, because only teachers can implement the reforms in the classroom. THE GOALS OF SCHOOLING CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY THROUGH PUPILS INTERACTING WITH THEIR TEACHERS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND FELLOW STUDENTS. State agencies, local school boards, and school-site councils can have a positive effect on learning only by taking a cooperative, helpful stance.

9. State and national policymakers should use leadership and capacity-building as their preferred policy instruments. Inducements should be used when leadership and capacity-building fail to effect the desired results. Mandates should be used only as a last resort when local districts do not have the will or capacity to act.

10. Local school boards and administrators must pursue highly ethical courses of action, rather than following paths of political expediency or building their own power bases. Local control of the

schools is firmly entrenched in American tradition, so that the concept can survive almost anything except a widespread perception that local power brokers are using local control to feather their own nests at the expense of pupil achievement. Fortunately, the vast majority of local boards and administrators are public servants of impeachable integrity, but the saying about a few rotten apples spoiling the bushel should not be forgotten. Not only do individual board members and administrators have a responsibility to be guided in their own actions by ethical principles, but associations of board members and school superintendents should develop and enforce codes of ethics upon the respective memberships.

11. Local control is most viable when school boards and administrators strive to make schools responsive to the needs of all residents of the community, get previously passive parents actively involved, conduct school affairs openly, and live up to the rhetoric of local control. If schools belong to the people, educators and policymakers must help all of the people gain a sense of ownership of their schools. The techniques are well-known: school councils, open meetings, public forums, volunteers in the schools, and reaching out to all members of the public. If local control survives, it will not be because of federal or state mandates, but because local school officials continue to earn the trust that has been placed with them.

12. State policymakers who desire education reform need to involve local districts in the change process to secure local commitment to the substance of the change. If local districts are to remain viable, the

state must engage in capacity-building activities to help local educators and policymakers acquire the necessary action-research skills for identifying and solving problems at the district and school-site level.

13. Finally, policymakers at the national, state, and local levels will be more successful if they understand the limitations of their policies: THE GOALS OF SCHOOLING CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY THROUGH PUPILS INTERACTING WITH THEIR TEACHERS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND FELLOW STUDENTS.

ENDNOTES

1. Roald F. Campbell, et. al., The Organization and Control of American Schools, 6th Edition. (Columbus: Merrill Publishing Co., 1990), 110.

2. Edwin Grant Dexter, A History of Education in the United States. (New York: MacMillan, 1922), 183.

3. Roald F. Campbell, "The Folklore of Local School Control," The School Review 68 (Spring 1959): 15.

4. Myron Lieberman, The Future of Public Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 34.

5. William D. Valente. Law in the Schools, 2nd Edition. (Columbus: Merrill Publishing Co., 1987), 240.

6. Chris Pipho, "States Move Reform Closer to Reality," Phi Delta Kappan 68 (December 1986): K2-K4.

7. Ibid., K-5.

8. "Some Indications of State Education Reform Activity," ECS Clearinghouse Notes (October 26, 1989).

9. Ibid.

10. "Statewide Mandates on Extracurricular Eligibility," ECS Clearinghouse Notes (December 1989).

11. "Some Indications." op. cit.

12. Pipho, op. cit., K6.

13. "Some Indications." op. cit.

14. Pipho, op. cit.

15. "Academic Bankruptcy," ECS Clearinghouse Notes (October 1989).

16. Whitley County Board of Education v. Brock, Franklin Circuit Court, Division II, 89-C1-0302, unpublished opinion, filed January 5, 1990.

17. Serrano v. Priest, 96 Cal. Rptr. 601, 487 P. 2d 1241 (1971).

18. Rose v. Council for Better Education, Kentucky 88-SC-804-T6.

19. Ibid., 58.

20. Ibid., 58.

21. Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S.483.

22. U. S. Constitution.

23. Richard F. Elmore, "Education and Federalism: Doctrinal, Functional, and Strategic Views," in School Days, Rule Days: The Legislation and Regulation of Education edited by David L. Kirp and Donald N. Jensen (Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, 1986), 179-180.

24. Kenton Stephens, "The Problem," in Nationalizing Influences on Secondary Education, edited by Roald F. Campbell and Robert A. Bunnell. (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, 1963), 4.

25. Roald F. Campbell, "Processes of Policy Making Within Structures of Educational Government: As Viewed by the Educator," in Government of Public Education for Adequate Policy Making, edited by William P. McLure and Van Miller. Urbana: Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, University of Illinois, 1960), 59.

26. Tyll Van Geel, Authority to Control the School Program (Lexington: MA: Lexington Books, D. C. Health, 1975), 74-83.

27. Data compiled by Charles F. Faber, Department of Administration and Supervison, University of Kentucky, Lexington.

28. Charles F. Faber, "The Size of a School District," Phi Delta Kappan 48 (September 1966): 35.

29. Ronald Edmonds, "Effective Schools for the Urban Poor," Educational Leadership 37 (October 1979): 22.

30. Stewart C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith, "Effective Schools: A Review," Elementary School Journal 83 (March 1983): 443-444.

