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ABSTRACT

Six papers discuss the Louisiana School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP) program, an ongoing 3-year research project associated with a legislatively mandated school and district accountability program. In three phases, the project joins school indicators, school effectiveness, and school improvement initiatives. The following papers are included: (1) "Joining School Indicator, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The International Perspective" (David Reynolds and Charles Teddlie); (2) "Dueling Agendas: Louisiana's Prescription for Balancing the Often Competing Demands of Education Improvement and Accountability" (Marlyn Langley and Bobby Franklin); (3) "Analyzing Statewide School Effectiveness Datasets Accurately and Fairly: A Review of SEAP-I" (Eugene Kennedy and Linda Crone); (4) "Gathering and Analyzing Intensive School-level Process Data: A Review of SEAP-II" (Lysah Kemper, Susan Kochan, Robin Jarvis, Maryann Durland, and Jane Johnson); (5) "The SEAP Process: Illustrative Case Studies from SEAP-II" (Debbie Heroman, Sharon Pol, Bobby Franklin); and (6) "Tying School Improvement to School Accountability: A Review of SEAP-III" (James Meza, Charles Teddlie, and Sam Stringfield. Each paper contains references. (Contains 38 tables.) (SLD)

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Integrating School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The Louisiana School Effectiveness Pilot (SEAP)

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Integrating School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The Louisiana School Effectiveness Pilot (SEAP)

AERA Session # 27.70

Symposium presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA, April 15,1998.

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Symposium Title: Integrating School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The Louisiana School Effectiveness Pilot (SEAP)

Organizer/Chair: *Charles Teddlie, Louisiana State University*

Presentation #1. Joining School Indicator, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The International Perspective. *David Reynolds, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom, and Charles Teddlie, Louisiana State University*

Presentation #2. Dueling Agendas: Louisiana's Prescription for Balancing the Often Competing Demands of Education Improvement and Accountability. *Marlyn Langley and Bobby Franklin, Louisiana Department of Education.*

Presentation #3. Analyzing Statewide School Effectiveness Datasets Accurately and Fairly: A Review of SEAP-I. *Eugene Kennedy, Louisiana State University; Linda Crone, West Virginia Education Fund*

Presentation #4. Gathering and Analyzing Intensive School-level Process Data: A Review of SEAP-II. *Lysah Kemper, Louisiana State University; Susan Kochan, Louisiana Department of Education; Robin Jarvis,Louisiana State University; Maryann Durland, Kentucky Institute for Educational Research*
Jane Johnson, Louisiana Department of Education

Presentation #5. The SEAP Process: Illustrative Case Studies from SEAP-II. *Debbie Heroman and Sharon Pol, Louisiana State University; Bobby Franklin, Louisiana Department of Education*

Presentation #6. Tying School Improvement to School Accountability: A Review of SEAP-III. *James Meza, University of New Orleans; Charles Teddlie, Louisiana State University; Sam Stringfield, Johns Hopkins University*

Discussant: *Carol Taylor Fitz-Gibbon, University of Durham, United Kingdom.*

Joining School Indicator, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The International Perspective.

David Reynolds, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom,
Charles Teddlie, Louisiana State University

Paper number one in a symposium entitled "Integrating School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The Louisiana School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP)" presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Diego, CA.

Joining School Indicator, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The International Perspective

Abstract: This paper will first discuss the artificial cleavage that still persists between the three related fields of school indicators, school effectiveness, and school improvement. This discussion will focus on the paradigmatic differences (e.g., positivism, constructivism) that have separated the three fields and how these differences are now reconcilable within the paradigm of pragmatism, together with the utilization of mixed methods and mixed model designs.

The sources for this paper include: Reynolds, Hopkins, and Stoll's (1993) review linking school effectiveness and improvement; Stoll's (1996) chapter on issues concerning the linking of school effectiveness and school improvement; Teddlie and Reynold's forthcoming *International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research,* which includes chapters that review and integrate the three related fields; a chapter from that *Handbook* by Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan that includes a discussion of the relationship between school indicators and the other two fields; and Tashakkori and Teddlie's (1998) *Mixed Methods and Mixed Model Studies in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, which reviews the denouement of the paradigm wars and the emergence of pragmatism and mixed model designs.

The paper will conclude with a brief overview of the School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP) project from Louisiana, which is an ongoing three year research project associated with a legislatively mandated School and District Accountability program.. This project joins all three fields in three ongoing phases: SEAP-I, school indicators; SEAP-II, school effectiveness; and SEAP-III, school improvement. This part of the paper also discusses how the School and District Accountability legislation that created SEAP calls for a combination of school accountability and improvement, which make the linking of the three fields possible.

The authors conclude that future research programs at the state, national, and international levels should integrate the methodologies of the three related fields, thus allowing the identification of more effective/typical/less effective schools based on multiple indicators, the intensive assessment of schools of interest, and the development of change process models for the identified schools.

Joining School Indicator, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The International Perspective

I. Introduction

There have been numerous calls for the integration of school indicator, school effectiveness, and school improvement efforts (e.g., Brown, Riddell, & Duffield, 1996; Fitz-Gibbon, 1996a; Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan, in press; Kochan, Teddlie & Franklin, 1997; Reynolds, Hopkins & Stall; 1993; Stoll, 1996) over the past five years. Despite this, the SEAP project in Louisiana appears to be the first program of its scope (i.e., state sponsored and operating at the entire state level) to be implemented.

The major factor keeping these three fields of study apart has been their separate evolutions as independent areas of academic specialization with distinct methods and paradigms that underlie them. In fact, the artificial cleavage among these fields is part of a larger distinction among the paradigms.

A paradigms may be defined as the worldview or belief system that guides researchers (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The importance currently attributed to paradigms in the social and behavioral sciences derives to a large degree from Kuhn's (1970) influential book entitled The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. In this book, he argues that paradigms are the models that are imitated within any given field, and that competing paradigms may exist simultaneously, especially within immature sciences (Kneller, 1984; Kuhn, 1970).

Over the past three decades, several debates or "wars" (e.g., Gage, 1989; Datta, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; House, 1994; Rossi, 1994; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) have raged in the social and behavioral sciences regarding the superiority of one or the other of the two major social science paradigms or models. These two models are known alternately as the positivist/empiricist approach or the constructivist (interpretivist)/ phenomenological orientation (e.g., Cherryholmes, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

The positivist paradigm underlies what are called quantitative methods, while the constructivist paradigm underlies what are called qualitative methods (e.g., Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Howe, 1988; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, the debate between these two paradigms has sometimes been called the qualitative-quantitative debate (e.g., Reichardt and

Rallis, 1994). In fact, the abbreviations QUANS (for those preferring the quantitative point of view) and QUALS (for those preferring the quantitative point of view) have been utilized in describing participants in these debates or "wars" (e.g., Creswell, 1995; Morse, 1991).

The three fields under study may be arrayed on a continuum from the most qualitatively oriented to the most quantitatively oriented: school indicators (almost entirely quantitative) to school effectiveness (began as quantitative, now more mixed) to school improvement (primarily qualitative since the 1980s). There has been some rapprochement between school effectiveness and school improvement, but school indicators has remained a separate field. The next section of this paper explores the linking, or lack thereof, of these three fields.

II. Paradigmatic Differences Among the Three Fields: School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Indicators

A. The Paradigm of School Improvement

According to Reynolds, Hopkins, and Stoll (1993), school improvement in the United States, the United Kingdom and internationally in the 1960's and 1970's displayed a number of paradigmatic characteristics associated with the positivist/empiricist tradition. It was linked as an enterprise to a technological view of school improvement, in which innovations were brought to schools from outside of them and then introduced 'top down'. The innovations were based upon knowledge produced by persons outside the school, the focus was on the school's formal organization and curriculum, the outcomes were taken as given, and the innovation was targeted at the school more than the individual practitioner. The whole improvement edifice was based upon a positivistic, quantitative evaluation of effects. The world-wide failures of this model of school improvement to generate more than very partial take up by schools of the curricula or organizational innovations became an established finding within the educational discourse of the 1970's, explained widely as due to a lack of teacher "ownership".

Out of the recognition of this failure came the new improvement paradigm of the 1980's, which is still reflected in much of the writing on school improvement that is current and in evidence today. This new movement celebrated a "bottom up" approach to school improvement, in which the improvement attempts are owned by those at the school level, although outside

school consultants or experts can put their knowledge forward for possible utilization. This new approach tended to celebrate the "folk-lore" or practical knowledge of practitioners rather than the knowledge base of researchers, and focused on changes to educational processes rather than to school management, or organizational features which were regarded as reified constructs. It wanted the outcomes or goals of school improvement programs to be debated and discussed, rather than accepted as given. Those working within this constructivist/phenomenological paradigm also tended to operate at the level of the practitioner rather than at the level of the school, with a qualitative and naturalistically orientated evaluation of the enterprise being preferred to quantitative measurement. The improvement attempt was "whole school" oriented and school based, rather than outside school or course based (see Reynolds, 1988).

Thus, Table 1 summarizes the evolution of the school improvement tradition from a primarily positivist/empirist paradigm in the 1960's/1970's to a primarily constructivist/ phenomenological in the 1989's/1990's. It could be argued that this evolution has continued intop the later 1990's, and that school improvement is now envisioned by some as a simultaneous "top down" and "bottom up" process (e.g., Murphy, 1992). This is certainly the case with the ongoing SEAP school improvement efforts, which are tied to an accountability legislation that puts a premium on quantitative achievement data.

Table 1
Characteristics of Two School Improvement Paradigms

Characteristic	**1960's**	**1980's**
Orientation	"Top Down"	"Bottom Up"
Knowledge Base	Elite Knowledge	Practitioner Knowledge
Target	Organization or Curriculum Based	Process Based
Outcomes	Pupil Outcome Oriented	School Process Oriented
Goals	Outcomes as Given	Outcomes Problematic
Focus	School	Teacher
Methodology of Evaluation	Quantitative	Qualitative
Site	Outside School	Within School
Focus	Part of School	Whole School

Note. This table was taken from Reynolds, Hopkins, and Stoll's (1993), p. 40.

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B. The Paradigm of School Effectiveness

As indicated by Reynolds, Hopkins, and Stoll (1993), the school effectiveness research paradigm has a very different intellectual history and has exhibited a very different set of core beliefs concerning operationalization, conceptualization and measurement by comparison with the changing approaches of the school improvers. It has been strongly committed to the use of quantitative methods, since many researchers were concerned to refute the "schools make no difference" hypothesis advanced by Coleman et al (1966) and Jencks et al (1972) by utilizing the same conventional methods of empirical research as their perceived opponents had utilized. Many researchers have also believed that teachers, especially North American ones, would pay more attention to work conducted within the quantitative paradigm.

School effectiveness researchers have also been primarily concerned with pupil academic and social outcomes, which is not surprising given the political history of school effectiveness research in the United States, where it has grown and built on the beliefs of Ron Edmonds and his associates that 'all children can learn'. Processes within schools only have an importance within the school effectiveness paradigm to the extent that they affect outcomes - indeed, one 'back maps' with the paradigm from outcomes to process. The school effectiveness paradigm furthermore regards pupil and school outcomes as fundamentally unproblematic and as given. Indeed, only a limited range of outcomes are used, reflecting the acceptance of 'official' educational definitions of the school as an academic institution. School effectiveness researchers indeed often talk of a 'good' or 'excellent' school as if that were unproblematic.

The school effectiveness paradigm is organizationally rather than process based in terms of its analytic and descriptive orientation, preferring to restrict itself to the more easily quantifiable or measurable. As an example, Fullan's (1985) process factors such as 'a feel for the process of leadership' or 'a guiding value system', or 'intense interaction and communication' are largely eschewed in favor of organizationally and behaviorally oriented process variables such as 'clear goals and high expectations' and/or 'parental involvement and support'. Additionally, the focus within the school improvement paradigm on the attitudinal, and on personal and group "'inner states", is replaced within school effectiveness research by a focus on the more easily measured behavior of persons.

A last couple of differences are also clear. School effectiveness research has customarily celebrated the importance of a very limited range of outcomes, mostly academic and mostly concerned with the acquisition of basic skills. Indeed, virtually all the early American work focused upon academic achievement virtually exclusively.

School improvement research by contrast has often conceptualized outcomes more broadly. Often indeed in the British tradition the improvement attempt or project was to debate the 'possible' goals of education, as against the limited 'official' goals, as part of the process of securing improvement. In most accounts of their processes (e.g. Hopkins, 1987), it seems that multiple goals form the intellectual base of school improvement.

Lastly, school effectiveness differs from school improvement in that it is concerned to celebrate the 'end state' of describing what it is that schools which are effective are actually 'like', whereas school improvement has been more concerned to discover what it is that has been done to bring schools to that state. The orientation of school effectiveness has been a 'static' one concerned with the 'steady state' of effectiveness; the orientation of school improvement has been a 'dynamic' one, focusing upon 'change over time'.

In the last several years, the voices calling for links between school effectiveness and school improvement have reached something of a chorus. Stoll (1996) argues that 'if practitioners can see and make links between school effectiveness and school improvement, surely it is time for researchers studying the two areas to do the same and to work with schools to develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the research and its implications for practice'. Hopkins (1996) argues that 'one of the most encouraging recent developments in the area of school effectiveness and school improvement is the seriousness with which the confluence of these two streams of enquiry is being taken'.

C. Comparisons Between School Effectiveness and School Improvement

From the outline of the two paradigms above, it can be seen that the disciplines of school effectiveness and school improvement have come from very different places intellectually, methodologically, and theoretically. Differences in these approaches are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2
The Separate Traditions of School Effectiveness and School Improvement

Traditional School Effectiveness Model	School Improvement in the 1980s
Focus on Schools	Focus on Individual Teachers or Groups of Teachers
Focus on School Organization	Focus on School Processes
Data Driven, with Emphasis on Outcomes	Rare Empirical Evaluation of Effects of Changes
Quantitative in Orientation	Qualitative in Orientation
Lack of Knowledge about How to Implement Strategies	Concerned with Change in Schools Exclusively
More Concerned with Change in Pupil Outcomes	More Concerned with Journey of School Improvement than Its Destination
More Concerned with Schools at a Point in Time	More Concerned with Schools as Changing
Based on Research Knowledge	Focus on Practitioner Knowledge

Note. This table was taken from Reynolds, Hopkins, and Stoll's (1993), p. 44.

While these differences have characterized the relationship between the two fields historically, changes have occurred over the past five to ten years. The distinction between school effectiveness and school improvement research have begun to blur. Examples of this "blurring" or merger include the following:

(1) There are several examples from the research literature of linkages between programs between the fields of school effectiveness and school improvement (see section below for examples),

(2) There has been tacit acceptance of the linkage found in the naming of important entities such: as the International Congress for School Effectiveness and School Improvement (ICSEI), the AERA SIG for School Effectiveness and School Improvement, and the School Effectiveness and School Improvement journal.

(3) a 1996 book entitled *Merging Traditions: The Future of Research on School Effectiveness and School Improvement* (Gray, Reynolds, Fitz-Gibbon, and Jesson, 1996) provided the intellectual underpinning for a close collaboration between the two fields, plus concrete examples of such interaction between scholars in the two fields.

Stoll (1996) summarized the impetus for more collaboration between the two fields:

> If practitioners can see and make the links between school effectiveness and school improvement, surely it is time for researchers studying the two areas to develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the research and its implications for practice. (Pp. 51-52)

According to some writers, school effectiveness research occupies an increasingly "centrist" position as it synthesizes and incorporates different intellectual traditions from different countries. In the forthcoming Handbook of School Effectiveness Research, the editors (Teddlie and Reynolds, in press) contend that there are, indeed, three traditions within school effectiveness research: school effects research (primarily quantitative), effective schools research, and school improvement research:

(1) School effects research (primarily quantitative) comprised, for the most part, of input-output studies focusing on the scientific properties of school effects. The field has grown increasingly complex over time, evolving from relatively simple, input-output models at the level

of the school or district to elaborate, multi-level designs utilizing sophisticated statistical techniques such as hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) and canonical correlation. In sum, school effects studies tend to involve the manipulation of large datasets by researchers who have never visited the campuses whose performance they weigh.

(2) Effective schools research (mixed model studies of differentially effective schools) is the logical extension of school effects research in that it represents the expansion of simple input/output school effects models to include measures of school context and process. In contrast to school effects research, the classic effective schools study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data gathered in the course of intensive, site-based research.

(3) School improvement research (as noted above, primarily qualitative in nature) is the "action research" arm of school effectiveness research. Characteristically, school improvement studies apply school effectiveness principals to the development of strategies for improving instructional delivery at specific school sites (Reynolds, Teddlie, Creemers, Scheerens & Townsend, in press).

D. The Paradigm of School Indicators

According to Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan (in press), an *education indicator* is a statistic collected at regular intervals to track the performance of an education system. Shavelson, McDonnel & Oakes describe an education indicator as an "individual or composite statistic that relates to a basic construct in education and *is useful in a policy context*"(1989, p.5). To discourage researchers from labeling every bit of archival data collected "an indicator," the U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) has gone so far as to caution that:

> statistics qualify as indicators *only if they serve as gauges*; that is, if they tell a great deal about the entire system by reporting the condition of a few particularly significant features. For example, the number of students enrolled in schools is an important fact about *the size* of the educational system, but it tells little about *how well* the system is functioning. On the other hand, a statistic that reports the proportion of secondary students who completed advanced study in mathematics provides useful information about the level that

students are participating and achieving in that subject... and can appropriately be considered an indicator" (OERI, 1988, p.5).

There are three types of indicators: outcome, intake, and process (e.g., Blank, 1993; Fitz--Gibbon and Kochan, in press; Willms, 1992). While most educational indicators in these three areas are quantitative in nature, qualitative process indicators could be developed in the areas of:

(1) outcome indicators - quality of life, and

(2) process indicators - alterable classroom variables and alterable school management variables.

The history of the school indicators literature in the United States, as well as the school effectiveness literature, starts with the Coleman Report (Kochan, 1998). The Coleman Report's greatest legacy may be that it whetted policy makers' appetites for more detailed and precise information on education, and spurred the development in the U.S. of these two research disciplines (school effectiveness, school indicators) dedicated to meeting the perceived research need.

Interestingly, British school effectiveness research had a similar etiology (Reynolds, et al., 1994; Teddlie, 1994). The Plowden Committee Report (1967) in the U.K. reached conclusions similar to those of the Coleman Report regarding the relationships among student background, schooling, and achievement. Early school effectiveness studies conducted in the U.K .(e.g., Reynolds, 1976; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, and Ouston , 1979) were aimed at demonstrating the "the outcomes of individual schools were not determined by ... their intakes of pupils" (Reynolds, 1993, p.3). Similarly, school indicator work in the U.K. was partially a reaction to these early input-output studies of school effects. As Willms noted (1992, p.28): "Monitoring systems are based on a theory about how schooling 'inputs' cause schooling 'outputs.'"

Over the course of the past 30 years, the fields of school effectiveness and school indicator research have traveled down parallel paths. During that time, school indicator researchers have adhered more closely to scientific research models than have their school effectiveness colleagues, and have tended to rely on increasingly sophisticated multi-level statistical procedures to improve the precision and detail of their findings. School effectiveness researchers have achieved similar success in expanding and refining our understanding of the schooling process, but have tended to

do so through a greater emphasis on mixed method designs that combine site-based qualitative and quantitative research. From time to time, researchers in both fields have been distracted from their original task (describing and explaining the education process) by forays into action research. For school effectiveness researchers, the distraction has been school improvement; for school indicator research, it has been school accountability (Kochan, 1998).

E. The Relationship Between the School Indicators and School Effectiveness/School Improvement Research Fields

While there has been a partial merger between the school effectiveness and school improvement literatures, this has not happened to any great extent with school indicators. At this point in time, the school indicators literature is an independent field that has few linkages with either the school effectiveness or school improvement areas. There are a number of reasons for this including:

(1) The continued emphasis in the school indicators literature on accountability considerations, often mandated by the state. State mandates often preclude the type of research that would involve school effectiveness or school improvement constructs and methods.

(2) The continued reliance in school indicators research on quantitative methods almost exclusively.

(3) The reluctance of researchers in the school indicators area to get involved directly with school improvement efforts.

The remainder of this section expands upon these general points and discusses some potential areas of rapprochement among the three research areas.

1. The Fields of School Indicators and School Effectiveness

Despite their common origins and similar aims, the two fields of school indicators and school effectiveness remain largely independent today. Much of the difference between school effectiveness and school indicator research concerns the methodological and logistical distinctions between the two fields.

A primary characteristic of school indicators systems is the requirement for "universal" measures due to the accountability functions that such systems typically serve. This necessarily leads to an emphasis on quantitative methods in these indicator systems, since it is easier to construct a numeric index with standard interpretations than a qualitative one. School effectiveness research, on the other hand, has moved toward a mixed methodological approach over the past twenty years.

Despite the overall quantitative orientation, there have been numerous calls in the school indicators literature for the development of school effectiveness indices and school process indicators that reflect school climate and/or behavioral outcomes over the past ten years (e.g., Good & Brophy, 1986; Kochan, 1998; National Study Panel on Education Indicators, 1991; Oakes, 1989; Porter, 1991). Research also shows that policy makers and parents want access to such information when evaluating education quality (Jaeger, Johnson & Gorney, 1993). Nevertheless, there are many problems inherent in the implementation of such mixed model indicator systems, not the least of which is the cost and effort required to collect process data that accurately reflect the condition of education (Kochan, 1998).

During the past 20 years, school effectiveness researchers have offered valuable insights into the contextual characteristics of schools that have high rates of student attendance and retention, but have primarily done so through intensive, site-based research in small samples of schools already identified as "effective" on the basis of achievement alone (e.g., Coleman, Hoffer & Kilgore, 1982; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). Normative findings in this regard have been limited to the relatively small number of studies that have looked at schools of all types (effective, ineffective, and typical).

School indicator researchers, on the other hand, have routinely gathered attendance and dropout statistics on very large samples of schools, but have made little progress in terms of translating such statistics into meaningful school process indicators. This is largely because few mechanisms exist for the large-scale collection of process data that are sufficiently detailed, yet practicable, in terms of reporting burden and cost.

Both research limitations - the shortage of normative data derived from school effectiveness research and the limited depth characterized by most school indicator research -

could be overcome if a school performance model focusing on multiple outcomes could be developed that (a) utilizes principles of school indicator research, and (b) has been validated through site-based qualitative research in the school effects tradition (Kochan, 1998).

2. The Fields of School Indicators and School Improvement

The distinction between the school indicators and school improvement area may be even greater than that between school indicators and school effectiveness. Individuals writing in the school indicators area prefer to discuss the policy implications of their work, but not the direct implications that their work has for school improvement. Those writing in the school indicators area are often concerned about the potential for the misuse of their data under the guise of reform. For example, Willms stated:

> Statistics describing the health of educational systems can be used to demonstrate the need for reform arising from poor management of a previous administration, or to demonstrate improvements stemming from reforms of the administration in power. Some critics contend that analysts choose to report, depending on their political purposes, statistics describing absolute levels of performance, changes in levels of performance, levels or changes for a particular subsample of the population, or comparisons with other districts, states, or countries. Porter (1988) argues that performance indicators are merely a political tool designed to strengthen the hand of those favoring centralized control of the process and products of teaching. (1992, pp. 4-5).

Fitz-Gibbon (1996a) has written about these issues, referring to the "corruptibility" of educational indicators, in which raw data are changed in order to alter the values reported in indicator systems. She contends that the greater the extent to which the indicators are used to publicly pressure institutions, then the greater is the need for "incorruptible indicators" (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996a; Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan, in press).

Thus, there is a desire among school indicators researchers, and rightfully so, to keep their systems separate from whatever educational reform is ongoing at any point in time. Furthermore, many school indicators researchers do not believe that it is appropriate for them to try to influence

the manner in which any school would undergo reform. These researchers believe that the purpose of an indicator system is to inform the faculty at a school of their current standing, not to guide school change. These researchers believe that each school must determine its own route to improvement, exclusively through the "bottom up" process described in an earlier section of this paper.

Thus, there is an inclination among school indicators researchers to separate their systems from school improvement for two reasons:

(1) School reform efforts tend to corrupt school indicators, and indicators should be made as "incorruptible" as possible.

(2) School indicators researchers should not be involved in individual school improvement, since proper school change must come from the faculty at the school; that is, school reform has to be "bottom up".

3. An Emerging Dialogue Between School Indicators and the Other Fields

There are some indications that a dialogue may be emerging between the fields of school indicators and school effectiveness/school improvement.

(1) Chapters on school indicators are beginning to appear in books devoted primarily to school effectiveness. For example, there was a Fitz-Gibbon (1996b) chapter on monitoring school effectiveness in *Merging Traditions: The Future of Research on School Effectiveness and School Improvement* (Gray, Reynolds, Fitz-Gibbon, and Jesson, 1996). Also, there is a chapter on school indicators (Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan, in press) in the forthcoming *International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research*.

(2) There are some ongoing research projects that attempt to integrate school indicators research with the two other traditions. For example, Kochan (1998) recently conducted dissertation research that involved a school indicator model focusing on multiple outcomes (achievement and behavioral), that also employed site-based qualitative research in the school effectiveness research tradition. The ongoing SEAP project described in this symposium is an example of a research program that integrates all three approaches.

(3) The educational *realpolitik* in several states in the U.S. does not allow for the distinction between school indicators and school reform described in the previous section. For example, the Louisiana Legislature in its 1997 session passed a bill that addressed both school accountability and school improvement simultaneously. This type of omnibus legislation demands an integrated approach in which the school accountability (indicator) model is inextricably linked to the determination of individual school effectiveness and to the promotion of individual school improvement.

While other states (e.g., Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland) have also addressed school accountability and school improvement simultaneously, the Louisiana situation is somewhat unique. In most states, the individuals who work on the educational indicator systems (typically psychometricians or computer experts) are not the same people who work in improving schools (education specialists, with expertise in school effectiveness and school improvement). During the SEAP project, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) reorganized structurally around the function of school improvement. A high percentage of the LDE staff was trained to conduct the SEAP-II intensive school assessment process. Almost all of those who were trained went on site visits in SY 1996-97 or SY 1997-98. Many of those who went on site visits wrote parts of the SEAP-II report, which included a section on school improvement. Many of those individuals will be directly involved in the program's school improvement activities (SEAP-III).

Several of those individuals who have been involved with SEAP-II and SEAP-III are also engaged in the development of the educational indicator system (SEAP-I) that will determine which schools are not meeting state standards. Thus, there are a number of individuals in the LDE who will work on the school indicator system (SEAP-I), the intensive assessment process (SEAP-II), and the school improvement efforts (SEAP-III). These integrated staff activities lead to a high degree of program cohesion.

III. The Paradigm Wars and their Denouement

The following section presents a more general discussion of the paradigm differences that underlie these differences among the fields of school indicators, school effectiveness and school improvement. It is based on Tashakkori and Teddlie's (1998) *Mixed Methods and Mixed Model Studies in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, which reviews the denouement of the paradigm wars and the emergence of pragmatism and mixed model designs.

Throughout this section , the reader should recall that the school indicators field probably prescribes more to the post-positivistic (quantitative methods)) point of view at this time, while the school improvement field leans more toward the constructivist (qualitative methods) point of view. School effectiveness research currently has more of a pragmatist orientation (mixed methods).

A. The Paradigm Wars

The paradigm wars have been fought across several "battlefields" concerning important conceptual issues, such as the "nature of reality" or the "possibility of causal linkages". No discipline (or subdiscipline) in the social or behavioral sciences has avoided manifestations of these paradigm wars. Datta (1994) called the participants in such wars "wrestlers"; we prefer to use the more genteel term "warriors". The "warriors" have included some of the best known scholars in their fields.

An example of the "warriors" from Education are Lincoln and Guba (1985), who have contended that the tenets of positivism and the quantitative methodology and data sources that accompany that paradigm have been discredited, and that constructivism and qualitative methods are in ascendance. Smith and Heshusius (1986), also writing in the field of Education, suggested "shutting down" the dialogue between the two camps, saying that their incompatibility made further dialogue unproductive. This point of view has been called the incompatibility thesis.

The paradigm debates have primary value now within the history of philosophy in the social sciences, since many active theorists and researchers have adopted the tenets of paradigm relativism, or the use of whatever philosophical and/or methodological approach works for the

particular research problem under study (e.g., Howe, 1988; Reichardt and Rallis, 1994). Even some of the most noted warriors (i.e., Guba and Lincoln, 1994) have signaled an end to the wars stating:

> The metaphor of paradigm wars described by Gage (1989) is undoubtedly overdrawn. Describing the discussions and altercations of the past decade or two as wars paints the matter as more confrontational than necessary. A resolution of paradigm differences can occur only when a new paradigm emerges that is more informed and sophisticated than any existing one. That is most likely to occur if and when proponents of these several points of view come together to discuss their differences .... (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 116).

Table 3 presents the distinctions between positivism/post-positivism and constructivism that have characterized the paradigm wars. On all these issues (methods, logic, epistemology, axiology, ontology, causal linkages), these two points of view are directly in contrast to one another. These distinctions will be discussed in detail in the next section of this paper when the philosophy of pragmatism is introduced.

B. The Philosophy of Pragmatism: The Rationale for Linking the Three Fields

Recently, there have been numerous attempts in the various social and behavioral sciences to make peace between the two major paradigms and their methods. "Pacifists" have appeared in each of the disciplines stating that qualitative and quantitative methods are, indeed, compatible. In Education and Evaluation research (e.g., Howe, 1988; Reichardt and Rallis, 1994), authors have presented the so-called compatibility thesis based on a different paradigm, which some have called pragmatism. Thus, we may refer to these pacifists in the paradigm wars as pragmatists.

Table 3
Comparisons of Three Important Paradigms
Used in the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Paradigm	Positivism	Post-Positivism	Constructivism
Methods	Quantitative	Primarily Quantitative	Qualitative
Logic	Deductive	Primarily Deductive	Inductive
Epistemology	Objective Point of View. Knower and Known are Dualism.	Modified Dualism. Findings Probably Objectively "True".	Subjective Point of Vie Knower and Known ar Inseparable
Axiology	Inquiry is Value Free.	Inquiry Involves Values, But They May Be Controlled.	Inquiry is Value Boun
Ontology	Naive Realism	Critical or Transcendental Realism	Relativism
Causal Linkages	Real Causes Temporally Precedent to or Simultaneous with Effects	There are Some Lawful, Reasonably Stable Relation-ships Among Social Phenomena. These May be Known Imperfectly.	All Entities Simultaneously Shaping Each Other. It Impossible to Distingui Causes from Effects.

Note. This table was taken from Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) *Mixed Methods and Mixed Model Studies in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, p. 23.

Pragmatically oriented theorists and researchers now often speak of mixed methods (or mixed methodology or methodological mixes), which contain elements of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches (e.g., Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Patton, 1990.) For instance, Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) presented 57 studies that employed mixed methods and described design characteristics of these mixed studies.

This detente in the paradigm wars has been positive for further research development in many fields of study, since most researchers now concentrate on doing research using whatever method is appropriate, instead of debating about methods or using one method exclusively. Nevertheless, the pragmatists have often employed imprecise language in their methodological discussions, utilizing some rather generic terms (e.g., mixed methods) to connote several different ways of conducting a study or a series of studies. Datta recently referred to what she called "mixed-up models", that derived from the " ... lack of a worldview, paradigm, or theory for mixed-model studies", concluding that "such a theory has yet to be fully articulated" (1994, p. 59).

C. Comparisons Among the Paradigms

Table 4 contains a presentation of what we consider to be the primary distinctions among four major paradigms used in the social and behavioral sciences: positivism, postpositivism, pragmatism, and constructivism. It is interesting to note that theorists delineating between positivism (including postpositivism) and constructivism (or interpretivism) typically do not include pragmatism as a third point of comparison, even though those two competing points of view do not exhaust the paradigmatic possibilities. As Howe (1988) notes:

> This seems to be a serious omission, for pragmatists were largely responsible for bringing down positivism and would clearly reject the forced choice between the interpretivist and positivist paradigms (p. 13).

Table 4
Comparisons of Four Important Paradigms Used in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: The Addition of Pragmatism

Paradigm	Positivism	Post-Positivism	**Pragmatism**	Constructivism
Methods	Quantitative	Primarily Quantitative	**Quantitative + Qualitative**	Qualitative
Logic	Deductive	Primarily Deductive	**Deductive + Inductive**	Inductive
Epistemology	Objective Point of View. Knower and Known are Dualism.	Modified Dualism. Findings Probably Objectively "True".	**Both Objective and Subjective Points of View.**	Subjective Point of View. Knower and Known are Inseparable
Axiology	Inquiry is Value Free.	Inquiry Involves Values, But They May Be Controlled.	**Values Play a Large Role in Interpreting Results.**	Inquiry is Value Bound.
Ontology	Naive Realism	Critical or Transcendental Realism	**Accept External Reality. Choose Explanations that Best Produce Desired Outcomes.**	Relativism
Causal Linkages	Real Causes Temporally Precedent to or Simultaneous with Effects	There are Some Lawful, Reasonably Stable Relation-ships Among Social Phenomena. These May be Known Imperfectly.	**There May Be Causal Relation-ships, but We Will Never Be Able to Pin Them Down.**	All Entities Simultaneously Shaping Each Other. It's Impossible to Distinguish Causes from Effects.

Note. This table was taken from Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) *Mixed Methods and Mixed Model Studies in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, p. 23.

1. Rejection of the Either/Or

In Table 4 the pragmatist point of view is illustrated as rejecting the forced choice between positivism (including postpositivism) and constructivism with regard to methods, logic, and epistemology. In each case, pragmatism rejects the either/or of the incompatibility thesis and embraces both points of view. Nielsen (1991, p.164) suggests that pragmatism is a "reactive, debunking philosophy" that argues against dominant systematic philosophies, making mocking critiques of metaphysical assertions such as "the grand Either/Or".

When choices come down between qualitative or quantitative methodology, postpositivists typically prefer experimental design (or variants thereof such as quasi-experimental designs or causal comparative designs), due to their preoccupation with causality and internal validity (e.g., Cook and Campbell, 1979). Similarly, constructivists prefer their own methods and dutifully distinguish the differences in methodological orientations.

Pragmatists, on the other hand, believe that either method is useful, choosing to use the broad array of all available quaitative and quantitative methods. Decisions regarding the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods (or both) depend upon the research question as it is currently posed and the phase of the research cycle that is ongoing.

2. The Research Cycle: Utilizing Both Inductive and Deductive Logic

Research on any given question at any point in time falls somewhere within a cycle of inference processes, often referred to as the research cycle or the chain of reasoning (e,g., Krathwohl, 1993) or the cycle of scientific methodology. The cycle may be seen as moving from grounded results through inductive logic to general inferences, then from those general inferences (or theory) through deductive logic to predictions to the particular (a priori hypotheses). .

At some points during the research process, it is likely that both types of inferences and methods will be used simultaneously. Pragmatists accept that they will use both inductive and deductive logic in the course of conducting research on a question in which they are vitally interested.

3. The Use of Both the Subjective and the Objective Points of View

Again the black and white contrast of the incompatibility thesis (either a dualism or a singularity, either an objective or a subjective point of view) is challenged by the pragmatists' contention that researchers may be both objective and subjective in epistemological orientation over the course of studying a research question. In this case, it is more reasonable to think of a continuum than two opposing poles: at some points, one may be more "subjective", while at others more "objective"; at some points the knower and the known must be interactive, while at others, one may more easily stand apart from what one is studying. If one allows the researcher the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodological tools, then this embrace of both the subjective and objective points of view is inevitable.

4. The Roles of Values (Axiology)

As indicated in Table 4, positivists believe that inquiry is value free, while constructivists believe that inquiry is value bound. Postpositivists realize that values play an important role in inquiry, but they also believe that it is possible to control the degree to which values influence results and interpretations. Postpositivists acknowledge both the value-ladenness and the theory-ladenness of facts (Reichardt and Rallis, 1994). Despite this recognition (and to a large degree because of it), postpositivists (e.g., Cook and Campbell, 1979) have devoted considerable effort to developing methods whereby the internal and external validity of their conclusions can be enhanced.

Pragmatists believe that values play a large role in conducting research and in drawing conclusions from their studies, and they see no reason to be particularly concerned about that influence. Pragmatists decide what they want to research, and this choice necessarily involves their personal value systems; that is, they study what they think is important to study. They then study the topic in a way that is congruent with their value system, including variables and units of analysis that they feel are the most appropriate for the research. They also conduct their studies in anticipation of results that are congruent with their value system. This description of the way in which researchers conduct their research has great face validity; that is, it seems to describe the way that researchers in the social and behavioral sciences actually conduct their studies, especially

research that has important social consequences.

5. Considerations of Ontology and Causality

The most controversial issues relating to the positivist/post-positivist, constructivist, and pragmatist points of views concern ontology and causality (the last two rows in Table 4). Guba and Lincoln (1994) consider differences concerning the nature of reality (ontology) to constitute the defining distinction between positivism/postpositivism and constructivism. Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1994) define the following types of realism:

(1) Naive realism - there is an objective, external reality upon which inquiry can agree (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). As indicated in Table 4, this position is associated with positivists.

(2) Critical realism - there is an objective reality, but it can be understood only imperfectly and probabilistically. This position is associated with postpositivists.

(3) Transcendental realism - the belief that social phenomena exist in the objective world, and that there are some "lawful reasonably stable relationships" among them (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 429). This statement is an alternative expression of the postpositivist position.

(4) Ontological Relativism - there are multiple social realities that are products of human intellects and that may change as their constructors change (Lincoln and Guba, 1994, p. 111). This position is associated with constructivists.

The major difference between the positivists/postpositivists and the constructivists on the nature of reality concerns the existence of an objective, external reality: the positivists/ postpositivists believe that such an objective reality exists, the constructivists believe that only multiple, subjective realities exist.

The pragmatist point of view regarding reality consists of two parts:

(1) There is an external world independent of our minds (Cherryholmes, 1992, p. 14). Thus, the pragmatists agree with the positivists/postpositivists on the existence of this external reality.

(2) On the other hand, pragmatists deny that Truth can be determined once and for all.

They also are unsure if one explanation of reality is better than another. According to Cherryholmes (1992), the pragmatists' choice of one explanation over another "... simply means that one approach is better than another at producing anticipated or desired outcomes. (p. 15)

Notions regarding causal relationships follow from these ontological distinctions. In short:

(1) Postpositivists believe that there are some lawful, reasonably stable relationships among social phenomena that may be known imperfectly, or probabilistically.

(2) Pragmatists believe that there may be causal relationships, but that we will never be able to pin them down.

(3) Constructivists believe that all entities are simultaneously shaping each other and that it's impossible to distinguish causes from effects.

6. The Intuitive Appeal of Pragmatism

Given all these considerations, pragmatism appears to be the best paradigm for justifying the use of mixed methods and mixed model studies (Howe, 1988). Pragmatism is appealing:

(1) because it gives us a paradigm that philosophically embraces the use of mixed method and mixed model designs;

(2) because it eschews the use of metaphysical concepts (Truth, Reality) that have caused much endless (and often useless) discussion and debate; and

(3) because it presents a very practical and applied research philosophy: study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you desire, and utilize the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system.

D. The Dictatorship of the Question

Pragmatists consider the research question to be more important than either the method they utilize, or the worldview that supposedly underlies the method. Most good researchers prefer addressing their research questions with any methodological tool available, utilizing the pragmatist credo of "what works" (e.g., Cherryholmes, 1992; Howe, 1988; Rorty, 1982). For most researchers committed to the thorough study of a research problem, method is secondary to

the research question itself, and the underlying worldview hardly enters the picture, except in the most abstract sense.

Our best scholars have always been more interested in investigating the questions that they have posed than in the specific methodologies that they employ, and the paradigms that underlie these methods. For instance, shortly after the recent death of pioneering methodologist Donald T. Campbell, Gene V. Glass eulogized him in a message sent out over the World Wide Web:

> The method must follow the question. Campbell, many decades ago, promoted the concept of triangulation - that every method has its limitations, and multiple methods are usually needed.

IV. Examples from the Research Literature of Linkages Among the Fields

A. The Blending of the School Effectiveness and School Improvement Traditions

The previous section presented the philosophical underpinnings for linking the fields of school effectiveness, school improvement, and school indicators in integrated programs of study. under the banner of pragmatism and using mixed methods. The following section will present examples of integrated research involving the school effectiveness and improvement paradigms.

Examples in this section come from Stoll (1996), Reynolds, et al., (1993), and Reynolds, et al., in press. Several research programs combining the school effectiveness and school improvement traditions were discussed in these three chapters.

(1) The Barclay-Calvert Project (Stringfield, et al., 1995)

(2) The Cardiff Change Agent Study (Reynolds, Davie, and Phillips, 1989)

(3) The Dutch National School Improvement Project (Houtveen and Osinga, 1995).

(4) Halton's Effective Schools Project (Stoll and Fink, 1992)

(5) Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA) (Ainscow and Hopkins, 1992; Hopkins, et al., 1994)

(6) Lewisham School Improvement Project

(7) Quality Development Initiative (QDI) (Ribbins and Burridge, 1994)

(8) Schools Make a Difference (SMAD) (Myers, 1996)

According to Reynolds, et al. (in press), a number of intervention projects emerged in the late 1980's and early 1990's in several countries (e.g., Canada, the Netherlands, the U.S., the U.K.) which were *neither* effectiveness based *nor* school improvement oriented, as defined by the traditional limits of those disciplines. Much of this convergence between these two paradigms has resulted from practitioners and district policy makers borrowing from both traditions, because *they do not share the ideological commitment to the one or other ways* of working of researchers in the fields. Some of this blending of research approaches has also arisen through the effects of the ICSEI in breaking down disciplinary as well geographical boundaries.

This failure to subscribe to an *either* (school effectiveness) *or* (school improvement) paradigm is the same process described in the previous section when pragmatists refused to select between the philosophies of positivism (quantitative methods) or constructivism (qualitative methods. Similar to the pragmatists who seeks "what works" and are interested primarily in the research question, the investigators leading these "blended" school effectiveness/school improvement studies seek any information or method that would lead to success in their action research projects.

Sometimes the adoption of ideas from research has been somewhat uncritical; for example, the numerous attempts to apply findings from one specific context to another entirely different context when research has increasingly demonstrated significant contextual differences (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). Sometimes it is clear that projects are partial in their adoption of material from the paradigms: some projects reflect on an understanding of what makes schools effective but do not have a detailed action plan to accomplish their goals, while other projects have celebrated the 'core' school improvement ideas of ownership, collegiality and laterality without much acknowledgment of the key areas of school process and organization on which to focus their attention (Reynolds, et al., in press)..

Nevertheless, there are a number of projects in action that represent a proper blending of the two approaches. These blended programs have several characteristics in common:

(1) Pupil outcomes in academic (and often social) areas are regarded as the key success criteria, rather than measures of teacher perception of the innovations, as was the case historically.

(2) These outcomes are increasingly assessed by use of quantitative data, that is regarded

as necessary to build commitment and confidence among those taking part and to measure the success or failure of the project initiative.

(3) Bodies of knowledge from school effectiveness, school improvement and school development are used to resource programs, with a problem centered orientation being used in which philosophical judgements about the nature of appropriate strategies in suspended in favor of a "what works" (the pragmatist) approach that is distinctly non-denominational.

(4) The learning level, the instructional behavior of teachers and the classroom level, are increasingly begin targeted for explicit program attention as well as the school level. This is a marked contrast again, with work from the 1980's where the school was often the sole focus. This change mirrors a similar conversion in traditional school effectiveness research, beginning in the mid 1980's, when researcher began consciously including teacher effectiveness variables in their work (Teddlie, 1994).

B. An Extended Example: The Barclay-Calvert Project in the United States

The following discussion is taken from Reynolds, et al. (in press).

Our discussion here about this project, and especially about the relationship between school effectiveness and school improvement, is based on a four-year evaluation (Stringfield et al, 1995). In this project the curricular and instructional package of Calvert School, a private school in Baltimore (USA), is being implemented in an inner city public school (Barclay) in the same city. The Calvert school offers a Kindergarten to Grade Six day school program to a predominantly highly affluent clientele in Baltimore. Since early this century, the school has also offered a highly structured, certified home study curriculum. Procedures for the teachers' provision of lessons, parent/school contact, and evaluation standards for each unit of the curriculum are all unusually specific. Each grade's curriculum and instructional program is provided in a level of detail that often approximates to scripting. Moreover, the entire program places an unusually high emphasis on student-generated products.

Students generate 'folders' of work that are regularly reviewed by their teacher, their parents, and the school's administrators. According to the evaluation team, the curriculum itself

is not revolutionary but reflects decades of high and academically traditional demands, blended with an emphasis on the importance of classwork and homework and an intensive writing program. All the work undertaken by students reflects the characteristics of effective teaching linked together with a high achievement level of the intakes. It is thus easy to understand why the results on norm-referenced achievement tests are very good. Virtually every grade of the select population of Calvert students score above the 90th percentile when compared to public, elite suburban and private school norms.

By contrast Barclay School is a kindergarten through eighth grade public school in Baltimore. The population served by Barclay is 94 percent minority. Nearly 80 percent of the students attending Barclay School receive free or reduced price lunch. The neighborhood is one of old factories and terraced houses. The school serves some families led by drug dealers, prostitutes, or impoverished graduate students at Johns Hopkins University; however, the great majority of students are the children of working class or unemployed African-Americans, often single-parent families. In the late 1980's it became clear that the school's achievement scores were poor, as well as the attendance rate and levels of student discipline in the classrooms and school halls. So, Barclay could be seen as having the typical problems of an inner-city American school.

The Principal at Barclay became interested in the Calvert School program and the two schools developed a proposal to implement the entire Calvert program at Barclay school. The program was to be implemented by the Barclay staff. The staff would receive training in the Calvert philosophy, materials, and instructional system. Ongoing staff development would be provided by a facilitator who had both public school and Calvert teaching experience.

Implementation began in the Fall of 1990 in kindergarten at first grade. Each year one additional grade has been added. For two weeks each summer the Barclay/Calvert facilitator trains the next grade's Barclay teachers in the Calvert philosophy, curriculum and methods. The facilitator spends the school year working with each succeeding group of teachers in an effort to maximize the chance of full program implementation.

The key factors making for the project's success are argued to be:

(1) Having Funding. The funding of the program by a private foundation made it possible

to appoint a full-time co-ordinator who acted as the project facilitator. It should be noted, however, that the entire four-year grant has supplied less money than is the annual difference in total funding between a disadvantaged Baltimore City and a suburban Baltimore County school. One of the benefits of this was that everything needed for instruction was there on time in a sufficient quantity (one of the major disadvantages of Barclay school in the past).

(2) Having Non-Fiscal Support. The funding foundation was involved in the program, not only in fiscal decisions, but also in regular staff meetings and in efforts to anticipate and solve problems. The principal was highly talented and very determined to make the program a success. She visited classes, attended meetings and was very active in involving parents. Furthermore, the Calvert co-ordinator at Barclay was very supportive with respect to the implementation and brought high levels of knowledge, competence and enthusiasm to the program implementation. Another source of support was Calvert School itself. The principal remained a supporter of the project; he assisted Barclay School, visited classrooms and repeatedly made himself available for consultations. Finally, the parents of Barclay were very actively involved at every stage of the project.

(3) Having an Achievable Plan. The Barclay/Calvert project was very methodical. Barclay did not attempt to implement the whole Calvert curriculum and instructional program all at once, but gradually, grade level by grade level. In this way it was possible to prepare teachers for the next grade level utilizing a cascade model.

(4) Having a High Quality Curriculum. The curriculum itself involves five processes that are extremely important for its success.

(a) Students read a lot (that means increasing opportunity to learn).

(b) All students produce a lot of work.

(c). Teachers check students' work and also correct all their own work.

(d) Student folders are read by the co-ordinator, the principal or the Calvert administrator every month. Therefore, student monitoring is very strong.

(e) The student folders are sent home every month, which increases parent involvement in what students do and also in checking homework.

(5) Having Positive Teacher Attitudes. It is striking in Calvert School that teachers are

highly confident that Calvert students can excel academically. It was one of the major changes of the implementation of the Calvert program in Barclay that the teacher attitudes changed also at Barclay. They were convinced that the Calvert program was helping them to teach more, teach better, and to help more children perform at higher levels. These are not of course unrealistic expectations, since the teachers have good grounds for their optimistic beliefs, because they have received meaningful, ongoing support and because they were observing enhanced results.