31. Ibid., 444-445.

32. Eddy J. Van Meter, Educational Change, Innovation, and School Improvement: A Selected Bibliography 1960-1985. 2nd Edition. (Tempe, AZ: Univesity Council for Educational Administration Resource Document #1401).

33. M. Fullan, Change Processes and Strategies at the Local Level, paper prepared for the National Institute of Education, July 1983, cited by Allan Odden, "State Level Policies and Practices Supporting Effective School Management and Classroom Instruction," in Reaching for

Excellence: An Effective Schools Sourcebook. (Washington, DC: Teaching and Instruction Division, Teaching and Learning Program, National Institute of Education, May 1985), 134.

34. Odden, op. cit., 136.

35. Timar, T. B., Educational Reform: The Need to Redefine State-Local Governance of Schools. (Charleston, WV: Policy and Planning Center, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1989), 17-20.

36. Ibid., 18-20.

37. Ibid., 19-20.

38. Rick Ginsberg and Barnett Berry, "Experiencing School Reform: The View from South Carolina," Phi Delta Kappan 71 (March 1990): 549-552.

39. What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina? (Columbia: South Carolina State Board of Education, 1988), cited by Ginsberg and Berry, Ibid., 549.

40. Report Card on School Reform: The Teachers Speak (Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988.), cited by Ginsberg and Berry, Ibid., 549.

41. Ginsberg and Berry, Ibid., 549-550.

42. Ibid., 550.

43. Ibid., 551.

44. Report Card on School Reform, op. cit., 10, cited by Ginsberg and Berry, Ibid.

45. Ginsberg and Berry, Ibid.

46. Ibid., 552.

47. Ibid.

48. Thomas B. Timar and David L. Kirp, "Education Reform in the 1980s: Lessons from the States," Phi Delta Kappan, 70 (March 1989), 510.

49. Ginsberg and Berry, op. cit., 552.

50. An Implementation Guide for the Legislative South Carolina Improvement Process. (Columbia, SC: South Carolina State Department of Education, 1986).

51. Ginsberg and Berry, op. cit.

52. The Institute for Educational Leadership. (1986). Strengthening Grass Roots Leadership. Washington, DC: Author, p. 10.

53. Ibid., p. 12.

54. Memorandum from Leadership Development Associates to Committee on Governance, Task Force on Education Reform, November 9, 1989.

55. Ibid., 25-30.

56. "The Governance Committee Makes the Following Recommendations," Final Report of the Committee on Governance, Task Force on Education Reform, February 1990.

57. Whitley County Board of Education v. Bro op. cit.

58. A recent study has shown that the extent of kinship among school employees is not as pervasive as critics have suggested. Thomas R. Mowery, "A Descriptive Study of the Extent of Kinship in Kentucky's Public Schools," (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 1989).

59. Educational Administration in a Changing Community, (Washington, DC: Thirty-seventh Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators, 1959), 36.

60. A Gesellschaft type of society, in contrast, is characterized by (a) union of people territorially rather than by kinship; (b) marked division of labor with great specialization of function; (c) proliferation of societies and organizations, each with special membership and interests; (d) a general lack of acquaintance with others, sometimes including next-door neighbors; (e) formalized social controls set up by law and enforced by police; (f) high interdependence with other communities even for basic necessities; (g) anonymity of many persons to the point that they do not associate themselves with community life but go where their jobs or chance opportunity takes them. Educational Administration in a Changing Community, op. cit., 36-37.

61. "Examples of State Leadership in Education Improvement." ECS Clearinghouse Notes (no date).

62. Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, Section 14.

63. Nak Jin Moon. "The Construction of a Conceptual Framework for Teacher Participation in School Decision-Making." (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 1983).

64. Ibid., 141.

65. Ibid., 139.

66. Ibid., 139-140.

67. John Lindelow and James Heynderickx, "School Based Management," in School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence, Second edition, edited by Stuart C. Smith and Philip K. Piele (Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1989), 114.

68. Ibid., 134.

69. Lorraine M. McDonnell and Milbrey W. McLaughlin. (1982). Educational Policy and the Role of the States. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 1982.

70. Ibid., 9.

71. Ibid., 11.

72. Lorraine M. McDonnell and Richard F. Elmore, Alternative Policy Instruments. (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 1987).

73. Ibid., 7.

74. Ibid., 8.

75. Ibid., 14-18.

76. Charles F. Faber and Gilbert F. Shearron, Elementary School Administration: Theory and Practice. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 272.

77. Peter Block, The Empowered Manager: Positive Political Skills at Work. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987) cited by Leslie Brady in "Effective Principals as Intrapreneues," paper presented to the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

78. Henry Barsky, The Political Style of an Urban Principal: A Case Study. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1975), cited by Brady, Ibid., 2.

79. McDonnell and McLaughlin, op. cit., xi.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 29, 1991