(6) Emphasizing Classroom Instruction. Little changes in students' academic achievement unless something changes between the student, the curriculum and instruction. The Calvert program is reaching towards the student, for which there are several reasons.

First, the curriculum has been put in place. The curriculum demands high fidelity implementation. Second, a high quality instructional system is also in place. Almost all the teachers have made significant changes in their teaching and have become more effective. In classroom observation it turned out that the student 'on-task' rates in the Calvert/Barclay classes were often very high and that teachers reported that given high quality instruction and instructional support, the Barclay students were responding well to the raised demands. In summary, the Calvert program has enjoyed a far better chance of achieving full implementation than most novel programs in school systems.

In the evaluation of the program, student testing was also included. The data from norm-referenced achievement testing programs indicate that students in the program are achieving academically at a rate significantly above their pre-program Barclay School peers. This finding is consistent across Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, and is particularly striking in writing. The Barclay students are also making progress not only in specific areas of academic content, but also in the ability to integrate new material and absorb new knowledge. Additional data indicate that the Barclay/Calvert project has reduced student absences, reduced student transfers from the school, greatly reduced the number of students requiring Chapter 1 services, reduced referrals to and diagnosis of 'learning disablement', eliminated disciplinary removals and increased the number of students found eligible for the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Taken collectively, the diverse measures indicate a very successful school improvement project, which above all has been reliably implemented.

V. Linkages Between School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Through SEAP

As noted earlier, the School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot is a three year study that joins all three fields in three ongoing phases: SEAP-I, school indicators; SEAP-II, school effectiveness; and SEAP-III, school improvement. Due to the high degree of integration among job functions in the newly restructured LDE, SEAP appears to be the first, large scale, state mandated program to integrate all three fields of study. This is a function of three factors:

(1) the enabling legislation, to be described below, which called for school accountability and school improvement;

(2) the restructuring of the LDE into a unit, whose primary goal is school improvement, and

(3) the development of a management team of state bureaucrats and university personnel, who conceptualized the three aspects of the project as integrated and highly interdependent.

While reading the following section, it is important to remember that SEAP is not a university based research project. It is a pilot study for a legislatively mandated program (School and District Accountability Program). Therefore, decisions that were made regarding the design and implementation of SEAP had to always take into consideration the politics associated with state level public education. In this particular context, the major players included the legislatively mandated School and District Accountability Commission, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Governor and his Educational Advisor, and the state legislature.

A. Act 478 of the Regular Session of the 1997 Louisiana Legislature

The education reform fervor that has consumed the United States over the past 30 years stimulated the creation of state education accountability systems throughout all 50 states. Though the precise structure of these systems varies from one locale to the next, reflecting the diversity of local populations and their respective education goals, the evolution of state accountability systems has tended to follow a general pattern (Cornett & Gaines, 1997). Louisiana has had its share of these reforms, as will be described later in this section.

The most current educational reform in Louisiana was initiated through Act 478 of the Regular Session of the 1997 Louisiana Legislature. This act called for the development and implementation of a school and district accountability system, which has the following four purposes:

(1) to provide for the development and implementation of a school and district accountability system that "requires and supports student achievement" in each public school,

(2) to provide for the monitoring of the "quality of education in each public school", and to insure that the quality of education is maintained at a level "essential for each student to receive a minimum foundation of education",

(3) to provide "clear standards and expectations" for schools and districts so that the assessment of their effectiveness will be understood, and

(4) to provide information to schools and districts that will assist them in focusing on student achievement.

The law called for two pilot study years (SY 1997-98, SY 1998-99) in order to prepare for full implementation of the state school and district accountability system in SY 1999-2000. The LDE had already initiated a limited pilot study of the school accountability system in SY 96-97, which is being continued in SY 1997-98. There are three phases of this School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP), which parallel the purposes of Act 478 (monitoring, intensive assessment, assistance) :

(1) SEAP-I - the piloting of a statewide system for monitoring the effectiveness of public schools,

(2) SEAP-II - the piloting of an intensive assessment of selected public schools, including an on-site visit, and

(3) SEAP-III - the piloting of a school improvement program.

The law also established the roles of BESE, the LDE , and a School and District Accountability Commission with regard to accomplishing its goals. The Accountability Commission reported its findings and recommendations to BESE in March 1998. As part of its duties, the Accountability Commission has been gathering information on school improvement plans currently in operation in other states and will provide BESE with recommendations for the

improvement component of the school accountability system.

B. Past Efforts at Educational Reform in Louisiana

1. Overview of Past Efforts at Educational Reform

Like many states in the U.S., Louisiana has attempted a number of educational reforms over the past twenty-five years. If student performance on standardized tests is used as the criterion (e.g., student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP), then these past efforts have been largely unsuccessful.

According to a recent literature review (Kochan, 1998), the progression of education accountability in Louisiana has tended to follow national trends: starting with a *focus on education inputs*, raising *standards for instructional personnel*, establishing *high standards for pupil performance*, and building to passage of a comprehensive education reform package - the Children First Act in 1988 - that simultaneously created a *teacher evaluation program*, an *education performance indicator program* to monitor school performance, and a *school incentive program* to recognize and reward high-performing schools. The Louisiana Association of Business and Industry published a document in 1986, entitled "Ten Years of Educational Reform: A Long Road to Nowhere". This document was published two years before the passage of the CFA, which basically codified under one umbrella the variety of educational reforms that had been proposed, and occasionally enacted without adequate funding, within the state from the mid-1970's.

The Children First Act (CFA) was widely perceived to be a failed reform effort, due to the scraping of its centerpiece, the Louisiana Teacher Evaluation Program (Ellett, et al., 1996; Maxcy and Maxcy, 1993). The School and District Accountability System, established by Act 478 of the Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, is the first major statewide reform activity since the CFA.

2. Education Accountability in Louisiana from 1975 through 1987: Tracking the National Trends

In keeping with national trends, Louisiana policy makers first began *focusing on education inputs* during the mid-1970's, taking steps to standardize such instructional inputs as textbooks. One of the major reform initiatives of this period was enacted in 1975 when the Louisiana Legislature authorized BESE to implement a "School Approval Process" (SAP) to ensure that all public schools met certain minimum standards relating to school safety, facilities, and instruction, such as maximum class size, the specific type of certification held by teachers, etc. Student outcomes did not figure into the school approval process in any way. Schools that fail to pass muster were given a grace period within which to correct their identified deficiencies or risk loss of state and federal funding. Though numerous schools have been cited over the years, particulary for deficiencies in certified personnel, none have been declared "unapproved" or have lost funding since the program's inception, leading school districts to take the approval process less seriously over time. There also is a growing skepticism that an approval process that focuses exclusively on inputs is adequate to ensure high quality instruction, particularly since LDE researchers have found only weak correlations between key SAP-monitored inputs and valued student outcomes, such as student achievement (Crone & Franklin, 1993).

In their efforts to improve the educational outcomes of Louisiana students, policy makers next turned their attention toward *raising standards for instructional personnel* in Louisiana public schools. A variety of measures were enacted during the late 1970's and early 1980's, establishing minimum criteria for teacher education programs (La. R.S. 17:7.2); raising standards for teacher certification; providing state-subsidized continuing education opportunities for teachers; and establishing minimum teacher salary schedules to encourage promising young people to enter the profession.

Another national trend which took root in Louisiana during this period was the drive to improve student outcomes by *raising standards for pupil performance* and then monitoring schools' progress toward achieving those more rigorous goals. The 1979 Louisiana Legislature enacted a competency-based education program that (a) mandated the adoption of statewide curriculum standards in required subjects, (b) directed local school districts to develop pupil progression plans setting local criteria for pupil promotion and placement, and (c) provided for the creation of a minimum standards testing program That program was repealed in 1986,

however, and replaced by the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP).

The LEAP's primary purpose is to provide information that can be used for diagnostic purposes and to guide local promotion decisions. Norm-referenced tests (NRTs) were initially administered in grades 4, 6, and 9, while criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) were implemented in grades 3, 5, 7, 10, and 11. Coincident to the program's creation, BESE adopted stringent new high school graduation requirements. Under those new guidelines, high school students were required to (a) pass a Graduation Exit Examination consisting of the five CRT components administered in grades 10 and 11, and (b) accumulate 23 Carnegie Units of academic credit in specified subject areas (Norton, Park, Christian & Eichler, 1996).

3. The Children First Act of 1988: Teacher Accountability Plus School Indicators and Incentives

The public fascination with educational accountability that swept the country after *A Nation at Risk* (1983) did not go unheeded in Louisiana (Kochan, 1998; Maxcy and Maxcy, 1993). Louisiana elected an "Education Governor" in 1987, a reform-minded Harvard-educated Congressman, who promised to improve Louisiana's schools and classrooms. Following up on the campaign promise that helped get him elected, Governor Buddy Roemer pushed an omnibus education bill through the Legislature during his first year entitled the "Children First Act." This comprehensive legislation had a number of components including: the Louisiana Teacher Evaluation Program (LaTEP for veteran teachers), the Louisiana Teacher Internship Program (LaTIP for first year teachers), the Model Career Option Program (MCOP) for outstanding teachers, teacher and administrator pay raises, longevity steps for educators through 25 years, the School Progress Profiles, the School Incentive Program, etc.

Three of these programs are particularly relevant to current educational reform in the state: the School Incentive Program, LaTEP, and the School Progress Profiles. The School Incentive Program (SIP) was designed to recognize and reward public schools that were making exceptional educational progress as compared to other schools of a similar type, based on student population factors, school environment factors, and prior achievement. During the SIP's first and only year of operation, $1,000 cash awards were made to 100 schools statewide. Though never

repealed, the program was never funded beyond its first year in operation; its greatest contribution to date may be the method researchers developed to calculate a composite, school-level achievement score (thereafter nicknamed "SIPSCORE"), which could be used to track school progress from year to year (Crone and Franklin, 1993; Kochan, 1998).

The Louisiana Teacher Evaluation Program (LaTEP) was a high-stakes professional accountability program whose purpose was to periodically assess the classroom performance of public school teachers. Though the legislation included provisions to remediate teachers in areas of deficiency and provide incentives for top teachers to remain in the classroom, those points were overshadowed by the program's third function: to provide a mechanism for revoking the credentials of incompetent instructors. LaTEP drew the bitter opposition of teacher unions who stridently criticized the highly complicated evaluation process that was developed largely without teacher input. Critics so undermined the program that it was suspended after only a few years in operation.

The Progress Profiles (School Report Card) Program. This component of the CFA is still in operation today, with the Progress Profiles Program having evolved into Louisiana's education performance indicator system. In true accountability logic, "the program was founded on the premise that educational improvement is most successful when parents, school staff, and policy makers have access to information on a wide range of factors believed to influence student learning" (LDE, 1993). Toward that end, the program was designed with three objectives in mind: "to establish a database for educational planning, to increase accountability at all levels, and to inform the parents of school children and the general public on the condition of public education" (Children First Act, 1988).

Three levels of Progress Profiles reports are published. Individualized School Report Cards in four formats (elementary, middle, high, and combination school) are developed on virtually every public school in the state, mass-produced, and distributed to public school parents statewide. These reports are the simplest in presentation and have presented only one year of data since a 1994 evaluation study demonstrated that parents and school staff had difficulty interpreting the indicators. A state-level report, the *Louisiana Progress Profiles State Report*, provides one year of summary, state-level information on all indicators and is designed specifically

for state officials and policy makers.

The most detailed and technical of the three Profiles reports is the *District Composite Report (DCR)*. These individualized district-level reports provide six years of longitudinal information, by school, on all the schools in a district. Some indicators are presented in greater detail than in either the parent and policy-maker reports; all include descriptions of the data sources and methods used in calculating the indicators. DCRs are distributed primarily to central office staff, school principals, researchers and other individuals involved in school administration and improvement.

C. School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot, Phase I (SEAP-I) - the School Indicator Component

This school indicator phase of SEAP involves the identification of more and less effective schools based on multiple indicators (school indicators). SEAP-I measures the effectiveness of nearly 1,500 Louisiana public schools using achievement and other performance indicators (dropouts, attendance).

SEAP-I was initially an outgrowth of education finance accountability legislation in Louisiana, which mandated that the LDE develop academic performance measures that could be used to test the "equity" and "adequacy" of the state's Minimum Foundation Program (MFP). In SY 1996-97, the LDE deputy superintendent for management and finance employed consultants from Louisiana State University (LSU) to improve upon an existing school performance model which used regression analysis in the calculation of school performance indicators (SEIs). Regression analysis or more complicated multilevel models are often used in school effectiveness research and in school indicator systems (e.g., Fitz-Gibbon, 1996a; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Willms, 1992). These models calculate school effectiveness indices (SEIs) after taking into consideration factors such as the socioeconomic status (SES) of students.

In SY 1997-98, LSU consultants worked with the School and District Accountability Commission in examining various types of models for assessing schools' effectiveness status. The results of these activities will be discussed in the third paper of the symposium.

D. School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot, Phase II (SEAP-I) - the School Effectiveness Component

The school effectiveness phase of SEAP involves the intensive assessment of schools of interest identified from the results of SEAP-I. In SEAP-II, teams of observers intensively assesses the effectiveness of selected schools (12 in SY 1996-97, 45 in SY 1997-98) using a wide variety of process and product data gathered through archived sources, school site visits and the schools' own internal needs assessments. The data collection is a mixed method one, with over 20 databases being utilized.

When the system becomes operational in SY 1999-2000, the results from SEAP-I will be used to determine which schools receive the intensive SEAP-II assessment process. During the pilot years SY 1996-97 and SY 1997-98, districts and schools volunteered to undergo the process. Representative samples of schools, with varying levels of achievement and of socioeconomic status of student body, were selected from the volunteers for the assessment.

SEAP-II activities will be discussed in the fourth and fifth papers of the symposium.

E. School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot, Phase III (SEAP-III) - the School Improvement Component

The school improvement phase of SEAP involves the development of change process models for the identified schools. When the system becomes operational in SY 1999-2000, these school improvement activities will be earmarked for those schools who were identified through the SEAP-I process and who weree intensively assessed through the SEAP-II process.

During the pilot years SY 1996-97 and SY 1997-98, two groups of schools (Cohorts One and Two) received, or will receive, a set of recommendations for school improvement, which was supposed to be incorporated into their existing school improvement plans. These recommendations were part of the school's SEAP-II report, which included a needs assessment completed by the schools' faculties.

As enacted for Cohort One (the only group to undergo improvement activities thus far) in

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Dueling Agendas: Louisiana's Prescription for Balancing the Often Competing Demands of Education Improvement and Accountability

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Paper number two in a symposium entitled "Integrating School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The Louisiana School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP)" and presented at the Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association

Presentation #2. Dueling Agendas: Louisiana's Prescription for Balancing the Often Competing Demands of Education Improvement and Accountability

Objectives: *Louisiana is noted for its diverse population and distinctive political heritage. This paper will describe the systemic education accountability reforms currently underway in Louisiana and the political and social context within which those reforms are taking place.*

Perspectives: *Louisiana's system of government is very centralized and is traditionally a top-down structure. The education reform efforts now underway are an attempt to break that mold. The LDE, under new management, is trying to (a) reconceptualize its role, moving from regulator to facilitator and (b) replace the current hodgepodge of performance monitoring mechanism -- all artifacts of the piecemeal reforms of the 1970s and 1980s -- with an integrated and systemic education accountability process.*

Conclusions/Point of View: *The development of a statewide, school accountability system is a process fraught with competing ideas, beliefs, philosophies, and political agendas that can stymy progress and subvert even the best intentions of reformers. Louisiana has embarked upon a progressive journey to restructure its education system by changing the LDE's primary function from one of regulation to one of service. While trying to redirect resources to fulfill this new calling, the LDE is charged with developing a means by which schools are held accountable for student performance. SEAP is the LDE's mechanism for striking a balance between those demanding school closures and those striving for improvement.*

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INTRODUCTION TO LOUISIANA EDUCATION REFORMS

In Louisiana, educational reforms began in the mid-1970s and have been on-going since with a little-bit-of-this and a little-bit-of-that, somewhat similar to making a gumbo. However, each of the Gumbo ingredients were being cooked in separate pots without ever being blended together in the Gumbo pot! One of the main reasons for the lack of coherence was an overall lack of leadership and a compartmentalized approach to reform. This paper will attempt to describe how the School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP) in Louisiana is helping to get all of the ingredients into ***the same*** gumbo pot so we can nourish Louisiana education.

Leadership

Public policy in Louisiana has been very centrally directed from the top by a number of elected bodies: the Governor, the Legislature, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) and the State Superintendent. At times, these bodies were in such disagreement that management issues entered the judicial arena, such as when the State Superintendent sued SBESE over the control of federal funding! Needless to say, almost every public policy regarding education was created and debated in the political environment.

In 1984, the legislature changed the law to allow SBESE to appoint the state superintendent which was during the first legislative session of the third term of Governor Edwin Edwards. This action may have been politically motivated, but still required a legislative 2/3 majority vote to convert the office from being elected to being appointed by SBESE. The vote was so close, a legislator was brought in on a gurney from his hospital bed in order to vote on securing the change. However, this action did not go into effect until the incumbent, who had ran for office, completed his term. Louisiana education then underwent a four year lame-duck situation with an elected

superintendent who could not run again for the office. This time-period also corresponded to a serious drop in the price of oil, which had a tremendous economic impact on the state as a whole. As a result, when dramatic reductions in state funded programs were required, the lack of leadership contributed to fragmentation and incoherence in any remaining programs.

Since the spring of 1988 when SBESE first appointed the state superintendent, the Department and SBESE have struggled to orient themselves to this change in governance styles. With the appointment of the current State Superintendent Cecil J. Picard on July 1, 1996, it appears that much of the struggling is beginning to pay off. Three months after taking office, the Superintendent presented to SBESE a four year action plan geared to improving student achievement that has served a the precursor to a five year strategic plan due to be completed June 30, 1998. The LDE had not had a strategic plan in at least the last twenty years. One house-keeping component of the action plan was the reorganization of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE). The reorganization will be complete by August of 1998 and will focus the agency on customer service and student achievement.

Educational Reforms, 1975-1991

The reforms that began in the late 1970s dealt with: student accountability by establishing a "basic skills" testing program along with the mandate for the state to develop the curriculum for every subject being taught; a local teacher evaluation program; a professional development program; and state school approval standards. The testing program was considered so basic, that in the mid-1980's it was suspended while a new testing program was created. In the late 1980s, the state resumed a student testing program with both criterion-referenced tests (CRT) and norm-referenced tests (NRT) through the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP). This program

continued to be based on state established curriculum guides. The CRT testing program also included specific content components for high school grades 10 and 11 which required passage in order for students to graduate from high school. The curriculum standards and the testing program, while encouraged to be coordinated, were administered by separate bureaus in separate offices of the LDE.

The Professional Improvement Program (PIPs) was active and funded for 5 years. At that point, the state was paying teachers who had taken college credit courses a total of $80 million each year and the program was suspended. There was much criticism that "teachers went and took basket weaving" and then were entitled to receive between $1,100 and $3,300 a year as long as they continued teaching. The suspension applied only for any new participants while previous participants continue receiving their supplements until they retire. The fiscal year 1997-98 cost to fund the program was approximately $38 million for professional development teachers received in the early 1980s.

Also in the late 1980s, Louisiana passed a state-level teacher evaluation program. Certification could be revoked based on the evaluation. This program soon ran into multiple problems and road-blocks and was totally revamped in 1992. Today, there is a state-level assessment for new beginning teachers tied to initial state certification. This program was revised in 1997 to focus more on the mentoring aspects of assisting beginning teachers. Individual evaluations for all certified teachers and principals are conducted at the local level based on state established program standards. Again, as with the curriculum and testing, the teaching standards and certification was the responsibility of one bureau and office while the teacher assessment and evaluation were the responsibility of a different bureau and office within the LDE.

The same fragmentation and incoherence existed for the school standards for approval (legislation passed in 1975) and the "School Report Card" (legislation passed in 1988). The data published on the "School Report Card" had very little to do the school's annual approval rating. Again, these programs were administered by separate bureaus in separate offices of the LDE.

Educational Reforms, 1992-1997

In 1992, the teacher evaluation program was revamped and focused on state-level teacher assessments for beginning teachers. Local evaluations for non-beginning teachers was strengthened, but was left at the local level with the state only monitoring the local process. One of the major reforms of 1992 was the passage of a new state funding formula. This is considered major, because Louisiana previously, since 1929, had used a specific resource-driven instructional unit formula for state aid equalization and distribution. The 1992 formula was the first step in moving to a performance-based management system with a per pupil driven formula. The formula also made tremendous improvements in equalization. The previous formula had only considered $60 million in local revenue as the equalization factor. The new formula considered $1 billion in local revenue as the equalization factor. The correlation to local wealth of the state aid distribution went from an inverse relationship of .18 in 1991-92 to an inverse relationship of .87 in 1996-97.[1]

In Louisiana, major state reforms usually come the first legislative session of a Governor's first or fifth year in office. At least, that was before the legislature and the people passed a constitutional amendment in 1992. This amendment provides consideration for only fiscal issues in even numbered years and only non-fiscal issues in odd numbered years. Our laws also provide that Gubernatorial and Legislative elections occur in odd numbered years with the induction into office in January of an even numbered year. Needless to say, newly elected governors and

legislators become very frustrated their first year in office when they can only deal with education and other non-fiscal issues in a special legislative session.

As a result, in 1996, we had the first year of a new administration and a new legislature that could not consider or pass any education legislation without it being in a special session! Therefore, there were over 1,100 education-related bills filed in 1997.

Reforms in 1997 include a major reorganization of the Department of Education and it's budget structure, a performance-based school accountability program, funding for development and implementation of a new testing program based on challenging content standards, a strengthening of the new teacher mentor program, a leadership program for principals, funding for classroom-based technology, funding for teacher classroom instructional supplies, funding for a K-3 reading and math reform program, and the expansion of the charter school program and loan fund.

Integrated Public Policies

Systemic reform implies policy coherence. The general notion is that policies should integrate and send consistent signals. This aspect of reform reflects significant frustration because of the complexity of the policies used to govern elementary and secondary education. There are a number of reasons for the complexity such as: our multilevel, multi factor system for governing education; the need to claim electoral credit through initiatives that are deliberately crafted to be distinctive; the increasing volume of policy from all levels of government; and related trends to specialize policy institutions. For these reasons along with many others, policy has been marked by fragmentation.[2] (Fuhrman, 1994) To improve the level of policy coherence, states are beginning to use their emerging student outcome standards as anchors for other policies that would coordinate with and reinforce these standards. Key policies being integrated include those directly linked to

curriculum: instructional materials, student assessment, teacher certification and teacher professional development.[3] (Smith and O'Day 1991)

In Louisiana, the 1997 reforms are focused on the challenging new content standards that have been adopted for students and the components of effective teaching identified for teachers. The reform efforts, such as new student assessments, textbook adoption, school effectiveness and assistance, school accountability, and leadership efforts, are being aligned with both the challenging content standards and the components of effective teaching. In addition, the Department reorganization aligned and focused the functions to be provided by a state department for students, schools, educators and school systems. The aligned functions are: setting standards; performing assessments; ensuring accountability; providing assistance; and resource management.

KEEPING REFORM ALIVE IN THE PUBLIC POLICY ARENA

One of the first lessons to learn in managing public policy is that there are *always* three aspects to every issue. You may have heard of the good, the bad and the ugly? Well, the three aspects could be considered similar but they are called the philosophical, the technical, and the political. The best way to define the three areas may be by describing the types of personalities that generally tend to make up the resident expertise in each of the areas.

Philosophical

The philosophical is best typified by the university professor. University professors are very versed in the philosophical and research basis of almost every educational issue and can be an invaluable resource. However, sometimes, they have problems if they are charged with the technical implementation of a reform effort. Their approach is generally too "pure" or dictatorial with little accommodation of different perspectives.

Technical

The technical area is best typified by the public financial administrator. They are very good at figuring out the most obscure detail of very complex formulas and procedures because, after all, everything must balance back to the penny! An example would be the one person in the state who knows every detail of the state funding formula. Almost every state has the one person (or at a maximum no more than two or three) that is the financial administrator over billions of dollars and administers a program that very few people understand. These types are usually very detail oriented, are reluctant to change, and think in terms of numbers!

Political

The politician has a chameleon personality, and justifiably so. They are elected to represent

constituents. Therefore, their perspective shifts or changes given the changes in the perceptions or opinions of their constituents. The perceptions or opinions of constituents are often formed by the philosophical or technical applications of public policy. But don't ever underestimate that almost every citizen has had some experience with public schools either directly or indirectly, usually have very specific opinions on how schools should operate and can become very vocal about expressing their concerns to elected representatives.

Louisiana Experience

An example of the failure to align all three aspects in Louisiana is the state level teacher evaluation program of 1988. From the philosophical perspective, it was very sound. It was designed by a team experts from a university. It ran into tremendous problems in the technical design and implementation stage, which had been contracted out to the University. Needless to say, with the technical design and implementation being very problematic, it soon became very political. We even had a Governor, on election night when it became clear that he had won, say "...run out of the state...and ... take his bastard step-children LTIP and LTEP with him..." When this happens, reform efforts, no matter how philosophically sound, are either suspended or required to undergo a massive redesign. Fortunately, in this Louisiana reform effort, a redesign was proposed and politically accepted so that the $5 million invested in the initial design and implementation was not a total write off. Unfortunately, reform efforts that go astray and are ultimately suspended usually cost millions of dollars for which there is little or no gain and generate significant mistrust with the public.

What does all of this mean for encouraging change in public policy to support school improvement? It means any new public policy needs to be grounded in a research-based philosophy that is understandable or logical, can be technically implemented without undue burden or

discrimination and is supported by a majority group of constituents. If any of these aspects are missing or are not aligned with the effort, the reform may be in jeopardy of achieving it's goal.

EDUCATION REFORM -- INCLUDING ALL OF THE PIECES

Successful education reformers develop practical strategies to manage change in a systematic way. School reform can be a complex undertaking that requires careful thought and administration, and nearly all reforms, regardless of their scope or intended target, share a number of characteristics. The U. S. Department of Education first published a report "Fitting the Pieces, Studies of Education Reform" in October 1996 which reviewed and described the essential elements of planning, implementing, and sustaining school reform. The report was designed to assist policy makers and practitioners at the district, school and community levels in creating strategies that will enable them to increase student learning. The essential elements as presented in the report are provided in this section with a comment about Louisiana's latest reform efforts.[4](Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc.)

Planning

> ***Leadership.*** *School reformers usually start out with high levels of energy and commitment to the process. Unfortunately institutionalizing change is a long, arduous process, and over time competing responsibilities and the slow pace at which gains are made can drain enthusiasm. Strong leadership can help ensure that initial reform objectives are achieved. In addition to making key decisions and following through on their implementation, effective leaders build consensus, promote buy-in, and delegate authority among participants. Ultimately, strong leadership is about good management.[4] (Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 5)*

The current State Superintendent Cecil J. Picard brings to the job twenty years of experience as a teacher, coach and principal plus an additional twenty years of experience as a state representative and state senator. Superintendent Picard has been actively involved with the Southern Region Education Board in addition to handling much of the state's education reform legislation over the past twenty years. His leadership has already been demonstrated with the reforms that have

been initiated or are being developed since he took office on July 1, 1996. Also, since 1996 there has been a climate in Louisiana of the teachers, principals, school boards, SBESE, the state legislature and the governor all working together to improve teaching and learning that has not been present in past reform efforts.

> ***Goals.*** *Education reforms endure when key stakeholders internalize reform goals and support implementation strategies. Regardless of the type of reform, positive results are more likely when everyone supports the larger vision, understands their role in the process and takes responsibility for action. Reformers seeking to create an environment that supports change must engage in a variety of planning and consensus building activities that motivate individuals to join the effort.*[4] *(Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 9)*

The school and district accountability reform underway in Louisiana has been developed by a Commission of representatives of the major stakeholders with a clear vision of improving student academic achievement. In addition, the State Superintendent has personally visited over one-third of the school districts in the state and spent time in the schools reviewing local reform efforts and seeing first-hand the successes schools and districts are achieving. These visits usually include not only a visit with school district and school personnel, but in many cases, the Superintendent also speaks with the local Rotary Chapter or the local business representatives. These local visits generally receive press coverage in the local communities informing a broad range of individuals of coming educational reforms.

> ***Timing.*** *Reform is neither easy nor quick; many reforms require years of work before producing measurable results. While patience and perseverance are two of the strongest assets of any education reformer, there are a number of strategies that educators have developed to increase their likelihood of success. These include making the most efficient use of available time, and capitalizing on the opportunities that risk may provide.*[4] *(Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 13)*

Louisiana's current reforms began and have been gradually building speed since 1992. As such, the first baseline year for school performance is 1998-99 for elementary grades K-8 and 2000-2001 for grades 9-12 with the first performance cycle being Spring, 2001 and Spring, 2003, respectively. Also, the Accountability Commission has recommended both ten year and twenty year growth targets with incremental progress expected every two years as a process to nurture reform efforts.

Implementing

> ***Training.*** *Participants must have training before they implement reforms. Education reform often requires fundamental changes in individuals' roles and responsibilities. This may mean that stakeholders are asked to assume new tasks in addition to their normal day-to-day duties, or engage in activities that have little in common with their present work. Regardless of the scope of change, all individuals must have the skills that will enable them to support reform objectives. Ideally, this training occurs before program implementation so that individuals have time to understand and relate their new skills to reform objectives, and to identify confusing issues and potential sources of conflict."* [4] *(Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 15)*

Another of the activities that has significantly impacted the LDE staff and local school system staff in the planning and consensus building stage has been the School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP). For LDE staff to participate, they initially receive a two day training session on local assessment instruments to be used and the State's components of effective teaching. Almost one-third of LDE staff have been involved with SEAP over the past two years. The initial pilot involved four school districts and 12 schools in the first year of 1996-97 and 45 schools in 23 districts the second year of 1997-98. These numbers represent approximately 38% of Louisiana school districts being involved with these pilots. The change in perceptions of both LDE staff and local school system staff by bringing the reforms into their immediate world has also provided an

opportunity for them to contribute in the reform process. In the past, reform efforts have been developed at the top and then forced down to the classrooms with very little training involved. With this pilot, training along with input on the development of the reforms is being provided from the classroom up. Hopefully, this process will create a greater buy-in from teachers, principles and local school district staff in addition to the training they have received as well.

> ***Flexibility.*** *Reform strategies should be flexible to accommodate multiple solutions to a given problem. It is often difficult to reverse direction once a reform strategy has been selected. Shifts in political climate or changes in fiscal resources, however, may require a change in reform plans. Alternatively, unexpected results of a reform may suggest other, equally promising paths to achieving intended goals. Successful reformers are agile: they adopt strategies that can accommodate a range of approaches and that respond to changing conditions and needs. This includes planning multiple solutions to a given problem, developing realistic time lines that avoid "all-or-nothing" approaches, and anticipating conditions that may contribute to achieving reform goals.*[4] *(Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 19)*

The primary aspect of SEAP in years one and two has been the development of an assessment model that local school system staff can be trained on to perform themselves without state involvement. The LDE has tried to maintain the approach that the on-site visits of SEAP were technical assistance oriented and that the use of the assessment information in revising or developing the individual school's improvement plan was strictly a local decision. The LDE has maintained the approach that local school systems should and could best identify potential solutions to solve their problems. The state's role is one of assistance and leadership in identifying "models of excellence" and "best practices" for schools demonstrating weaknesses.

> ***Infrastructure.*** *Reform may require redesigning organizational infrastructure. Education reformers look for the most effective ways to organize and deliver classroom instruction and school services. Regardless of the depth and breadth of an undertaking, by definition reform involves change. At some point in time, those involved in the reform process are asked to break with convention and do things in*

new ways. Invariably, changing the way things are done can affect organizational infrastructure. Mechanisms to disseminate information about a reform and its potential impact can reduce anxiety about a proposed change and support a dialogue that increases cooperation among participants. [4] *(Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 23)*

The reorganization of the LDE is an integral component of the current educational reforms. The LDE had gradually over the past thirty years become organized around federal funding sources. There was an Office of Special Education, an Office of Vocational Education, a Bureau of Title 1, a Bureau of Adult Education, and other units designated by major funding source. The reorganization which is being implemented during the 1997-98 fiscal year, reorganized the LDE by function. For the first time, there is an organizational unit for School Accountability, Improvement and Assistance which has mixed funding from state general funds, federal elementary and secondary, special education and vocational funding, and statutory dedicated funding all directed a single vision and goal. Previously, these funds would have been split into several different organizational units, each operating under their own guidelines with separate visions and goals. The reorganization was the initial attempt to breakdown walls established by various funding sources and to create a process of education guided by five offices. Those offices are: the Executive Office of the Superintendent for leadership; the Office of Management and Finance for resource management; the Office of Student and School Performance for student and school standards, assessments, accountability and assistance; the Office of Quality Educators for standards, assessments, accountability and assistance for teachers and principals; and, the Office of School and Community Support for the standards, assessments, accountability and assistance in non-academic school support functions, such as transportation, food service and parental and community involvement; and in post-secondary adult education and training including workforce development programs.

Sustaining

> ***Managing Resources.*** *Reform prospects improve if there is a means to redirect or reallocate resources in ways that meet the needs of the new, emerging system. Reform is not cost-free. At the very least, reform often requires reallocating existing fiscal and human resources. Authority over budgets and other resources allows schools to support the reform process, often because it enables those implementing the reform to funnel resources to where they are most needed. Many schools that were successful at reform did not wait to be granted control over existing resources, but actively sought new funding. Beyond initiating the reform process, schools need to take into account the ongoing costs of reform in order to plan for the long run.*[4] *(Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 27)*

The next stage of SEAP that will be developed in 1998-99 is the school improvement plan process that incorporates all funding sources. One of the problems with previous reform efforts has been that activity was focused by using new funding that was provided specifically for that purpose. When the incremental reform funding went away, so did the reform effort, without ever impacting the underlying base. In Louisiana we are trying to model reform practices that local school systems can use to improve student achievement and school performance through modifying current management practices and spending priorities. Through this process, if whatever amount of reform funding is decreased or discontinued, the benefits of the reform, in terms of changed practices, will continue. This empowerment and training of local school system staff will also provide them the flexibility and tools to identify and solve their own problems.

> ***Self-assessment.*** *Reform is an ongoing process. School reform is a dynamic process that requires participants to engage in nearly continuous self-reflection and program improvement. Although a carefully planned reform strategy may provide initial support in achieving program goals, most reforms proceed by trial and error, which means that activities require constant review and adjustment. Maintaining educational gains may also require constant skill upgrading and professional development among reform participants, while shifts in fiscal, material, and human resources as well as changes in school and community demographics, can influence reform strategy.*[4] *(Klein, Medrich, Perez-Ferreiro & MPR Associates, Inc., p. 31)*

One of the strategies in Louisiana is to create an information technology system that allows for the aggregation and measurement of performance indicators at all levels of the educational system: student, teacher, school, school system and state. It is hoped that through the use of a decision support system, which makes information more accessible, policy-makers and management officials will appropriately engage in self-reflection and program improvement.

ERIC

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Louisiana is constantly in an environment that requires tremendous vigilance to nurture and protect reforms. With a fairly high percentage of students in non-public schools (approximately 17%) there is always an appearance of "competition" between public and private schools. The demographics of the state play a large role in predicting the choices and outcomes of schooling along with the current and future challenges facing the state.

Equity and Adequacy of Funding

As has been seen from the state's efforts to equalize funding, the most wealthy school systems in Louisiana only spend an amount per student that is equal to the average in the southeast region of states. Recent efforts to equalize state funding have achieved a certain measure of success when correlating the distribution of state aid to the wealth of the local district. However, Louisiana, like other states, is struggling with the issues of identifying adequate funding based on performance given the complexities comprising the nature of each of the school systems and their local management decisions.

Major reform occurred in Louisiana's school finance system in 1992. The state had traditionally used a minimum foundation approach to state aid funding. This system was based on an allotment of a teacher instructional unit based on school membership, with extra teachers and school administrators pyramiding from the base. These allotments were not funded unless a local school system also "hired" a person to fill the allotted spot. Additional categorical line items were funded for textbooks, vocational programs, special education, etc. In the 1992-93 year, this foundation type program was replaced with a percentage equalizing formula. The state formula no longer provided categorical line item funding. For a state with a very strong centralized approach

to education, the inability to "micro" manage from the state level has been one of the most difficult reforms to sustain. For the past two years, lawmakers have bypassed the per pupil formula to provide teachers a state pay raise, regardless of significant inequities in teacher pay across the state. The state pay raises are distributed evenly to all teachers, regardless of local wealth. Even though we are close to putting in place school performance accountability, state law makers appear unwilling to forgo traditional management practices in favor of performance management practices.

Blending Traditional and Performance Management - A Research Model for the Future

One of the strategies being developed in Louisiana is analysis of information that will clearly identify the level and use of available funding to achieve acceptable student performance levels. The SEAP deals with one side of the cost-benefit equation. Through the new accountability system being developed, Louisiana will be identifying and differentiating the performance levels of all schools. By merging the information system that collects data on school system staff with the annual financial reporting system, Louisiana is able to identify an estimate of the cost of providing educational services at each individual school. Current plans are to define a research project for 1998-99 that looks at the cost-effectiveness of Louisiana schools to determine an estimate of what an adequate education in Louisiana costs. It is hoped that through research-based statistics, trust between state law makers and local school systems can begin to grow to the point of balancing the traditional management approach and control of funding with the newer performance management strategies and flexibility of funding.

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Analyzing Statewide School Effectiveness Datasets Accurately and Fairly: A Review of SEAP-I

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Paper number 3 in a symposium entitled "Integrating School Indicators, School effectiveness and School Improvement Research: The Louisiana School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP)" presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Associatoin in San Diego, CA.

Introduction

ACT 478 of the Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature required the State Board of Elementary and Secondary (BESE) to develop and implement a statewide system of accountability for schools and school districts in Louisiana based on student achievement and minimum standards. The legislation specified that the system would (a) set 'clear and appropriate' performance standards for schools and school districts, (b) provide for technical assistance to schools and school districts deemed in need, and (c) include rewards and corrective actions based on state-level assessments. The legislation also provided for the creation of a School and District Accountability Advisory Commission. The Commission was to be composed of parents, educators, etc, and it would make recommendations to BESE regarding the structure of the accountability system. Finally, the bill called for BESE and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) to provide for a pilot study which would provide useful information for the accountability system.

The School Effectiveness and Assistance Project (SEAP) is a joint effort between the LDE and researchers at Louisiana State University. It was designed to build LDE capacity to (a) identify schools in need,(b) analyze their needs, and (c) provide assistance in improving. Accordingly, the project was divided into three phases: Phase I focused on the design and piloting of a statewide school effectiveness model; Phase II focused on the design and piloting of a school analysis/diagnosis process; and Phase III focused on the development and piloting of a school improvement process.

This document presents results of initial efforts in Louisiana to develop a school effectiveness model. Both the model developed as part of SEAP-I and the model proposed by the Accountability Advisory Commission are discussed. Standardized test data from the Louisiana Statewide Assessment Program for the 1996-1997 school year are used to investigate the outcomes of the two proposed models. Also, due to their growing popularity among researchers, a multilevel modeling strategy for identifying effective schools is also studied.

This study was designed to provide answers to two questions:

1. To what extent do the various procedures yield similar rankings of schools with regard to effectiveness status?

2. What are the pros and cons of various procedures with regards to (a) technical issues, (b) practical implementation issues, and (c) political issues?

This manuscript is organized as follows: Part 1 presents an overview of school effectiveness research related to the identification of effective and ineffective schools. Part 2 describes the three models studied. Part 3 describes the data sources and measures, and part four presents the results of the study.

Background

Over the past twenty years there has been considerable effort focused on the identification of schools that appear to be unusually effective at fostering of inhibiting desired student outcomes such as achievement, attendance, etc. (Raudenbush & Bryk, 1986). These efforts have focused on both conceptual issues and methodological issues.

Conceptual Issues

On what basis is it reasonable to conclude that one school is more effective than another at fostering student achievement or some other desired student outcome? Is it sufficient to simply compute building level averages of student level data and proceed with comparisons? The present day consensus among researchers seems to be a resounding "no" to this strategy. Instead, researchers have proposed a variety of techniques that attempt to address the fact that schools must serve student populations that differ significantly in their preparation for learning, out-of-school support systems for academic pursuits, etc. These and other exogenous variables which impact student outcomes are largely beyond the control of school officials and yet, many have concluded that they ought be taken into account in efforts to identify the unique impact a given school may have on student outcomes (e.g., see Goldstein, 1991).

Raudenbush and Willms (1995) present a structural model of student achievement which serves as a useful platform for a discussion of the complexities of defining and estimating school effects. Accordingly,

Student Achievement = Mean Achievement + Student Background

+ School Context + School Process

+ Random Error

According to this model, student achievement is a function of student background, (e.g., social class, previous achievement, etc.), school processes (e.g., organization and management practices, school climate, etc.), school context (e.g., size of student body, percent minority, etc.) and a component due to random chance. In this formulation, the unique impact of a school on students is conceptualized as the impact beyond the influence of student background factors. Raudenbush and Willms distinguish two types of school effects. Type A effects reflect the overall impact, both context and process influences, of attendance at a given school and Type B effects reflect the impact of a school on student performance that is attributable to school practices. Type A effects are likely of interest to parents that simply want the greatest boost to their child's performance irrespective of whether it stems from school context or process.

In this paper we focus on the estimation of Type A effects. According to Raudenbush and Willms, to achieve this it is only necessary to control for student background factors when estimating the unique impact of a school.

Methodological Issues

Almost 30 years ago Dyer, Linn, & Patton (1969) recommended that conclusions regarding school effects on student learning be based on the 'discrepancy' between actual mean achievement and the achievement expected given previous achievement

and the social background of the students. As implied, the proposed strategy was simply to aggregate all student-level data to the school-level and, using multiple regression, calculate a standardized discrepancy score between actual student achievement and predicted student achievement. Criticisms of this approach have included (1) parameter estimation is generally inefficient, (2) problems of collinearity are common, (3) school effectiveness indices based on this model are generally unstable, and (4) the focus on means may mask important differences among subgroups of students with regard to school effects (Aitkin & Longford, 1986).

As an alternative to the school aggregate model, a number of researchers have studied student-level residual models. In this instance, students from all schools are pooled together and, without regard for school membership, the criterion of interest is regressed on student background and other student variables considered relevant. The residuals from this total sample regression are then averaged by school and taken as an index of school effectiveness. However, it can be shown that this strategy will yield biased estimates of school effects if there is heterogeneity of slopes among schools (Aitkin & Longford, 1986).

Finally, in response to the inherent multilevel nature of schools (students nested within classes; classes nested within schools, etc.) many researchers argue in favor of so-called hierarchical or multilevel statistical models as suitable for estimation of school effects. These models attempt to explicitly incorporate the layered nature of contemporary schooling into the analysis process and they permit the researcher to explicityly model complex within-school processes as consequences of between-school characteristics (see Mason, Wong, & Entwisle, 1983; Raudenbush & Bryk, 1986;

Goldstein, 1986; Aitkin & Longford, 1986).

Following the notation of Raudenbush and Bryk (1986), let Y_{ij} be the outcome (e.g., achievement score) of student i ($i=1,\ldots,n_j$) in school j ($j=1,\ldots,J$). The within school regression model for predicting Y from, say, social class (X), is given by,

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{j0} + \beta_{j1}X_{ij} + e_{ij} \tag{1}$$

where β_{j0} is the intercept of the regression, β_{j1} is the slope and e_{ij} is an error term. The model in Equation 1 allows for the possibility that the regression parameters β_{j0} and β_{j1} vary across schools. If this variability is manifest, it could be due to differences in school policies, practices, or organization. A second model, the between model, might attempt to predict this variability on the basis of these or other school level attributes. If P represents an attribute of interest, then,

$$\beta_{jk} = \Phi_{0k} + \Phi_{1k}P_{jk} + a_{jk} \tag{2}$$

where k=0, 1 for the model in Equation 2. If Equation 2 is substituted into Equation 1 the result is,

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{ij} = {} & \Phi_{00} + \Phi_{10}P_{j0} + \Phi_{01}X_{ij} + \Phi_{11}P_{j1}X_{ij} \\ & + (e_{ij} + a_{j0} + a_{j1}X_{ij}) \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

This is a general model for multilevel data problem and many researchers argue that it represents a significant advance in the effort to study schools and their effects on students.

Applications in School Effects Research

The multilevel model, as described above, has several desirable features: (1) it is possible to decompose any relationship into within- and between-group components;

(2) multivariate between-group formulations can be studied; (3) multiple within-group slopes can be handled in a single analysis; and (4) slope estimates are relatively robust with respect to data quality. These characteristics have motivated researchers to extend and employ the HLM methodology in a variety of education related contexts (see Raudenbush & Willms, 1991). In this paper concern is with the identification of unusual schools.

As noted previously, the typical strategy for identifying unusual schools has involved the analysis of residuals from a student-level or school-level regression wherein current achievement was regressed onto previous achievement and/or some index of social class (Dyer, Linn, & Patton, 1969). The limitations of this strategy have lead many investigators to consider the usefulness of multilevel models for this purpose (e.g., see Tate, 1988) . Specifically, referring to Equation 2, the error terms a_{j0} and a_{j1} represent, respectively, the deviation of school j from the overall intercept and the overall slope of schools in the population. Once substituted into the student level model as in Equation 3, the sum of a_{j0} and a_{j1} X_{ij}, which will be referred to as π_{ij},represents the difference between an actual student outcome in school j and the prediction of that outcome based on the school level variable P. The variable π_{ij} can then be interpreted as an index of school effectiveness for student i which, given the presence of X_{ij}, may vary among students within a given school.

Multilevel models have been criticized because of their complexity and because when used to estimate school effects, they make it difficult for small schools to appear effective (de Leeuw & Kreft, 1995; Morris, 1995). Also, there is evidence that, when the focus is on mean outcomes, the results from multilevel analyses and the school

aggregate model do not differ substantially (Kennedy, Teddlie, & Stringfield, 1991).

School Acountability in Louisiana

Over the past few years several techniques for identifying effective and ineffective schools have been proposed or studied in Louisiana. Initial efforts sponsored by the LDE grew out of legislative requirements to develop academic performance measures of schools relative to public funding of education in the state. While SEAP-I grew out of LDE desires to improve upon the initial model (see Oescher, Black, Gunning, & Brooks, 1996; Teddlie & Kennedy, 1996), public and political responses to the early effort informed the design of SEAP-I. Specifically, the results of early efforts pointed to need for any school identification system in Louisiana to exist within the following parameters:

Simplicity:

1. The logic of the system should be easily explainable to lay audiences.
2. The number of factors/variables included in the system should be limited and should be linked to school rankings in a clear and obvious way.
3. The variables or factors inluded in the system should be of a high quality and should not be easily manipulated.

Fairness:

1. The system should take into consideration the fact that some schools and school systems serve more or less advantaged populations than others.
2. The system should not focus exclusively on relative rankings, but should incorporate absolute measures of performance (e.g., average

achievement).

In this section of the paper we describe the three models studied and discuss each in reference to these lessons learned from previous efforts.

The SEAP-I Model

Analyses of standardized achievement data for public school students in Louisiana over the past five years have shown that five predictors yield satisfactory results for the school aggregate regression model. These predictors are (1) percent of students receiving free school lunches, (2) percent of students identified as special education, (3) percent of students identified as gifted and talented, (4) percent of students classified as 'Limited English Proficient,' and (5) community type or degree of urbanicity.

These predictors have been used to predict school averages on a composite formulated with norm- and criterion-referenced standardized test data from the Louisiana statewide student assessment program (Crone, Lang, Franklin, & Halbrook, 1994; Kochan, Tashakkori, & Teddlie, 1996). Analyses conducted within school category-- Elementary, Middle, High, Combination--have consistently yielded squared multiple correlations in the .6 and above range (see Teddlie, 1996).

Typically, the school aggregate regression models studied in Louisiana were fitted for three years of data and the effectiveness status of schools was based on the consistency of their standardized discrepancy, or relative performance indicators (RPIs), over this period. Schools with consistently large positive RPIs were designated as effective relative to other schools serving similar student populations; those with consistently large negative values were designated as ineffective, and those with values

consistently close to zero were designated as average. Other patterns were designated as inconsistent. It should be noted that the use of multiple years of data for purposes of identification of effectiveness status addresses one of the key challenges to the school aggregate regression model, instability of rankings.

The SEAP-I study foucsed on the exploration of this model with data collected over the period 1994-95, 1995-96, and 1996-97. Additionally, as part of the SEAP-I strategy, an absolute measure of school performance, called a baseline performance indicator (BPI) was included in the identification process. Specifically, because Louisiana uses a criterion-referenced statewide test in several grades, the percent of students attaining the performance standard for any grade and any subject area was computed for each school. This value was taken as a measure of absolute performance. A two by two matrix (relative by absolute indicators) of school performance was formulated. Classifications of schools was then based on both RPIs and BPIs. As an example, if a .2 RPI (plus or minus) was selected as a differentiating point, and 85% was set as a differentiating point for the BPI, the matrix would be as follows:

	RPI<-.2	-.2<=RPI<=+.2	RPI>+.2
BPI >=85%	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
BPI <85%	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6

In this example, schools in 'Class 4' would be designated as 'ineffective' and those in 'Class 3' would be designated as 'effective.' While there is some evidence to suggest

that selection of the boundary values of the RPI can be guided by statistical considerations (i.e., consistency of school classifications; see Lang, 1991), the cut point for this measure as well as the BPI would clearly be influenced by budget considerations, political realities, etc.

As described, the model studied in SEAP-I addressed many of the issues noted above: The model achieves simplicity in that school level data are used to predict performance on an aggregate measure of student achievement. The measures used in the model are well know to educators and are generally thought to be of 'high' quality. Finally, the model incorporates both a relative and absolute measure of performance.

The Accountability Commission's Model

The accountability system proposed by the School and District Accountability Advisory Commission requires that a composite score, called a School Performance Score, be computed for each school in the state. The score will be based on a weighted combination of the following:

Criterion Referenced Test (60%)

Norm Reference Test (30%)

Student Attendance (10% for grades K-6 schools; 5% for grade 7-12)

Student Dropout Rate (5% for grades 7-12)

The school performance score will have a minimum value of 0 and a maximum value in excess of 100. Following the baseline year, each school in the state will be expected to achieve a score of 100 on the composite after a 10 year period. Growth

targets will be set for two year cycles based on distance from the 10 year goal. Growth is expected to be linear. Also, school performance scores will be recomputed each two years. Finally, the model specifies that schools performing below a critical 'unacceptable' level will automatically qualify for corrective actions.

The Commission's model explicitly does not take poverty into consideration. The logic of this decision is as follows:

1. The Commission felt that schools should have the same expectations for students regardless of their economic backgrounds;
2. Recognizing that some schools have large populations of high-poverty students who face greater challenges, the Commission adopted a growth model so that each school would be measured against its own starting point;
3. Consultants from all other states advised using poverty as a separate variable would set lower expectations for high-poverty students;
4. Business representatives indicated that poverty is not a factor when hiring qualified applicants. High school graduates are expected to be knowledgeable and skilled despite their economic status.

The Commission's model achieves the objective of simplicity in that only a limited number of factors are considered when setting the baseline as well as growth targets. Further, the achievement measures used are generally regarded highly and their use should be easily explainable to the lay public. However, the criteria of fairneess set forth above is not as readily incorporated. In particular, the model fails to consider

differences in student populations served and as such and may be perceived as being biased or 'unfair.'

A Multilevel Model

The multilevel model described above has been expaned and modified to ever increasing levels of complexity in an effort to more realistically address the organization of modern schools. These developments include longitudinal models which permit study of cohort and panel designs (Raudenbush, 1989), cross-classified models which allow for the possibility that lower level units may be nested within several higher units (Goldstein, 1994), and multivariate and structural equation models which permit modeling of multiple outcomes and allow for the presence of measurement errors in indicator variables (Muthen, 1994).

The application of the simple (see Equation 1) and more sophisticated multilevel models to the identification of effective and ineffective schools has been discussed at length in the school effects literature. While most would agree that these models offer the possibility of more realistic modeling of school processes, their sophistication may be an impediment to use in the practical settings. Specifically, it seems unlikely that even the most simple versions of these models will be easily comprehended by lay persons. Add to this the shrinkage phenomenon noted above, and these models also have questionable 'fairness' appeal. Given the politically sensitive nature of high-stakes accountability systems, this is a serious limitation.

Nevertheless, ease of communication alone can not be a sufficient justification for selecting a model for accountability purposes. However, there is evidence that results based on multilevel models may not differ significantly from more easily

understood regression based procedures (see Fitz-Gibon, 1996). In the present effort, for comparison purposes, two simple multilevel models are studied. One is based on a cross-sectional study of achievement for the 1996-1997 school year. The other is based on a longitudinal design and focuses on the impact of schools on the 1994-1195 cohort of third grade students in the state (see Bryk & Raudenbush, 1987). The only control or school level variable considered for either model is percent of students in poverty. In both instances, empirical Bayes residuals based on school averages are used as RPIs. The objective was to identify which schools appeared to yield larger or stronger growth trajectories for their students than did other students. The only control or school level variable considered was percent of students in poverty. The cross-sectional study is concerned with identifying schools which have higher average achievement levels than expected given the poverty level of the students served. The longitudinal study is concerned with the identification of schools which appear to yield larger or stronger growth trajectories for the 1994-1995 third grade cohort than other schools.

Methods

Sample and Measures

School Aggregate Achievement. This measure is based on data from the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program. This program consists of a criterion-referenced (CRT) and norm-referenced (NRT) test administered annually to public school students in Louisiana. The CRT is administered in grades 3, 5, 7, 10, and 11. The tests administered in grades 3,5,7, and 10 measure performance in language arts

and mathematics, and written composition is assessed in grade 10. The grade 11 test measures performance in social studies and science. The NRT measures included in these analyses reflect performance in reading, language arts, and mathematics in grades 4, 6, and 8.

The composite achievement measure was formulated for each school classification–Elementary, Middle, High, Combination–by equally weighting and combining the scale scores in each of the subject areas for the CRT and NRT separately. These values were assigned a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. The final composite is based on a equally weighted composite of the CRT and NRT. Again, the mean is 500 and the standard deviation is 100.

Percent Free Lunch. This measure reflects the percent of students receiving free school lunches as reported to the Student Information System (SIS) during the October 1 reporting period.

Percent Limited English Proficient. This percent is based on the number of students reported as LEP on the student test answer records for the CRT.

Community Type. This variable reflects the type of community within which schools are located. It is based on US Census classifications of schools by population of the area. There are seven classifications ranging from '1' Large City to '7' Rural.

Percent Special Education. This percent is based on data maintained by the LDE Lanser data base. It reflects the percent of students falling within special education 'exceptionalities' using LDE categories.

Percent of Gifted and Talented Students. This measure is based on data reported in the Lanser data base. It reflects the percent of students falling within the

special education exceptionalities 'gifted' or 'talented.'

The Regression Model

The strategy for fitting the regression models reported in this paper involved (a) checking assumptions of the fixed predictor regression model, (b) identifying unusual or influential observations, and (c) building best-fitting regression functions (see Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, and Wasserman, 1996). All analyses were conducted within school type classifications (noted above). The resulting models yielded squared multiple correlations in excess of .6, with the exception of the combination schools which was lower. The relative performance indicators, RPIs, reported for this model are essentially studentized residuals (see Neter et al., 1996).

The Accountability Commission's Model

This model called for the development of a composite score based on CRT, NRT, student attendance, and student dropout data. For the present analyses, only achievement data were used. The Commission's recommendations are based on the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program as it will exist during the 1998-1999 school year. Significant changes will occur not only in the grades assessed, but in the assessments used. Specifically, the current norm-referenced test, CAT5, will be replaced by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The current criterion-referenced test will be replaced by a version with a more performance based orientation. Further, the new CRT will classify students into one of five performance levels: Unsatisfactory, Approaching Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Because the current CRT only classifies students into two categories, met standard or failed to meet standard, it was necessary to set category boundary values to arrive at five categories. We assumed

that 10% would achieve Advanced, 15% would achieve Proficient, 15% would achieve Approaching Basic, the percent failing to meet standard would be classified as Unsatisfactory, and the remaining students would be classified as Basic. The procedure for transforming these percentages into a single score was as follows: Identify the percentage of students performing in each category. Assign weights as follows: Advanced=2; Proficient=1.5; Basic=1.0; Approaching Basic=0.5; and Unsatisfactory=0.0. Compute the total number of points and multiply this value by 0.60. For the NRT, we computed the percentage of students with stanines greater than 4. Schools that did not have grades in which the CRT or the NRT were given were eliminated from the analyses.

The Multilevel Model

For this model the focus was on the equally weighted composite of the CRT and NRT. School averages on the composite were computed for the 1994-1995 third grade cohort at three points in time: as third graders during the 1994-1995 school year; as fourth graders during the 1995-1996 school year; and as fifth graders during the 1996-1997 school year. These data were not matched at the student level for two reasons: First, it was no obvious how we cold handle students retained in grade and eliminating these students from the analyses was deemed unacceptable. Second, student records from the Louisiana testing program do not readily permit matching files across year. The level of accuracy was deemed unacceptable.

The longitudinal model studied for this analysis assumed a linear growth trajectory over the three years. The within-school model predicted the average achievement as a function of time and percent free lunch was used as a between-

school predictor. For comparison purposes, a school aggregate regression model was computed with these data for each of the three years. In each instance, average achievement was predicted as a function of percent free lunch. The objective of the comparison was to determine the extent to which schools were consistently classified as positive or negative by the two methods.

Analysis Strategy

Although the school aggregate regression model developed in SEAP-I was based on three years of data, the current analyses focused only on the most recent school year. The primary objective was to determine the consistency of rankings between the RPIs formulated with the multilevel and regression models, and the school performance score associated with the Commission's model. Also, a key interest was in determining the extent of relationship between free lunch rates and school rankings based on the three methods. Pearson correlations are used for these purposes.

Results

The results in Table 1 present Pearson correlations between the effectiveness indices based on the regression model (REGRESS), the model proposed by the accountability commission (ACCTCOM), and the percent of students at each school receiving free school lunches (PCTFREE)--a measure of poverty. These data consistently show a higher relationship between free lunch rates and the effectiveness index proposed by the accountability commission than the regression model or the multilevel model.

The results in Table 1 indicate that the Commission's model may be particularly

harsh in terms of schools with large concentrations of high poverty students. In Table 2 we investigate this further by presenting the mean and quartiles for free lunch rates for schools that meet and schools that do not meet the 100 cut score on the commission's model. In practically every instance, free lunches rates for the high achieving schools are consistently lower than are those for the low achieving schools.

The final analyses considered in this paper concerns the degree of consistency between the classifications of elementary schools based on a longitudinal examination of the 1994-1995 third grade cohort. Using the school aggregate regression model, schools with positive residuals for each of the three years were designated as 'consistently positive' and those with negative residuals for this period were designated as consistently 'negative.' The results were that 63% of the 'consistently positive' schools had positive residuals for their growth rate based on the multilevel model, and 52% of the 'consistently negative' schools had negative residuals based on the multilevel model.

Conclusions

This study reviewed several techniques for identifying effective and ineffective schools for accountability purposes. The results suggest that the SEAP-I school aggregate regression model not only has rational appeal based on criteria set forth in this document, but that it yields results not substantially different from those reported for more sophisticated models. On the other hand, the model proposed by the School and District Accountability Advisory Commission appears to yield performance rankings related to poverty. Several issues stem from this:

1. Can a model that appears to confound school effects with student background characteristics be successfully implemented?

2. To what extent will school success in reaching growth targets be related to poverty level? These results indicate that the growth targets for high poverty schools will be more demanding than the growth targets for more advantaged settings.

Finally, it should be noted that the results for the Commission's model reported in this document are based on achievement data only and reflect assumptions that may or may not be consistent with results form the future testing in the state.

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Table 1. Pearson Correlations Among School Indices & Percent Free Lunch

ALL SCHOOLS

	PCTFREE	REGRESS	ACCTCOM
PCTFREE	1.00000	0.04488	-0.67305
REGRESS		1.00000	0.53940
ACCTCOM			1.00000

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

	PCTFREE	REGRESS	ACCTCOM
PCTFREE	1.00000	0.03983	-0.72735
REGRESS		1.00000	0.55599
ACCTCOM			1.00000

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

	PCTFREE	REGRESS	ACCTCOM
PCTFREE	1.00000	0.05939	-0.74387
REGRESS		1.00000	0.48943
ACCTCOM			1.00000

Table 1 (continued)

HIGH SCHOOLS

	PCTFREE	REGRESS	ACCTCOM
PCTFREE	1.00000	0.11410	-0.66002
REGRESS		1.00000	0.47490
ACCTCOM			1.00000

COMBINATION SCHOOLS

	PCTFREE	REGRESS	ACCTCOM
PCTFREE	1.00000	0.01872	-0.54552
REGRESS		1.00000	0.62271
ACCTCOM			1.00000

Table 2. Quartiles and Mean Free Lunch Rates by Accountability Standard.

SCHOOLS ABOVE THE 100 CUT SCORE

	Elementary	Middle	High	Combination
Percent Free Lunch:	33.61	35.09	29.29	51.68
Quartiles:				
Q3	45.49	52.74	36.52	79.53
Q2	32.54	32.00	29.29	41.39
Q1	19.44	13.88	22.06	34.11

SCHOOLS BELOW THE 100 CUT SCORE

	Elementary	Middle	High	Combination
Percent Free Lunch:	62.22	52.30	43.86	46.26
Quartiles:				
Q3	83.01	68.26	62.80	56.80
Q2	63.44	53.78	39.64	44.32
Q1	43.47	35.53	26.82	32.19

Note. There were only 3 observations in the 'Above Cut Score' group for Combination schools.

Gathering and Analyzing Intensive School-Level Process Data: A Review of SEAP-II

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Introduction

The School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP), a joint research project between the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) and faculty at Louisiana State University (LSU), was conceived in the fall of 1997 as a mechanism for developing and testing three components of a comprehensive, statewide education accountability system. Those components are: (a.) SEAP-I, involving the development of a regression-based model for measuring school performance; (b.) SEAP-II, a multi-method approach to collecting school process data through intensive, site-based research; and (c.) SEAP-III, which joins local school staff, LDE specialists, and university researchers in collaborative, school improvement efforts springing from the SEAP-II research. The following paper is an overview of the process used to gather data in the SEAP-II site visits, focusing on the methodologies that were employed and how the process benefits not only the schools which volunteered, but the LDE as well.

Overview of the SEAP Process

Roughly 18 months after its inception, the three components of SEAP are in various stages of implementation. During SEAP-I, which was conducted during the summer of 1997, composite relative performance indices (RPIs) of student achievement were calculated for all public schools in Louisiana for three consecutive years (1994-95 - 1996-97). Though the RPIs have been well received by policy makers at the local level, it is not likely that the performance model

recommended by the SEAP -I researchers will be adopted and implemented. The gubernatorially-appointed panel that is charged with recommending an accountability model to the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) opposes the use of regression-based indices that take school intake characteristics into account. SEAP III, the school improvement phase, is in its infancy, as only one cohort of schools have gone through the complete SEAP process.

SEAP-II is the only component that has run its full course. In addition, the SEAP-II site visits have become the centerpiece of the LDE's attempt to reinvent itself as an agency whose primary role is to support schools and districts in their efforts to improve themselves rather than function as a bureaucracy that audits rather than advises, documents rather than assists.

What Is SEAP-II?

The first round of SEAP-II visits was conducted over a four week period during the Spring of 1997. These site visits were originally designed to have been conducted in the Fall of 1997, but decision makers at the LDE were impatient to begin the SEAP process. It was decided during the winter of 1996-97 that Cohort 1 visits would be completed before the end of the 1996-97 school year rather than "lose an entire year" by waiting until the next academic year.

The format of the SEAP visits was conceptualized during the early months of 1997 and field tested on a voluntary basis in 12 schools/districts around the state (4

districts, 3 schools each). Based loosely on the model used in the Louisiana School Effectiveness Study (LSES) (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993), the process called for five \member teams from the State Department of Education and LSU to conduct two day site visits to each participating school.

During each site visit, data on school climate and classroom instruction were collected using the following mix of quantitative and qualitative methods: surveys (parents, teachers, principal), interviews (principal), and focus groups (student, teacher). Classroom observations also were conducted, during which student time-on-task was assessed using the Stallings Time on Task Instrument and instructional methods and behaviors were documented as they relate to the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LCET). School- and district-level reports were generated from the analysis of the school level data which, cited school/district strengths and made specific recommendations for improving areas of weakness. The following sections of the paper explore the methodology utilized for school level data collection in the Cohort 1 schools, i.e., participant observation, attitudinal surveys, interview/focus groups, and consensus building.

Participant Observation as a Research Tool

Participant observation is a critical component of each SEAP site visit. Team members not only observe in classrooms but throughout the school, gathering data which is explicit as well as that of a more elusive nature. The main advantage of directly observing school activities and operations is that the team develops a better

understanding of the context within which the school operates (Patton, 1990). The two ways in which participant observation is utilized in the SEAP process is through the School Observation Checklist, and in classroom observations.

School Observations

The School Observation Checklist (see Appendix 1) is a form which allows for the standardization of school level data collection across the schools visited. The form encompasses areas such as the teachers' lounge, principal and assistant principal presence throughout the school, auxiliary classes (i.e., art, P.E., vocational classes, special education), cafeteria staff and rules for student behavior in the cafeteria, the custodial staff and school cleanliness, the library and its function in the school, the play ground, school arrival, and hallways and bulletin boards. The instrument is divided among the team members, so that each person specifically focusses on one or two areas, but also records any pertinent observations outside of the assigned section(s). These observations are invaluable in understanding the underlying school culture and how day-to-day management activities are undertaken. In addition, these observations are quite helpful when pulling together all of the data collected during the site visit into a written case study, as it is the context variables which make each school unique.

Classroom Observations

The classroom observation component of the SEAP-II site visits consists of

twenty four classroom observations spread across the five observers over a two-day visit. The team leaders seek to stratify the grades and subjects examined across the observers, so that a more holistic view of the type of teaching in use at the school can be obtained. The procedure used to standardize the observations process is a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods that broadens the lens of the observation, especially when compared to more traditional methods of school level observations, which tend to focus on teacher activities and not on classroom context.

The classroom observation process is threefold. The first stage is scripting. This consists of the observer taking continuous field notes of what is occurring in the class. In the second stage, while the observer is scripting, the Stallings Classroom Snapshot is used every 4-6 minutes to scan the class and record a time on task measurement in six equal intervals. The last stage involves the completion of the LCET, a quantitative instrument designed to evaluate teacher behaviors. The following sections will explore each part of the process in greater depth, and then show how the results of the classroom observations are used.

Scripting. The scripting process begins as soon as the observer enters the classroom. The goal of this procedure is to have a running record of exactly what is occurring in the class. These notes consist of quotes from both teachers and students, descriptions of the room's physical qualities, explication of how students respond to the teacher and his/her teaching style, as well as the types of activities that go on during the observation. In addition to providing notes from which the

LCET will be scored, this process also adds a layer of context to the observation which is not present in the use of strictly quantitative observation methods (Schaffer, Nesselrodt, & Stringfield, 1994).

Stallings Classroom Snapshot. The Stallings (1980) Classroom Snapshot is a "low inference instrument which allows for the calculation of time on task and levels of interactive teaching" (Schaffer, Nesselrodt, & Stringfield, 1994). After scripting the lesson for approximately five minutes, the observer scans the room and takes a count of those students who are engaged with the teacher, those who are working either in groups or alone (without the teacher), and those students who are off-task (unengaged in the classroom activity). The observer repeats the scan at five equal intervals of four to six minutes, continuing to take field notes when not in the midst of a scan.

Table 1 gives an example of how the time on task data gathered in the classroom observations is aggregated at both the school and grade level. This table is information rich, and allows the analyst to draw conclusions about the types of teaching that are utilized at a specific grade level, as well as those visible across the school as a whole. For example, the rates of interactive teaching reported in Table 1 are quite low in the fifth and sixth grades. This can be traced to the preponderance of written assignments that were seen at these grade levels as compared to the other two grades.

Table 1. Percentage of Time on Task (TOT): Total and Interactive, by Grade Level

Task	Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total Time on Task (TOT)	4	84.9	5	63.0	6	72.1	7	73.9	23	72.4
Interactive Time on Task (TOT)	4	29.0	5	33.2	6	59.2	7	50.0	23	45.5
Reading Aloud	4	1.34	5	.513	6	.556	7	.099	23	.519
Making Assignments	4	4.17	5	0	6	2.78	7	0	23	1.45
Instruction, Explanation	4	12.7	5	11.3	6	14.0	7	19.8	23	14.3
Discussion, Reviewing Assignments	4	10.8	5	18.1	6	7.50	7	14.1	23	12.1
Practice Drill	4	0	5	0	6	12.4	7	1.06	23	6.18
Taking Test, Quiz	4	0	5	3.30	6	22.0	7	14.9	23	11.0
Non-Math or Non-Reading Instruction	4	0	5	0	6	0	7	0	23	0
Non-Interactive Instruction	4		5		6		7		23	
Reading Silently	4	24.0	5	1.68	6	0	7	2.98	23	5.44
Written Assignments	4	31.9	5	28.1	6	13.0	7	20.9	23	21.4

Source: Observer-scored Classroom Observations, Spring 1997

Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching. The LCET is a modified version of an instrument developed for the Louisiana Teacher Assessment program. The main difference between the two forms, is that the assessment version rates teachers behaviors on a two point scale (pass/fail); while the SEAP version of the instrument uses a four-point scale to obtain a greater degree of variance in scoring. As established by the Louisiana Department of Education, the face validity of the instrument is quite high. Out of over 7000 responses from professional educators throughout the state, 93.9% found that the instrument represents a realistic expectation for teachers, and 95.5% said that they believe that

the framework as a whole represents a comprehensive set of expectations for teachers (Oescher & Brooks, 1993).

The LCET focuses on two domains, management and instruction. Within the management domain are components which examine the learning environment, maximization of time, and management of learner behavior. Within the instruction domain are components which examine the teacher's ability to deliver instruction effectively, the teacher's presentation of appropriate content, the teacher's provision of opportunities for pupil involvement in the learning process, and how the teacher assesses pupil progress. Each component is further subdivided into attributes which are rated by the observer

Each attribute is rated on a scale of one to four. A "4" indicates the teacher is doing an outstanding job. A "3" indicates that teacher performance can be improved, although current practices are clearly acceptable. A "2" indicates that improvement activities are required to meet standards consistently, and a "1" indicates that the teacher's performance is not acceptable and improvement activities must be undertaken immediately (SEAP Training Manual, 1997).

Table 2 shows mean teacher LCET ratings by grade and school level for one of the SEAP Cohort 1 schools. A score on an attribute or component below a 2.5 signals a need for attention in that area. For example, on Domain III, Component A: the teacher delivers instruction effectively, the school as a whole rated below 2.5, as are the teachers at each grade level. In addition, every attribute in the component also scored below 2.5. Ratings this low would be a focus of the final report as justifying

targeted staff development in order to improve delivery of instruction throughout the school.

Table 2. Mean Teacher Ratings on the LCET, By Grade Level

Components & Attributes	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	All Grades
Domain II. Management, Component A The teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning.	**2.87**	**2.80**	**3.00**	**2.71**	**2.86**
II(A1). Organizes available space, materials, and/or equipment to facilitate learning.	3.25	2.80	3.00	2.85	3.00
II(A2). Promotes a positive learning climate.	2.50	2.80	3.00	2.57	2.73
Domain II. Management, Component B The teacher maximizes the amount of time available for instruction.	**2.75**	**2.37**	**2.70**	**2.71**	**2.61**
II(B1). Manages routines and transitions in a timely manner.	3.00	2.50	3.00	2.71	2.77
II(B2). Manages and/or adjusts time for activities.	2.50	2.25	2.40	2.71	2.45
Domain II. Management, Component C The teacher manages learner behavior to provide productive learning opportunities.	**2.87**	**2.50**	**2.90**	**2.64**	**2.71**
II(C1). Establishes expectations for learner behavior.	2.75	2.60	3.00	2.85	2.78
II(C2). Uses monitoring techniques to facilitate learning.	3.00	2.40	2.80	2.42	2.65
Domain III. Instruction, Component A The teacher delivers instruction effectively.	**2.29**	**2.00**	**2.36**	**2.15**	**2.21**
III(A1). Uses technique(s) which develop(s) lesson objective(s)	2.25	2.00	2.20	2.16	2.19
III(A2). Sequences lesson to promote learning.	2.75	2.00	2.75	2.33	2.40
III(A3). Uses available teaching material(s) to achieve lesson objective(s).	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
III(A4). Adjusts lesson when appropriate.	2.00	na	3.00	1.00	2.00
Domain III. Instruction, Component B The teacher presents appropriate content.	**3.00**	**2.53**	**2.93**	**2.85**	**2.83**
III(B1). Presents content at a developmentally appropriate level.	3.00	2.40	3.20	2.85	2.86
III(B2). Presents accurate subject matter.	3.75	3.20	3.40	3.00	3.31

Components & Attributes	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	All Grades
III(B3). Relates relevant examples, unexpected situations, or current events to the content.	2.25	2.00	2.20	2.66	2.28
Domain III. Instruction, Component C The teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process.	**2.31**	**1.90**	**2.35**	**2.42**	**2.31**
III(C1). Accommodates individual differences.	1.75	1.40	1.80	1.85	1.78
III(C2). Demonstrates ability to communicate effectively with students.	3.00	2.40	2.80	3.14	2.86
III(C3). Stimulates and encourages higher order thinking at the appropriate developmental levels.	1.75	1.60	2.20	2.16	2.00
III(C4.) Encourages student participation.	3.00	2.20	2.60	2.33	2.52
Domain III. Instruction, Component D The teacher assesses student progress.	**2.75**	**2.20**	**2.70**	**2.42**	**2.47**
III(D1). Monitors ongoing performance of students.	3.00	2.40	2.80	2.42	2.56
III(D2). Provides timely feedback to students regarding their progress.	2.50	2.00	2.60	2.42	2.39

Source: Observer-scored Observations, Spring 1997

Results of Classroom Observations

As seen in Tables 1 and 2, the data generated from the classroom observations are aggregated and presented in summery form at each grade level. This is because the purpose of SEAP is to generate a holistic picture of the school, and not to single out individuals.

There were a few methodological problems associated with the classroom observation components with Cohort I schools. The classroom snapshot yielded very high levels of total time on-task behavior in contrast to the low performance of many schools on the LCET. However, most schools that performed poorly on the LCET also had low rates of interactive teaching, in spite of high total time on task. The latter finding is in line with benchmark studies conducted throughout

Louisiana over the past decade, which show that schools with low rates of interactive time on task are less effective (Teddlie, 1994). It was felt that the overall high measures of total time on task were slightly skewed in part due to complications which arose in using the classroom snapshot scoring sheet. This form was revised for use in Cohort II schools, so that choices were streamlined.

The scripting became a valuable tool when writing the reports that were disseminated to the school districts and their schools, as this qualitative data enabled the reprort writers to support the quantitative data with examples from actual observations. For example, many of the schools in Cohort I were rated quite low on components relating to the individualization and flexibility of instructional methods. Through the patterns which emerged from the scripting, it became evident that there was a low usage of hands-on learning techniques and high occurrences of teacher-centered instruction. This anecdotal evidence lent credence and support to the more structured LCET data, and provided the basis for which to begin making recommendations for school improvement.

Attitudinal Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups as Research Tools

Interviewing in research provides a way to find out what is going on in someone's mind or a person's perception of a particular situation. Three methods of gathering individual perceptions about a specific school in the SEAP - II process are surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Surveys enable researchers to gather large amounts of data, which can be standardized across constructs and administered

across different groups. Interviews and focus groups provide details and information that cannot be uncovered through close-ended questions on surveys. Interview techniques allow a researcher to delve into the minds of the participants in a situation and to gather more in-depth information about the functioning of the organization. The following sections of the paper explore how attitudinal surveys, interviews, and focus groups are used in the SEAP-II process.

Attitudinal Surveys

The attitudinal surveys used in SEAP-II are based upon research by Brookover, W.B., Schweitzer, J.H. , Schneider, J.M., Beady, C.H., Flood, P.K., & Wisenbaker, J.M. (1978). The surveys were modified during the field testing phase of the Louisiana Effective School Study (LSES-II) to ensure clear wording and the elimination of redundant items (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). The surveys are worded in a parallel fashion and focus on the respondent's perceptions about various school areas, i.e. reputation of the school, school environment, school climate, organizational issues, parent/school relationship, staff development, and job satisfaction.

Surveys are administered to four different groups within the school constituency: the principal, the teachers, students and parents. Parent surveys were mailed to the school in advance and distributed in the homerooms of three classes at different grade levels. These surveys are collected at the end of the site visit. Principal and teachers surveys are distributed at the beginning of each site visit, and

collected at the end of the second day. Student surveys are conducted in three classes above the second grade level, and read to students between third and sixth grades.

Table 3 presents the mean scores of responses on the attitudinal surveys for a Cohort 1 school, across all four constituencies. The scores are based upon a five point scale, in which "5" indicates the most positive response and "1" indicates the least favorable response. All scores, except for "General Reputation of the School" are based on multiple items; for example, the score for "Safe and Orderly Environment" is the average score for five items that measure different aspects of that component. "General Reputation of the School" is based on one item only.

Table 3. Mean Attitudinal Responses of Students, Parents & School Staff, by Type of Respondent

Respondent	Student	Teacher	Principal	Parent
General Reputation of the School	na	3.08	3.00	3.10
Climate I: Safe and Orderly Environment	3.23	4.17	4.40	3.22
Climate II: Expectations	4.10	2.83	3.00	3.82
Climate III: Academic Norms	3.84	3.78	3.60	3.65
Climate IV: Academic Futility	3.37	3.86	4.50	3.71
Organization I: Collaboration	na	3.69	4.00	na
Organization II: Leadership	na	3.75	4.20	3.88
Quality of Instruction	3.91	3.95	3.90	3.59
Parent/School Relationship	3.81	2.99	3.70	3.66
Staff Development	na	3.28	3.60	na
Job Satisfaction	na	3.99	3.80	na

Na=Not applicable. *Source: Site-level Surveys of Parents, Students, and School Staff, Spring 1997*

An advantage of administering the surveys across the four levels of respondents is that differences in perceptions regarding the school become apparent when compared across the constructs. For example, in the above table it is evident that the principal's and teachers' expectations for the students are much lower than the expectations of the parents and students. In addition, the principal and teachers perceive the school to be a safer place than do the parents and students.

Interviews and Focus Groups

According to Patton (1990), three general types of interviews are available to researchers. These are the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview. For the interviews conducted during SEAP-II site visits, the interview guide approach is utilized. The site teams are provided with a list of topics and questions to discuss with the principal and guidance counselor so that interview data gathered across sites is consistent. While maintaining consistency in the topics discussed in the interviews, the interview guide approach allows the interviewer to probe as needed to gather information important to the individual school context.

In contrast to the principal and guidance counselor interviews, teacher and student interviews are conducted through the use of focus groups. According to Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989), "groups are not just a convenient way to accumulate the individual knowledge of their members. They give rise synergistically to insights and solutions that would not come about without them

(p. 40)."

Focus group interviews are considered to be highly efficient since they allow the researcher to gather data from a larger number of people at one time. Participants in focus groups also tend to provide checks and balances for each other that reduce problems with false or extreme views. In addition, the group dynamics of focus groups help to keep the group focused on the most important topics and issues, and allow the researcher to determine if there is a fairly consistent view of the program or school among the participants.

Due to the number of participants in such group interviews, the response time must be increased therefore the number of questions asked may have to be limited. In addition, facilitating interviews with groups requires some knowledge of group process skills so that the discussion will not be dominated by one or two individuals in the group. It is generally necessary to have at least two researchers conducting focus group interviews since it is difficult to take notes while facilitating the discussion of the group (Patton, 1990).

For the student and teacher interviews conducted during the SEAP site visits, a list of questions are provided for the team similar to the interview guide technique. The team utilizes these questions in conducting the interviews, but also probes as necessary to gain needed information or to clarify information based upon observations at the site. The interview topics include areas such as the strengths and weaknesses of the school, methods of improvement, job satisfaction, and future aspirations. Discussion of these topics by the group generally provides details that

verify or expand upon the data gathered through observations and attitudinal questionnaires.

Results from Interviews and Focus Groups

The information gathered in the interviews and focus groups provide interesting anecdotes at each of the schools that add depth to the quantitative data collected through the SEAP methodology. These anecdotes make the reports more interesting and often reveal unique circumstances in certain schools.

In the case of one school in north Louisiana, the principal interview provided information about the numerous business partnerships that are held with the school. These partnerships yielded both resources and support for the school. The principal shared how the school was involved in partnerships with the local cable company, the local K-Mart store, a local hospital, the local Domino's Pizza, a Kiwanis Club in the area, and an Air Force base located nearby.

The cable company had provided cable hookups to all of the classrooms, TV production equipment, and a closed circuit TV channel enabling the students to produce their own shows. In addition, the company had installed television sets purchased by the school's PTO in each classroom. These improvements allowed the school to produce a morning news program staged by the students.

While this company had chosen to participate by providing resources to the school, others participated by providing incentives for the students. The K-Mart store sponsored a Citizen of the Month program and a Lunch Bunch Program, while

the Kiwanis Club sponsored the B.U.G. (Bringing Up Grades) roll and Terrific Kids programs. The local Air Force base had taken an even more hands-on approach to their partnership by participating in a tutoring program that provided assistance to individual students while providing service people at the base with an opportunity to fulfill their community service requirements.

The information gained from the principal regarding these programs was very important in the development of the school's final report. It provided details regarding the school climate and incentive programs that might not have been observed during the three-day visit, or gleaned from the closed ended interviews.

The teacher and student focus groups were consistently found to be valuable information generators across all twelve schools. For example, at one of the schools, the principal had portrayed himself as a strong disciplinarian during his individual interview. However, through the teacher and student focus groups, it became increasingly apparent that this was not the perception of others in the school community. Teachers indicated that the principal utilized a negative approach to discipline which disturbed many of the teachers. They felt that he seldom offered praise, and even remarked that after a recent program for which the students had worked very hard, he failed to congratulate them for a job well done. Instead, the principal commented that the students talked too much and too loudly in the hallway while waiting to perform. Considering that the students were performing the program at several other schools in the district and had been recognized for their performance by the district superintendent, the principal's behavior seemed to be a

rather harsh response.

The students who participated in the focus group interview corroborated the teachers' tale of a negative disciplinary environment. They complained of partiality in the enforcement of the school rules, including a story about a group of honor roll students who were caught in the bathroom smoking marijuana yet went unpunished because of the likely damage to their grades, and to the school's reputation. They were also concerned about the controlling and negative comments of the principal, remarking that he seldom had anything positive to say. The students reported that the principal's comments to students tended to focus upon reminders to students to tuck in their shirts or get haircuts.

Anecdotes such as the ones described above provided substance to support the results of the attitudinal questionnaires, the test data, and the classroom and school observations. In addition, they were also useful in substantiating recommendations made in the final reports.

Issues Related to the Use of Interviews

One of the major issues in utilizing focus group interviews in school settings such as those visited during the SEAP site visit is that of confidentiality. Whenever a group of individuals who work together daily are asked questions about their work setting as a group, differences of opinion about the situation will come out in the discussion. Therefore, it is very important to insure that all parties involved in the interviews agree to maintain the confidentiality of the group once the interview

is complete.

This issue was raised early in the SEAP visits when a teacher at one of the first schools visited went to the principal after participating in the teacher focus group. This teacher repeated comments made by other teachers who participated in the group, and apparently provided the principal with information that he felt reflected negatively on him as the school's administrator. As a result of this information, the principal later attempted to fire the teacher who had been most vocal during the focus group interview removed from his position. The principal was ultimately unsuccessful in this attempt, but the experience triggered the addition of several safeguards to the data collection process to prevent a reoccurrence.

The first of these safeguards is the requirement that all participants sign a statement of confidentiality before the focus group interview begins. In addition, at the beginning of the interview, the facilitator reads to the group a statement regarding confidentiality of all matters discussed during the interview. These requirements have so far prevented further confidentiality problems during the SEAP site visits.

A second issue concerns focus group sampling. It was also discovered early in the SEAP visits that in several schools, relatives of administrators were employed by or enrolled in several of the schools visited. In several instances, these individuals were randomly selected for participation in either the teacher or student focus group interview. Their presence during the interview stifled other members of the group

in their responses, and made them very guarded. In order to eliminate this problem, the leaders of the site teams have since been given the authority to remove such individuals, if detected, from the focus group samples and to replace them with alternates as needed. There have been no further problems with the inclusion of relatives in the focus group process, enabling the teams to gain the information the interviews are designed to acquire.

Concluding the Data Collection Process: Building Consensus

At the conclusion of a site visit, team members are often left feeling somewhat fragmented, as due to time constraints, no observer can see everything. To facilitate a shared sense of what is observed at the school, the 12HD (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1991)(see appendix 2), is used to bring about consensus regarding various school climate indicators. The instrument is scored by the group, and rates the school on a scale of one to seven (with 4.0 being a hypothetical state of "average") on various dimensions including: students' ability to make sense of their day, observed planned academic push, principal's presence throughout the school, coordination of school activities, and teachers' experimentation with new curriculum.

An audiotape is made of the group while scoring the 12HD, as the scoring of this instrument tends to be very interactive. The group begins with a brief description of the school and its main features. Each item is scored individually by the team members', all members then discuss the group score, using examples gathered from the site visit to refute or support stated opinions. In addition, the

12HD offers a forum for events not observed by other team members to be acknowledged and recorded.

Building a group consensus about individual school observations is an important culminating activity as it ensures that all observers leave the school site with a shared view of how they believe the school is performing. The strategy of consensus building with regard to school performance also begins the process of developing commendations and recommendations for the school, which is an integral part of the final report generated for each school visited.

Going Beyond the Site Visits: Ancillary Benefits of SEAP-II

As mentioned previously, the LDE began a total reorganinzation coincident with the initiation of SEAP. A key concept in the reorganization of the LDE involved replacing the agency's rigid, top-down, bureaucratic, structure with a more horizontal organization to encourage across-function collaboration. The SEAP-II teams have become a prototype for this new way of work as it is the first large-scale effort to assemble teams of specialists from a range of units within the LDE and to assign them a common task: helping schools to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

It is not unusual for a SEAP-II team to consist of staff drawn from such diverse administrative areas as the research unit, Title I, vocational education, special education, and early childhood sections. In addition, the teams cut across hierarchical levels— program managers, psychometricians, section heads, even

assistant superintendents. In some instances, assistant superintendents have worked under the direction of team leaders who were themselves program managers (entry-level professionals.)

An important feature of the SEAP-II site visits is their ability to place LDE staff into schools. Although job qualifications for LDE staff are such that virtually every professional staff member at the Department is a former classroom teacher or administrator, many staff members are initially reluctant to participate in the site visits. However, once out in the field, the majority of participants find themselves invigorated by the opportunity to be back in schools. Even staff members whose jobs routinely call for them to be out in schools -- for example child welfare and attendance staff or Title I monitors -- have for the first time been stepping outside their particular program bounds and find themselves acquiring different perspectives about schools.

SEAP-II has also given the research staff involved with the LDE's education performance indicator program, the Progress Profiles, an opportunity to gather data useful in establishing concurrent validity regarding data collected by this unit. For example, for roughly 10 years the LDE has published data on student attendance, discipline, dropouts. The qualitative data generated by site-based observations, surveys, focus groups, and interviews has been used to validate or dispute what the indicators say about the school's disciplinary climate and student achievement.

The SEAP-II site visit process also allows for the initiation of relationships between LDE staff and schools. This not only makes the new LDE goal of assistance

a reality, but also helps to lessen the fear a school commonly associates with a visit from the "State Department." Thus, SEAP-II has transcended its initial function as a process for gathering school level data to becoming (a.) an entity in which schools are examined on their own merits not just as statistics, and (b.) a means for bringing together LDE staff across functions and hierarchies with a common goal of school improvement.

ERIC

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APPENDIX 1

School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP)

SCHOOL OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

School: _____ Date: _____

Observer: _____

Note: Not all items on this checklist will be appropriate to all schools. Every team member should complete sections 1-3.

Sections 4-10 should be divided among the team members. *Any notable observations relevant to unassigned sections should be recorded.*

Section I. Teacher

1. Note number/percent of teachers arriving:
   a. early (_____ _____ %)
   b. at school starting time (_____ _____ %)
   c. late (_____ _____ %)

   Comments:_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Number of breaks allowed per day:_____
3. Length of breaks allowed:_____
4. Number of teachers leaving the lounge after break has ended:_____
5. Number of teachers taking breaks in lounge:_____

   Comment:_____

   _____

   _____

6. Note type(s) of information posted on lounge bulletin board:_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Note comments, statements, and conversations of faculty, reflecting their attitudes and perceptions of their school in general, students, principal, local school district personnel, etc._____

_____

_____

8. Based on observations of teachers, do they appear to be satisfied with their jobs as:
   a. Professional educators:_____

   _____

   _____

   b. Teachers with this particular school:_____

   _____

   _____

Further Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section II. Principal Involvement

1. How often is the principal seen in the hallways during the day?_____

_____

_____

2. In the classrooms?

_____

_____

3. Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Describe the principal's rapport with the students (as indicated through observations).

_____

_____

_____

5. Describe the principal's rapport with the faculty (as indicated through observations).

_____

_____

_____

6. Are there visible signs of the principal's implementation of policies on personnel matters, student discipline, student achievement, in-service, safety and health, behavior codes, etc.?

_____

_____

_____

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Section III. Assistant Principal(s) Involvement

1. How often is the assistant principal(s) see in the hallways during the day?

_____

_____

_____

2. In the classrooms?

_____

_____

_____

3. Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Describe the assistant principal's rapport with the students (as indicated through observations).

_____

_____

_____

5. Describe the assistant principal's rapport with the faculty (as indicated through observations).

_____

_____

_____

6. Are there visible signs of the assistant principal's implementation of policies on personnel matters, student discipline, student achievement, in-service, safety and health, behavior codes, etc.?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Section IV. School Arrival

1. Note the proportion of students (a few, some, many, most, all) who arrive:
   a. early (_____ _____%)
   b. at school starting time (_____ _____%)
   c. late (_____ _____%)

2. Note the number of duty teachers when students arrive at school:_____

3. Do there appear to be regimens or constraints placed on students' behavior? (e.g., strict structure placed on before-school behavior; students appear somewhat independent, with a few rules governing activities; students' activities are unrestricted.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Are there any security devices/regimens? (e.g., metal detectors, student ID badges, security officers)

_____

_____

_____

5. How are rules and regimens implemented? (e.g., teachers and/or staff use authoritative control; some guidance from staff, but students are self-disciplined)

_____

_____

_____

6. How do students respond to the rules and regiments? Describe their general before-school behavior.

_____

_____

_____

Further Comments: _____

_____

_____

Section V. Playground/School Grounds

1. Number of recess periods: _____ Length:_____

2. Monitoring of playground equipment/school grounds; number of duty teachers.

_____

_____

_____

3. Note amounts, types, and condition of playground equipment.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Are there specific rules (formal or informal) regarding where students can congregate during recess? (e.g., students can/cannot go in their classroom(s) early; males gather near gym, girls near auditorium; playgrounds segregated by grade)

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Is there scheduled use of playground equipment, organized play, etc.? To what degree are the students independent in their playground activities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Are there specific playground rules and discipline policies in place? Describe each? If so, describe them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Do the students respond quickly to the school bell at the end of the recess period?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Further Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Section VI. Custodial Staff and Physical Appearance of School

		Unclean	Somewhat Clean	Very Clean
1.	School grounds, playground(s)	a	b	c
2.	Hallways, offices, bathroom(s)	a	b	c
3.	Classrooms	a	b	c

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. How much interaction is there between faculty and/or students and custodial staff?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What is the general attitude of faculty toward custodial staff?

Negative Indifferent Positive

6. What is the general attitude of students toward custodial staff?

Negative Indifferent Positive

7. Are some school buildings and facilities in need of repair, replacement, maintenance, etc.?

walls _____
building structure _____
windows _____
fences _____
faculty desks, chairs _____
student desks, chairs _____
air conditioning system _____
bathroom facilities _____
water fountain(s) _____

Further Comments: _____

_____

_____

Section VII. Cafeteria

1. What is the general demeanor of the cafeteria staff?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How do students treat the cafeteria staff?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Are the students allowed to talk during lunch?

_____

_____

_____

4. What other rules and regulations govern student behavior at lunch time (e.g., clean plate, disposal of trays, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

5. Describe the behavior of students at lunchtime. _____

_____

_____

6. Are teachers required to eat lunch with their students? _____

_____

_____

7. Are there cafeteria monitors? _____

_____

_____

8. *[Applies to secondary schools] Are students allowed to leave campus at lunchtime? What rules govern student behavior after they finish lunch and before class resumes? (e.g., students must remain in cafeteria, students are restricted to a particular spot on campus, bathrooms are accessible/locked, etc.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section VIII. Auxiliary Classes

1. Are the P.E. classes organized with physical fitness in focus, organized play/exercise, or independent?

_____

_____

_____

2. Who teaches P.E. classes: _____

_____

_____

_____

3. What amount and type of P.E. equipment and resources are available?

_____

_____

_____

4. Who teaches music classes? _____

_____

_____

5. What amount and type of music class equipment/resources are available? _____

_____

_____

6. Who teaches art classes? _____

_____

_____

7. What type of art is taught? What type of art materials are available?

_____

_____

_____

8. Who teaches vocational classes? *[Applies to secondary schools]* _____

_____

_____

_____

9. What amount and type of vocational equipment and resources are available? *[Applies to secondary schools]*

_____

_____

_____

10. Does the guidance counselor come into the classroom regularly to lead discussion, provide information, etc. How often?_____
What is discussed? _____

_____

_____

11. What type of special education services/resources are available? (e.g., autistic classes, signing for the hearing impaired, resource/remediation, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Describe the attitudes of teachers and students of special education classes. Do they appear to be an integral part of the school culture?

_____

_____

_____

13. Are there scheduled visits and/or classes for students with the:

a. social welfare worker _____
b. school psychologist _____
c. dietitian _____
d. foreign language teachers _____
e. safety instructors _____
f. health professional _____
g. others _____

_____

f. health professional _____

g. others _____

_____

14. Do these visits appear to interfere with the regular class routine?

_____

_____

_____

15. What appears to be the attitude of the regular classroom teacher(s) toward these visits?

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. In what other classes, extracurricular functions, activities, etc. are students involved? (e.g., plays, field trips, clubs/organizations, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Further Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section IX. Hallways and Bulletin Boards

1. What is displayed on walls of hallways? (e.g., artwork of students, awards, posters, banners, announcements, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

2. What is displayed on bulletin boards in hallways? _____

_____

_____

_____

3. What are the subject matters of displays around the school? _____

_____

_____

4. Do the displays have specific themes? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. How often do displays change? _____

_____

_____

_____

6. Who is responsible for displays on walls and bulletin boards? _____

_____

_____

_____

Further Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section X. Library

1. Is there a school library? _____

2. Describe its physical attributes.

_____

_____

_____

3. Is there a librarian? _____
If yes, is he/she _____ full-time?
_____ halftime?
_____ less than halftime?

4. If the librarian is less than full-time, what are his/her other duties?

_____

_____

_____

5. How are the students scheduled to visit the library?

_____

_____

_____

6. What is the general behavior of students in the library?

_____

_____

_____

7. Does the librarian have structured classes for students in library science? _____
In general knowledge/various subjects _____
If not, how is library time used?

_____

_____

_____

8. What resources are available in the library (furniture, books, AV equipment, periodicals, professional materials for faculty)?

_____

_____

_____

9. Note the number and availability of
   a. library aids _____
   b. student helpers _____
   c. parental volunteers _____
10. As indicated through observation, what is the general rapport of the librarian with students?

_____

_____

_____

With faculty?

_____

_____

_____

Section X. Other Observations

School: _____ Date: _____

Observer: _____

APPENDIX 2

12HD --- Revised Version (OEI)

Observers Exit Inventory (OEI)

School Name: _____

Rater Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions

The purpose of this taped meeting is to obtain an over-all, integrated impression of the school. Each team member should have already completed his/her own copy of the OEI before coming to the group meeting. Observers should not be concerned if their ratings for specific questions do not fit their overall impression of the school and are encouraged to discuss openly and informally any aspects of the school that seemed noteworthy to them. Each question can be discussed in any manner that suits the needs of the observers, but at some point should include a team agreed upon score from 1-7. **Begin each tape with a description of the school, the size and make-up of the student body, and the community it serves.**

Scoring

1 represents a judgement of "totally absent" or "not at all like this school."
7 represents a judgement of "exemplary" or "present and working smoothly in virtually all observations."

S1. To what extent would you describe this school as having a serious academic atmosphere?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

To what extent would you describe this school as being a friendly place for pupils/students and adults?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

S2. To what extent is this school one at which academic time is valued?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

S3. To what extent is this school one at which policy, curriculum, and school activities are consistently implemented and well coordinated?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

S4. To what extent does the principal appear to be involved with the daily activities of teachers and students in the school?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

S5. To what extent are academic challenges, recognition, and rewards clearly posted?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

T1. To what extent does classroom teaching exhibit academic rigor and challenge?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

T2. Rates of interactive teaching were _____ (very low to very high).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

T3. To what extend are classes experimenting with new curricula and instructional techniques?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

ST1. To what extent is this school one in which the **total** school experience of students appears to be meaningful?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

ST2. To what extent is this school one in which the education of all students is valued equally.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The SEAP Process: Illustrative Case Studies from SEAP-II

Symposium Presentation # 5 Integrating School Indicators, School Effectiveness, and School Improvement Research: The Louisiana School Effectiveness Program (SEAP)

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draft

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ERIC

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The SEAP Process: Illustrative Case Studies from SEAP-II

Overview

The Louisiana School Effectiveness and Assistance Program (SEAP) is a two year pilot project (1996-97, 1997-98) that evolved from an earlier school performance model (Oescher, Black, Gunning, and Brooks, 1996). This earlier school performance model had been developed as part of the requirements for a Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) accountability system, within the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE), which had been authorized by the 1992 state legislature. The LDE's response to this MFP accountability legislation included the development of academic performance measures that could by used in "equity" and "adequacy" applications. The SEAP program now includes statewide school accountability (SEAP-I), intensive school assessment (SEAP-II), and school improvement (SEAP-III) activities. SEAP can best be conceptualized as a two track, parallel system of statewide school accountability and local school improvement activities. While the two tracks are linked through common research activities, each has independent goals. It is the purpose of the SEAP two-year pilot program to provide information to the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Accountability Commission created through House Bill 2068, and other educational policy makers regarding both school accountability and school improvement.

The question that guided this research is: Can an intensive analysis of both process (qualitative) and product (quantitative) indicators of effectiveness be used to generate case study reports that assess the current effectiveness status of schools and make suggestions for improvement?

Methodology

SEAP-I

The first activity undertaken by the researchers in the FY 1996-97 was the evaluation of an existing school performance model, which was generated using a mathematical model known as regression analysis

(Oescher, Black, Gunning, & Brooks, 1996). This mathematical model, or more complicated multilevel models are often used in school effectiveness research (e.g. Brookover, et al., 1979; Mortimore, et al, 1988; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; Hill & Rowe, 1996) and in school indicator systems (e.g. Fitz-Gibbon, 1995, 1996; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Webster & Mendro, 1997; Wilms, 1992). These regression models calculate school effectiveness indices (SEIs) after taking into consideration factors such as the socioeconomic status (SES) of the students attending the schools. The SEAP researchers produced (SEIs) for nearly 1,500 Louisiana public schools. More than just a research exercise, the SEIs are used to target schools for intensive site-based assessment and ultimately, improvement. Each school's performance was judged using two achievement measures (1) a standards-based Baseline Performance Indicator (BPI) and a Relative Performance Indicator (RPI), which takes into consideration six student and school intake characteristics. Each BPI is a school-level composite score reflecting student performance on all state-administered criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) for that site. The RPI, which also is a school -level composite score, reflects student performance on state-administered norm-referenced tests (NRTs) as well as CRTs. Other indicators (e.g. student participation index based on attendance, dropout, and/or other data) may be added at a later date. The SEIs calculated during the SEAP pilot are based on three years of achievement data (Spring 1995-1997) from the LDE's Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP). These composite scores were produced by summing and averaging transformed subject area scores for the respective grade-level tests (Crone, Lang, Franklin, Halbrook, 1994; Crone, Teddlie, Franklin, 1995). The RPIs were calculated using two competing statistical models: school based regression and multilevel modeling (HLM).

SEAP-II

SEAP-II involves the intensive analysis of a select number of schools on both process (qualitative) and (quantitative) indicators of effectiveness. This information was then used to generate (case studies) school reports that assess the current effectiveness of the school and make suggestions for school improvement. The principal and superintendent of each school was presented the initial draft of the report in a meeting in which results of the analysis are discussed. The faculty of each school was then asked to

complete standardized needs assessment forms, and the results from these needs assessments were used to refine the suggestions for school improvement.

An abstract of the final report (case studies) was then given to the faculty of each school, and the faculty decided whether or not to participate in the school improvement process. If the school decided to participate in the process, then the LDE and Louisiana State University (LSU) affiliated external consultants jointly provided technical assistance as needed. Additionally, the LDE and LSU personnel assisted the schools in monitoring their progress under the school improvement plan.

For Academic Year (AY) 1996-97, 12 schools (Cohort One Schools) were assessed from four volunteer districts. Some thirty LDE employees and external consultants affiliated with LSU were trained on the SEAP-II procedures in April, and the site visits took place in early May, 1997. Each five member team spent 1.5 days at each site, for a total of 7.5 person days per site. The activities included observing in the classroom (24 hours per school), interviewing the principal, conducting focus groups with students and teachers, completing school checklists through observation in the school and on the grounds, and distributing and collecting attitudinal questionnaires from parents, teachers, students and the principal.

After the site visits, team members met in Baton Rouge at the LDE building in June to discuss their experiences and to write school analysis reports. These case studies were written in accordance with the procedures advocated by Yin (1994) and the Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) case studies. The final reports were completed by September and visits with each of the faculties occurred at this time. The final reports cite strengths of each school and make specific recommendations for improving identified areas of weaknesses. Each school then developed its own school improvement plan using the final LDE/LSU report as a starting point in conjunction with a LSU analysis of the school needs assessment.

School Report (Case Study) Format

The twelve (12) case studies were guided by the following outline of information. (See Table 1) The main section headings included School Context, School Effectiveness Indicators, District Level Factors, School Administration and Other Factors at the Level of the School, Classroom Teachers and Other Factors

at the Level of the Class, Life in the School at the Student Level, Results from the School's Needs Assessment, Commendations for the School, and Recommendations for School Improvement.

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Table 1
SEAP-II REPORT
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D. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL AND ADMINISTRATION
E. STUDENT AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL AND ADMINISTRATION

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A. TEACHER RETENTION, TEACHER ABSENTEEISM
B. TEACHER ATTITUDES
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VI. LIFE IN THE SCHOOL AT THE STUDENT LEVEL

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A. FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL'S STRENGTHS
B. FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL'S WEAKNESSES
C. FACULTY'S SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SCHOOL

VIII. COMMENDATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Section and specific information to be included was detailed under the section heading. Prompts were provided listing questions to be answered under each heading. Team members worked together to write some sections and worked independently on other items. A team consisting of report writing specialists reviewed and edited the rough draft of the reports for continuity and consistency across all 12 reports.

Case Study Demographics

One application of case studies is to describe the real-life context in which an intervention or innovation has occurred. Yin (1989) defines case studies as examining a range of complex social phenomena and representing a holistic approach to research. In addition ,Yin felt that case studies are process oriented describing the mechanism of the intervention or innovation. Quantitative research gives parameters and measurements to set criteria while qualitative research (case studies) allows for a broader discussion of perceptions, attitudes, and interpretations of situational conditions by members of the organization under study. By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods in this research, confirmation of quantitative and qualitative findings are possible. The quantitative section of this study is enhanced and expanded by case studies which give greater detail to the relationships found within the schools. The following paper includes quantitative summaries across all 12 case studies regarding demographics, teacher performance in classroom observations, school commendations and recommendations. In addition to these quantitative summaries, qualitative information contained in two case studies is presented in narrative form.

The four districts in this study are from four distinctly different parts of the state. There is a disparity of urbanicity, school population, teacher/student ratio, and geographic location across the 12 schools. Each district in the study volunteered their schools to be part of the statewide accountability field test. This resulted in two districts volunteering only rural schools and no high schools being represented in the SEAP-II Cohort I schools. In order to get the maximum amount of candid information, personnel and students at the school level were promised anonymity. The names of the districts, schools, and personnel have been assigned pseudonyms. Table 2 presents the participants in the study by their pseudonyms. Listed for each

school are the districts, schools, location, student/teacher ratio, grade configurations, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (based on percentage of free lunch) for each school. The teacher section includes not only classroom teachers, but support personnel at the schools. These 12 schools are representative of the types of Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Eight schools found in Louisiana. They include a variety of sizes (range from 159 to 749) and school configurations, along with a varied range of teacher/pupil ratios that are reflective of the auxiliary and ancillary personnel assigned to the school for support and assistance. The ethnicity level of these sample schools range from a 90% to a 6.7% white population. The state public school population is 51% white. African- American children comprise the other 48%, with Hispanics, Asians and other ethnicities completing the whole. The SES status based on free lunch eligibility ranges from 25% to 82.3%, with the state average being 57%.

Table 2
School Effectiveness and Assistance Program
SEAP-II Field Test Participants
Demographic Data

District	School	Location	Population Student	Population Teacher	Level	Ethnicity White	SES Free Lunch
Atchafalaya (A)	#1	Rural	231	18	5-8, NG	7.8%	77%
	#2Creole	Rural	309	28	PK-4, NG	6.7%	82.3%
	#3	Rural	399	31	5-8, NG	50%	69%
Barataria (B)	#1	Rural	749	40	4-6	84.5%	11.3%
	#2	Urban	562	39	K-5	68.3%	25%
	#3	Urban	581	45	K-5	59%	45%
Comite (C)	#1	Rural	184	15	K-8	88.3%	34.5%
	#2	Rural	551	40	K-4	57.6%	66%
	#3	Rural	159	15	5-8	38%	71%
Delta (D)	#1 Bayou	Rural	466	34	4-6	73%	59%
	#2	Suburban	436	29	3-5	90%	38.8%
	#3	Suburban	381	38	K-7	87.5%	32.4%

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Quantitative Results

School Climate Scale

The instruments for school climate assessment were modified versions of Brookover and colleagues (1979) and other school climate questionnaires. Surveys were administered to a sample of parents and students randomly and representatively selected from the school population. The entire faculty and teaching staff completed the surveys as well as each principal at the 12 school sites. The survey items were worded in a parallel fashion, allowing for comparisons across the constituencies and the following variables: General Reputation of the School, Safe and Orderly Environment, Expectations, Academic Norms, Academic Efficacy; Organization collaboration and Organization Leadership; Quality of Instruction, Parent/School Relationship, Staff Development, and Job Satisfaction.

Table 3
Common Results Across the 12 Case Study Schools
Mean Attitudinal Responses of Students, Parents and School Staff,
by Type of Respondent

Respondent	Student	Teacher	Principal	Parent
General Reputation of the School	na	3.72	3.92	3.64
Climate I: Safe and Orderly Environment	3.37	3.90	4.57	3.57
Climate II: Expectations	4.10	3.63	3.60	3.76
Climate III: Academic Norms	4.00	3.80	3.85	2.90
Climate IV: Academic Efficacy	3.93	4.02	4.43	3.93
Organization I: Collaboration	na	3.72	4.33	na
Organization II: Leadership	na	3.87	4.40	3.63
Quality of Instruction	4.08	4.15	4.26	3.84
Parent/School Relationship	3.77	3.28	3.98	3.88
Staff Development	na	3.61	4.08	na
Job Satisfaction	na	3.75	4.23	na

Source: Site-level Surveys of Parents, Students, and School Staff, Spring 1997
na=Not Applicable. [1] Based on one survey item.

Table 3 presents a summary of the mean responses by the constituency and the variables. All scores on this table are based on five point scales, on which "5" indicates the most positive response and "1" indicates the least favorable response. An average score is approximately 3.50. All scores, except for "General Reputation of School," are based on multiple items; for example the score for "Safe and Orderly Environment" is the average score for five items that measured different aspects of that component.

Across all 12 schools, a discrepancy between the responses of teachers and principals and that of students and parents became evident. Teachers and principals consistently expressed much lower expectations for students than did the students themselves and their parents. In contrast, teachers and principals reported that the quality of education at their schools was better than the opinions expressed by students and parents. This discrepancy between constituency responses was recognized when recommendations for each school were written; most schools were encouraged to improve upon their school/parent/community relationships.

Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching

Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LCET) is a modified version of an instrument developed for the Louisiana Teacher Assessment Program. The main difference between the two, is that the assessment version rates teachers' behaviors on a two point scale, pass/fail; while the SEAP version of the instrument uses a four point scale to obtain a great degree of variance in scoring.

The LCET focuses on two domains, management and instruction. Within the management domain are components which examine the learning environment, maximization of time, and management of learner behavior. Within the instruction domain are components which examine the teacher's ability to deliver instruction effectively, the teacher's presentation of appropriate content, the teacher's provision of opportunities for pupil involvement in the learning process, and how the teacher assesses pupil progress. Each component is further subdivided into attributes, which are what is rated by the observer.

Table 4 presents the aggregated results for the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LCET) across all 12 schools. Each school received this data summed for the entire school, and then broken down to each grade level. The LCET is scored using a four point scale. A "4" indicates that the teacher does an outstanding job and no area for improvement is readily identifiable. A "3" indicates the teacher consistently

meets and sometimes exceeds expectations , however, performance can be improved, but current practices are clearly acceptable. A "2" indicates the teacher's performance sometimes, but not always meets expectations and improvement activities are required for performance to consistently meet standards. A "1" indicates the teacher's performance is not acceptable and improvement activities must be undertaken immediately. A score below a 2.70 for either a component or attribute represents an area of weakness that the school needs to address

with targeted staff development.

Table 4
Common Results Across the 12 Case Study Schools
Teacher Ratings on Components of Effective Teaching - Mean Scores

Domains, Components, Attributes	12 Schools
Domain II. Management, Component A **The teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning.**	**2.94**
II(A1). Organizes available space, materials, and/or equipment to facilitate learning.	2.97
II(A2). Promotes a positive learning climate.	2.92
Domain II. Management, Component B **The teacher maximizes the amount of time available for instruction.**	**2.66**
II(B1). Manages routines and transitions in a timely manner.	2.82
II(B2). Manages and/or adjusts time for activities.	2.53
Domain II. Management, Component C: The teacher manages learner behavior to provide productive learning opportunities.	**2.78**
II(C1). Establishes expectations for learner behavior.	2.79
II(C2). Uses monitoring techniques to facilitate learning.	2.77
Domain III. Instruction, Component A: The teacher delivers instruction effectively.	**2.55**
III(A1). Uses technique(s) which develop(s) lesson objective(s)	2.59
III(A2). Sequences lesson to promote learning.	5.60
III(A3). Uses available teaching material(s) to achieve lesson objective(s).	2.55
III(A4). Adjusts lesson when appropriate.	2.23
Domain III. Instruction, Component B: The teacher presents appropriate content.	**2.96**
III(B1). Presents content at a developmentally appropriate level.	3.03
III(B2). Presents accurate subject matter.	3.22
III(B3). Relates relevant examples, unexpected situations, or current events to the content.	2.63
Domain III. Instruction, Component C: The teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process.	**2.52**
III(C1). Accommodates individual differences.	2.06
III(C2). Demonstrates ability to communicate effectively with students.	2.78
III(C3). Stimulates and encourages higher order thinking at the appropriate developmental levels.	2.33
III(C4.) Encourages student participation.	2.76
Domain III. Instruction, Component D: The teacher assesses student progress.	**2.64**
III(D1). Monitors ongoing performance of students.	2.71
III(D2). Provides timely feedback to students regarding their progress.	2.56

Based upon the overall results, the 12 schools performed poorly in the following 4 components: Management Component B: The teacher maximizes the amount of time available for instruction (2.66); Management Component C: The teacher manages learner behavior to provide productive learning opportunities (2.55); Instruction, Component C: The teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process (2.52); and Instruction, Component D: The teacher assesses student progress (2.64). In addition, under the Instruction Component: : The teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process, two attributes were consistently rated low: Accommodates individual differences (2.06) and stimulates and encourages higher order thinking at the appropriate developmental levels (2.33). The attribute "adjusts lesson when appropriate" under the Instruction Component A was another area where teacher performance was low (2.23). The scores on these three attributes are in line with other programs in the state which use this instrument, most notably the Louisiana Teacher Assessment Program (LTAP).

Recommendations and Commendations

The following two sections consist of an aggregated analysis of all twelve schools' commendations and recommendations. The methodology used to analyze each schools' recommendations and commendations involved using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) method of unitizing and categorizing the data. Each item was divided into units which were then classified by category code, and then a frequency count for each category was tabulated.

Commendations

Tables 5a and 5b show the results of the content analysis of the commendations across all 12 schools. Table 5a reports the commendations at the school level and Table 5b shows the frequency of commendations across school.

The most frequently recognized commendation was the strength of the school faculty. These areas included the commitment of the faculty to furthering their knowledge and professional credentials, participation in the school decision-making process, and teacher stability in the schools. Faculty set high expectations for learner behavior creating a positive school climate.

Table 5a
SEAP-II Cohort-I Schools
Types of Commendations Across Schools
Part I

NRT/CRT	Faculty	Community Patterns	Attitudinal Scores	Instruction	School Operations
A, 1st, # 2	A, 3rd, # 4	A, 2nd, # 2	A, 1st, # 1	B, 2nd, # 7	B, 1st, # 8
A, 1st, # 3	A, 3rd, # 5	B, 1st, # 1	A, 2nd, # 3	B, 2nd, # 9	B, 2nd, # 6
A, 2nd, # 1	B, 1st, # 4	B, 2nd, # 1	A, 3rd, # 6	C, 1st, # 6	B, 3rd, # 1
A, 2nd, # 4	B, 1st, # 5	B, 2nd, # 3	B, 3rd, # 4	L, 1st, # 5	C, 2nd, # 2
A, 3rd, # 3	B, 1st, # 6	B, 3rd, # 2	C, 1st, # 1	L, 1st, # 7	
B, 3rd, # 3	B, 1st, # 7	L, 1st, # 4	L, 3rd, # 3		
C, 1st, # 2	B, 2nd, # 8	L, 1st, # 6			
C, 1st, # 3	C, 1st, # 8				
C, 3rd, # 2	C, 2nd, # 1				
L, 1st, # 1	C, 2nd, # 3				
L, 1st, # 2	C, 3rd, # 1				
L, 1st, # 3					
L, 3rd, # 1					

Part II

Physical Facilities	Administration	Discipline	Achievement	Attendance	State Standards
B, 1st, # 2	C, 3rd, # 3	A, 1st, # 4	B, 1st, # 3	A, 3rd, # 2	C, 1st, # 4
B, 2nd, # 4	C, 3rd, # 4	A, 3rd, # 1	B, 2nd, # 2		
B, 2nd, # 5	L, 1st, # 8	C, 1st, # 5			
C, 1st, # 1	L, 3rd, # 2				

Testing results indicated that several of the schools showed an increase in CRT and NRT scores. Pupils in many cases tested above the national median on state administered standardized tests. Attitudinal scores reflected the students positive attitudes toward their school experiences. Many of these scores were reflected by the students responding to caring attitudes of their teachers. Expectations were high concerning school and the opportunities it offered, which is a positive indication of improved student performance. Schools were commended for encouraging the community to play an active part in the school. This was evidenced by the successful partnerships with businesses in the community.

Effective discipline and improved attendance was reflected by a decrease in the student suspension rate. Most discipline problems were handled in the classroom. Daily operations at several of the schools were well-organized and maximized the use of instructional time. Data from the time-on-task scans indicated high scores and effective instruction in many of the 12 schools.

Table 5b
SEAP-II Cohort-I Schools
Frequency of Recommendations Across Schools

Category	Frequency
Norm/Criterion Referenced Tests	13
Faculty	11
Community Patterns	7
Attitudinal Scores	6
Instruction	5
Physical Facilities	4
School Operations	4
Discipline	3
Administration	3
Achievement	2
Attendance	1
State Standards	1

Recommendations

Table 6a and 6b show the results of the content analysis of the recommendations across all 12 schools. Table 6a focuses on recommendations targeted at the school level and Table 6b focuses on recommendations targeted at the district level. Breaking this analysis down even further is Table 7 which reports the frequency of recommendations across schools. The most frequently made recommendation had to do with leadership, with every school receiving at least one recommendation under this heading. The majority of recommendations in this area looked at scheduling/planning/protecting academic time; school and classroom discipline policy; and increasing principal observations along with teacher feedback.

Every school was also cited for needing staff development as a recommendation for school improvement. Most of the suggestions centered around improving instructional methods, classroom management, and addressing the individual needs of all students and special needs students. Three-quarters of the schools' recommendations centered around curriculum as an area needing improvement. These recommendations focused on language arts, reading and math instruction becoming a more hands on, interactive experience for students.

Half of the recommendations made for the schools regarded improving parental involvement and communication. This was primarily in response to the variance between the responses of the parents and those of the teachers and principals on the attitude surveys. One third of the schools had recommendations that targeted the low expectations that faculty and staff appeared to have for students. This was evidenced in the results of the classroom observations and the attitudinal survey responses.

It is important to note that professional development was cited as a recommendation in all 12 schools. Targeted staff development, built upon the goals of school improvement plans is a concrete way in which schools can begin to address their shortcomings and move toward the future.

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Table 6a
SEAP-II Cohort-I Schools
Types of Recommendations Across Schools
School Level Results

Leadership	Professional Development	Curriculum	Parent Involvement Communication	Expectations	Physical Site	Other
A, 1st, #1	A, 1st, #7	A, 1st, #5	A, 3rd, #3	A, 1st, #3	A, 1st, #8	B, 3rd, #8
A, 1st, #2	A, 2nd, #3	A, 1st, #6	B, 1st, #5	A, 1st, #4	D, 1st, #6	
A, 2nd, #1	A, 2nd, #5	A, 2nd, #4	B, 2nd, #5	A, 2nd, #2		
A, 2nd, #3	A, 3rd, #4	A, 3rd, #11	C, 3rd, #7	C, 2nd, #5		
A, 3rd, #1 & 2	A, 3rd, #6	B, 1st, #7	D, 1st, #5	C, 3rd, #2		
A, 3rd, #3	A, 3rd, #7	C, 2nd, #2	D, 3rd, #4			
A, 3rd, #5	A, 3rd, #8	C, 2nd, #8	D, 3rd, #5			
A, 3rd, #10	A, 3rd, #9	C, 2nd, #10				
B, 1st, #2	B, 1st, #1	C, 3rd, #4				
B, 1st, #3	B, 1st, #4	D, 1st, #7-1				
B, 1st, #6	B, 2nd, #1	D, 2nd, #5				
B, 2nd, #2-1 & 2	B, 3rd, #3	D, 2nd, #6				
B, 2nd, #2-3	B, 3rd, #6	D, 3rd, #6				
B, 2nd, #3-1 & 2	C, 1st, #3-1	D, 3rd, #7				
B, 2nd, #4	C, 1st, #3-2					
B, 3rd, #2	C, 2nd, #4					
B, 3rd, #3	C, 2nd, #7					
B, 3rd, #4	C, 2nd, #9					
B, 3rd, #5	C, 3rd, #3					
B, 3rd, #7	C, 3rd, #5					
C, 1st, #4	D, 1st, #2					
C, 1st, #5	D, 1st, #3					
C, 2nd, #1	D, 1st, #4					
C, 2nd, #3	D, 1st, #7-2					
C, 2nd, #6	D, 1st, #8					
C, 3rd, #1	D, 2nd, #1					
D, 1st, # 6	D, 2nd, #2					
D, 2nd, #7	D, 2nd, #9					
D, 3rd, #2-1 & 2	D, 3rd, #3					

A, 1st, # 3 means Atchafalaya District, School # 1, Recommendation # 3

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Table 6b
SEAP-II Cohort-I Schools
Types of Recommendations Across Schools
District Level

Leadership	Staffing	Management	Physical Site	Staff Development	Programs / Pupil Teacher Ratio	Technology Resources
D, 1st, #1	A, 1st, #9	D, 2nd, #4	C, 1st, #2	A, 3rd, #4	C, 1st, #1	B, 3rd, #1
D, 2nd, #8	A, 1st, #10		C, 3rd, #8	D, 3rd, #3	C, 3rd, #6	
	A, 3rd, #12		D, 3rd, #1			
	D, 2nd, #3					
	D, 3rd, #4					
	D, 3rd, #8					

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Table 7
SEAP-II Cohort-I Schools
Frequency of Recommendations Across Schools

Category	Frequency
Leadership	**29**
Scheduling/Planning/Protect Academic Time	7
School and Classroom Discipline Policy	7
Classroom Observations/Feedback	4
School Improvement Team	2
Improve Communication/Collaboration	2
Class Size	2
New Principal	1
Reward Pupil Success	1
Homework Plan	1
Special Education	1
Student Involvement	1
Professional Development	**29**
Instructional Methods	7
Individual Needs/Special Needs Students	7
Classroom Management	4
Structure Opportunities/Staff Development Coordination	4
Higher Order Thinking Skills	2
Technology, Discipline, & Data Analysis	2
Learning Styles	1
Teachers on Self-Esteem	1
Cooperative Teaching	1

Table 7
Frequency of Recommendations Across Schools (Cont'd)

Category	Frequency
Curriculum	**14**
Language Arts	3
Reading	2
Math	2
Curriculum	2
Gifted and Talented	1
Vocational Education	1
Extra Curricular Activities	1
Computer	1
Social Studies, Study Skills	1
Parental Involvement/Communication	**7**
Expectations	**6**
Physical Site	**3**
Other	**1**
TOTAL	**89**

Case Studies

The following excepts from two illustrative case studies (school reports) of Bayou Elementary and Creole Elementary are indicative of the information contained within the case studies about school context and the leadership/administration of the schools (Section I. SCHOOL CONTEXT and Section IV. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER FACTORS AT THE LEVEL OF THE SCHOOL). These two schools are similar in context, but dissimilar in leadership/administration of the school. Table 8 depicts the comparison of the two schools in these two areas:

Table 8
Comparison of Bayou Elementary and Creole Elementary Schools on School Context and Leadership and Administration Components

SCHOOL CONTEXT			LEADERSHIP|ADMINISTRATION		
Category	Bayou Elementary	Creole Elementary	Category	Bayou Elementary	Creole Elementary
Location	Rural	Rural	Ethnicity	White	White
Level	K-7	PK-4,NG	Gender	Male	Female
Population Students	385	309	Teaching Experience	10 Years	18 Years
Ethnicity White	73%	6.7%	Administrative Experience	23 Years	2 Years
SES/Free Lunch	59%	82.3%			
Population Teachers	35	28			
% of Faculty with Master's Degree or Higher	37%	30%			

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School Context Indicators

Table 8 provides school summary descriptive information from the *Progress Profiles*[2] *(School Report Cards)*. Both Bayou Elementary and Creole Elementary are located in two of the southernmost coastal, rural Parishes in the State. Bayou Elementary, a one-time K-12 school has been truncated to a K-7 school serving a population of approximately 385 students from mostly working-class backgrounds. Creole Elementary serves pupils in grades PK through 4. Enrollments at Bayou Elementary have been relatively stable in recent years, averaging between 370 and 380 students over the past three years, with 1996-97 at 385. As the table notes, enrollments at Creole Elementary declined about 29% between 1993-94 to 1995-96; that is, enrollment decreased from 483 pupils in 1993-94 to 342 pupils in 1995-96, and became stable during 1996-97 at 309. The population at Bayou Elementary is predominately white (73%), whereas the student population at Creole Elementary is predominately non-white (92.3%). The free lunch figures indicate that Bayou Elementary (59%) has a smaller number of at-risk students as compared to Creole Elementary (82.3%). Both of these at-risk percentages are higher than the state's at-risk population (57%).

The teacher workforce at Bayou Elementary (35) is larger than Creole (28), but this is reflective of the 76 additional students which includes the deaf education students that require special needs teachers. Approximately 37% of the faculty at Bayou held at least a master's degree in 1995-96, down somewhat from the year before (47.06%). Approximately 30% of the faculty at Creole held at least a master's degree in 1995-96. The percent of faculty (including teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators) who have earned a master's degree or higher is a reflection of the extent to which the instructional staff have made a commitment to furthering their own knowledge and professional credentials.

Bayou Elementary and Creole Elementary are both located in rural communities and have at-risk student populations. The population at Creole Elementary has a higher percentage of at-risk students than Bayou Elementary. The student population has seen a decline over the past several years at Creole, whereas

1995-96 *Louisiana Progress Profiles District Composite Report*, Delta Parish. A technical report published March 1997, by the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Research and Development, Bureau of School Accountability.

Bayou Elementary has stayed relatively stable. The instructional staff at both schools is comparable in their commitment to furthering their professional development. These two schools have very similar school context variables , but as this study will show other factors will influence the strengths and weaknesses in these schools.

Leadership/Administration Indicators

In Table 8, the leadership /administration indicators compare the demographic data on the principals from Bayou Elementary and Creole Elementary. Bayou Elementary's principal is a white male with ten years of teaching experience and 23 years of administrative experience. In contrast, Creole Elementary's principal is a white female with 18 years of teaching experience and two years of administrative service. The following case study will further contrast the differences and similarities between the administration in Bayou Elementary and Creole Elementary.

Case Study Reports

The entire case study reports were presented to the District Superintendents and the principals at a meeting to decide the focus of the school improvement plan for the schools. The case study approach provides the school system with a contextual background and an actual picture of what is occurring within the schools. The feedback to the schools was in a narrative format and provides examples of justifications for the improvement recommendations. The following excepts from two of the twelve case studies are based on the triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from the SEAP site visits to the schools. References are made throughout the case studies to mean scores from attitudinal responses to school climate surveys administered by the SEAP site visit team to the principal, teachers, pupils, and parents. All items are based on five-point scales, with five indicating the most positive response and one indicating the least positive.

Bayou Elementary School

Bayou Elementary School is located in one of the southernmost coastal, rural Parishes in the State. Bayou Elementary is one of the oldest schools in operation in Delta Parish. The campus, which is located

on LA 1, facing Bayou Lafourche, is a mix of the old and new, permanent and temporary buildings on a plot of land carved from an old sugar cane field. The focal point of the campus is a two-story, clapboard building erected in 1918, with wide halls and high ceilings. Though an annex with a combination of cafeteria/auditorium was added in the 1980's, the two permanent buildings have comparatively few classrooms between them. Therefore, the majority of students are housed in an assortment of temporary buildings, clustered at the rear of the main building.

Delta, one of the southernmost parishes in Louisiana is located west of the Mississippi River and south of New Orleans in the heart of the Mississippi delta. Bayou Lafourche, the parish's principal waterway, traverses the parish from the north to the south and serves as an economic corridor for the region. From Thibodaux in the northernmost tip of the parish to Golden Meadow and Fourchon in the south, most of the parish's residents live, work, and attend school along LA 1, the state highway that skirts the Bayou's western bank.

Though Delta has been described by all interviewed as a neighborhood school, there is limited community involvement in the school, partly because the school draws from a wide geographic area, with few businesses in the immediate area. Parents seem to value education because they reportedly respond quickly and supportively to contacts from teachers and attend open houses and other school functions.

Delta Parish is somewhat above the state average financially, but slightly below the state average economically. For example, about three in ten households (30%) had average annual incomes of less than $15,000 in 1990, as compared to a state average of 36.3%. The district is in fact solidly middle class, with approximately 60% of Delta households earning incomes between $15,000 and $50,000 as compared to a state average of 48.3%. On the other hand, 43.8% of adults held less than a high school education as compared to 27.4% for the state as a whole. The slight imbalance in economic and educational performance indicators is not surprising in this region because residents have traditionally earned their livelihood in the fishing and petroleum industries where semi-skilled workers were long able to earn good wages. Not

surprisingly, 40.8% of the parish's workforce in 1990 were blue collar workers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990).

Risk factors for children and youth are somewhat lower in Delta than for the state as a whole. Some 15% of households were headed by single parents in 1990 as compared to 19.1% statewide. Thirty percent of Delta residents were living below the poverty level that year (the state average was 23.6%), and the parish's teen pregnancy rate was 15.8% as compared to 17.6% for the state as a whole (U.S. Bureau of the Census).

Delta Parish is one of the state's larger public school districts, with roughly 16,300 students in grades K-12 enrolled in the district's 28 public schools in 1995-96. Public school students here outnumber nonpublic students more than 6 to 1. The parish's seven nonpublic schools (all Catholic) enrolled approximately 2,600 students in grades K-12 in 1995-96 (Bulletin 1462, *Louisiana School Directory*). The Delta Parish system employed nearly 1,200 faculty in 1995-96 (Bulletin 1462, *Louisiana School Directory*) at an average annual salary of $26,838 compared to an average $24,873 statewide (Bulletin 1472, *Annual Financial and Statistical Report, 1995-96*). Teacher salaries in Delta rose to $26,838 in 1995-96 from a low of $22,736 in 1993-94 (Bulletin 1472, *Annual Financial and Statistical Report, 1995-96* and *1993-94*).

In 1995-96, the district spent $4,359 per student in average daily membership compared to a state average of $4,468 (Bulletin 1472, *Annual Financial and Statistical Report, 1993-94*). However, district funding per student is expected to jump nearly seven-fold (from $5 to $34 per student) when a recently approved sales tax increase goes into effect.

Bayou Elementary, a one-time K-12 school has been truncated to a K-7 school serving a population of approximately 385 students from mostly working-class backgrounds. The student body appears somewhat better off economically than the parish average, judging from the free/reduced lunch rate of 32.4% for Bayou Elementary. According to the principal, about half the students' parents have completed high school, and the great majority of families are above the poverty level.

Approximately 15% of the children attending Bayou Elementary in 1996 were special education

students, with fewer than 1% identified as "gifted and talented." It appears that many of the special education children at Bayou are hearing-impaired students enrolled in a deaf education program that the district launched at the school some three years ago. The hearing-impaired students spend most of their day in a regular education classroom, and are pulled out for resource. They also have an "adaptive physical education teacher" who is the only physical education teacher on site. Only .5% of students at Bayou were identified as Limited English Proficient in 1996.

Tenure of the Principal and Other Administrators

Mr. John Boudreaux, a native of Delta Parish, is a family man whose wife has also spent a career working for education at the university level. Mr. Boudreaux has served his entire educational career within the district, rising through the teaching ranks from his first post as a fifth grade teacher to become principal of Bayou Elementary. He has been principal at Bayou for 23 years. There are no assistant principals, administrative assistants, or guidance counselors at Bayou.

Mr. Boudreaux has completed the DROP program and is going into his second year after DROP. At this point in his profession, he is relatively disengaged from the instructional component of the school and, with the exception of serious problems, takes a "hands off" approach to his teachers. In regards to school safety/discipline, teacher focus group respondents said that they handle most discipline problems themselves, at the classroom level.

The SEAP team also perceived the principal to be "in a holding pattern" insofar as instructional leadership is concerned. He was not visible within the classrooms during the site visit and, according to teacher focus group participants "makes two scheduled observations per classroom each year and that's about it." Because the faculty is stable, he apparently feels that they are doing a very "good" job and does not need to hover over them.

Teachers feel the principal is handling the administrative paperwork and duties and can be depended upon to handle major problems. As one teacher put it, "if something major comes up, *he will be there*. He

will come find you on duty if necessary." They also feel that the principal is supportive and stands behind his teachers, applauding him for "getting between" the parents/community and teachers.

There is little upheaval apparent at Bayou Elementary and few apparent problems to manage; as a result, detailed school-level policies are not so evident here as they might be in other settings. For example, the staff do not appear ruled by rigid disciplinary policies. Teacher remarks during the focus group suggest that disciplinary problems are primarily handled at the classroom level and are referred to the principal only as a last resort or in the event of repeated behaviors. However, more coordination may be needed because, as one teacher noted during the focus group, "Most of the time, teachers don't know if a behavior is a first offense."

Feedback from the principal interview and teacher focus group suggest that the principal makes most of the decisions at the school, particularly in regard to budgeting, school partnerships, etc. There is very little faculty turnover at Bayou -- usually from the occasional retirement or teacher moving out of the parish. When vacancies do occur, the central office fills them based on seniority. Though work has begun on a five-year improvement plan, the process is progressing slowly, and many topics addressed during the site visit are addressed in the school's own five-year plan.

As is evident from Mr. Boudreaux's survey responses, he is very proud of Bayou Elementary and gives uniformly high ratings to the climate, quality of instruction, and academic norms at the school. In fact, his mean attitudinal responses on the attitudinal survey are much higher than those of the students, teachers, or parents.

The principal's mean response on items relating to "safe and orderly environment" is quite high (4.40), nearly a full point higher than the mean student (3.45) and teacher (3.50) responses. His mean attitudinal responses are similarly high (4.40) for the school's quality of instruction and academic norms, and are again substantially higher than the other three groups of respondents.

The principal's apparent contentment with these three aspects of life at Bayou Elementary may explain why, with the exception of serious problems, he takes a "hands off" approach to the instructional

component. As alluded to before, teacher focus group respondents said that they handle most discipline problems themselves, at the classroom level.

On three other facets of school life, the principal's mean attitudinal responses are higher than any other group surveyed : parent/school relationship (4.20), organization/collaboration (3.20). However, his expectations for long-term student outcomes are lower than any other group (3.40 as compared to 3.59 for teachers, 3.81 for parents, and 4.05 for students themselves).

Teachers feel the principal is handling the administrative paperwork and duties and can be depended upon to handle major problems. As one teacher put it, "If something major comes up, *he will be there*. He will come find you on duty if necessary." They also feel that the principal is supportive and stands behind his teachers, and they applaud him for "getting between" them and the parents/community.

As an organizational leader, however, he receives lower ratings. Teachers rate organizational leadership at the school quite low (2.78), a full point lower than the principal's mean response (3.80). Their perceptions of organizational leadership at the school may reflect their apparent disappointment with opportunities for staff development (mean teacher response, 3.65) and collaboration (2.91).

Teachers also feel the principal should interact more with students and create more opportunities to reward and acknowledge students for their accomplishments. "Some of the little ones here don't know who he is," one teacher commented. Another agreed and said, "The kids aren't at ease around him because they seldom see him." The principal's lack of visibility apparently is not a new issue at the school; it reportedly is mentioned in the school improvement plan.

The need for greater principal visibility that was cited in the teacher focus group also surfaced indirectly in the student focus group discussion. That is, few comments were made of the principal *outside* of his role as school disciplinarian.

Though the SEAP survey instrument gives students no opportunity to comment on leadership at the school, parents give organizational leadership a lower mean rating than any other survey component (3.31 on a scale of 5.0). Their next lowest rating is 3.64 for "safe and orderly environment," an area of

responsibility that generally is attributed to the principal. The parents' responses to these two items do not seem to stem from dissatisfaction with the parent/school relationship; they rate that aspect of the school environment relatively high (3.96), though not as high as the principal's rating (4.40).

Two PTA sponsored events, a Fall Halloween Carnival and a Spring Talent Show, are eagerly anticipated and well-attended. However, there appears to be no organized plan for parent volunteers within the school. Volunteers do not help in the classroom as instructors, though they sometimes "keep" classes for short periods of time. The limited roles that parents fill as volunteers reportedly involve running off ditto sheets, working on the school carnival/talent show, or manning monthly candy/bake sales.

Recommendations for Improvement

The following eight recommendations were made for Bayou Elementary. These recommendations were considered in light of the school's needs assessment, along with information from the on-site school analysis.

1. The district should evaluate the physical plant at Lafourche School #3 to provide the students and teachers a more adequate environment to learn and work. The facilities at Bayou Elementary do not meet the needs of a K-7 school serving nearly 400 students. The district's over-reliance on T-buildings to meet the school's space requirements has left the staff little or no flexibility in assigning classroom space. Furthermore, there are no large spaces under roof where teachers can combine classes for instructional purposes or students can congregate during inclement weather. The one large covered area (the combination auditorium/cafeteria) is furnished in such a way that the meeting space is under-utilized. That is, the lunchroom is equipped with large tables and free-standing chairs rather than folding table/chair units that could be easily stored.

2. Classroom assignments should be redistributed to reduce excessive student movement, especially in the upper grades. The layout of the current campus is too inconvenient for so much movement to be taking place. The school improvement team might consider the following strategies.
   (a) Cluster classes taught at the same or similar grade levels in a particular part of campus rather than distributing them all around the school site;
   (b) assign self-contained classes (for example, second or third grade classes in which students stay with the same teacher all day) to T-buildings and move departmentalized grades to the classroom annex or main building;
   (c.) wherever possible, ask teachers in the departmentalized grades to trade classrooms for part of the day rather than moving more than 30 children every hour. For example, 25 students could study English in T-Building 5 during first period; the social studies teacher assigned to T-Building 3 could trade rooms with the English teacher during second period so that the students could have two hours of back-to-back instruction without changing rooms.

3. The faculty should experiment with cooperative teaching to make instructional delivery more equitable and effective from one class or grade to the next. It was pointed out, for instance, that

some students at Bayou receive P.E. more regularly than others because some teachers enjoy teaching P.E. more than others. For example, at one school in Barataria Parish, staff compensate for teachers' differing interests by sharing teaching responsibilities; that is, one teacher will take along a colleague's class when she takes her own class to P.E., freeing up time for the other teacher to plan. The second teacher returns the favor by combining the same two classes for art. The students benefit because they receive more enthusiastic instruction on a more regular basis, and the teachers benefit from increased planning time.

4. More student recognition activities should be initiated. The student focus group discussion suggests that students are highly motivated by the rewards and incentives their respective teachers provide for academic achievement and good behavior, yet the site team found relatively little evidence of any coordinated student recognition activities. Such a recognition program need not entail a great deal of expense. Student successes (and not just in academics areas, either) could receive more prominent attention on bulletin boards around campus. Rewards might also include extra time for a favorite activity or special status for a specified period of time (one school in Comite Parish, for example, allows its ablest older students to mentor younger students or serve as official campus greeters for a day or week). The students both enjoy and benefit from the increased recognition and their newfound responsibility.

5. Steps should be taken to increase community and parental involvement in the school. If not already in practice, these strategies should be considered.
   (a) Include parents as well as business and industry partners on the school improvement team;
   (b) develop business and industry support groups for school programs (e.g., agriculture and shipping industries); and,
   (c.) schedule open houses at the school twice a year to display student work and improve public relations with the community.

6. Children in the upper grades should be given access to the career exploration opportunities typically found in a comprehensive middle school by offering rotating vocational electives at the sixth and seventh grade levels. These electives could include the exploratory courses of Agriscience, Business Education, Family and Consumer Science (Home Economics) and Technology Education (Industrial Arts). Some course explanations can be found in *Bulletin 741, Minimum Standards for State Approval in Reimbursed Programs in Vocational Education (See sections 122-145.1).* Vocational program managers at the Department of Education can provide technical assistance in setting up these courses.

   The ship building and ship transportation industries that are located in Delta Parish have adopted schools in other parts of the parish in hopes of employing students after graduation. These courses will help students study careers in shipping and transportation industries and better prepare them for career paths they will follow in high school. These courses will also reinforce the academic standards by providing practical applications of academic subjects. Courses could be taught by itinerant teachers from other middle/junior high schools in the district.

   Vocational student organizations are integral parts of the curriculum of each of these courses (Agriscience, Future Farmers of America; business education, Future Business Leaders of America; family and consumer science, Future Homemakers of America; and technology education, Technology Student Association). Such organizations will offer students intra- and extra-curricular activities, and will teach skills of leadership, organization, competition, and teamwork. Students also will receive recognition through these student organizations. While students are enrolled in these rotating electives, academic teachers would have the opportunity to have a planning period

where they could collaborate. Elective teachers and academic teachers could collaborate at scheduled faculty meetings before or after school hours.

7. Football or some other competitive athletic program should be instituted if a survey of students, faculty, and parents demonstrates general support for such a program. It was obvious from the discussion in both the student and teacher focus groups that the termination of the football program is perceived to have limited the social development opportunities for boys and girls. Presumably, an athletic competition also would give the surrounding community another means for relating to the school.

8. Appropriate steps should be taken to identify a successor for the current principal (who plans to retire at the end of next school year) and to appoint that person as administrative assistant during this final year of the principal's service to the system. This would provide a logical and smooth transition to a different administration because it would (a) enable the administrative assistant to become familiar with the new system, and (b) make for a comfortable "changing of the guard." The collaboration and teamwork approach to administration would foster cooperation and would provide a model of collaborative leadership that could possibly be the impetus for shared decision-making at the school level.

The recommendation for improvement in the administrative collaborative component is to find a replacement for Mr. Boudreaux and make him/her the administrative assistant for the last year of Mr. Boudreaux's service to the system. This would provide a logical and smooth transition to a different administration. The change would allow the interested participants to become familiar with the new system and make for a comfortable "changing of the guard". The collaboration and teamwork approach to the administration would foster cooperation and would provide a model of collaborative leadership that could possibly be the impetus for shared-decision making at the school level.

Creole Elementary School

Atchafalaya Parish is irregularly shaped, located in south-central Louisiana. It is about 30 miles south of Baton Rouge and 60 miles west of New Orleans. The southernmost tip is about 25 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The parish encompasses 365 square miles, and according to the U.S. Census, had a population of 22,859 in 1996. Bayou Lafourche is the parish's principal waterway, and many of the parish's residents live, work, and attend school along LA 1 or 308, the state highways that skirt the bayou's western and eastern banks.

Creole Elementary is located in a community in the extreme northern part of the parish. The school faces LA Highway 1. It is bounded by a corn field on one side and a church and cemetery on the other. The

community is hamlet-sized and very rural. The focus of the community is characterized by its thirteen churches. Many of the students' parents work either in the sugar cane fields or the local sugar cane mill. Parental involvement in the school is low in part because of limited access to transportation.

Atchafalaya Parish ranks below the state average both financially and educationally. For example, 28.2% of all persons in the area live below the poverty level, whereas the state average is 23.6%. Some 31.3% of households had average annual incomes of less than $15,000 in 1990 as compared to a state average of 36.3%. Almost half (49.6%) of the adults in Atchafalaya Parish do not have a high school education as compared to 31.7% for the state. The economic and educational performance indicators are not surprising in this region as residents have traditionally earned their livelihood in the agricultural, fishing, and petroleum industries in which semi-skilled workers were long able to earn good wages. Therefore, it is not surprising that in 1990, 44.9% of the parish's workforce were blue collar workers (U.S. Bureau of the Census).

Of risk factors for children and youth, Atchafalaya Parish has 17.6% of its households headed by single parents in 1990 as compared to19.1% statewide. The parish's teen pregnancy rate was 18.2% as compared to a statewide total of 17.6%.

The Atchafalaya Parish system employed nearly 304 full-time classroom teachers in 1995-96 at an average annual salary of $24,985 compared to a statewide average of $26,800 (Bulletin 1472, *Annual Financial and Statistical Report, 1995-96*). Data from Table 1 indicate that the school has a slightly smaller percentage of its faculty with a master's degree or higher (30%) than the district (33%).

Atchafalaya Parish ranks 39th in the state in enrollment and number of schools, with 4,879 students in grades PK-12 enrolled in the district's twelve public schools in 1995-96. The district compares favorably with the state in annual per pupil expenditure. In 1995-96, the district spent $4,576 per student in average daily membership compared to a state average if $4,468 (Bulletin 1472, *Annual Financial and Statistical Report, 1995-96*). Public school students here outnumber nonpublic students more than 13 to 1. The

parish's two nonpublic schools enrolled approximately 358 students in grades PK-8 in 1995-96 (Bulletin 1472, *Annual Financial and Statistical Report, 1995-96*).

Creole Elementary serves pupils in grades PK through 4. Of the pupils attending Creole Elementary in 1995-96, 10.5% were special education students, with none identified as "gifted/talented" since screening for gifted and talented is not part of the school's program. The percentage of special education students is slightly above the state average, while the gifted/talented population is obviously under-represented relative to the state average of 2.7%.

The percentage of at-risk Title I students reported for this school in 1993 was 82.3%, increasing to 91.5% of the pupils in 1996-97 who are eligible for the free/reduced lunch program. Because of the socioeconomic status of the student body, the school qualifies under the Improving America's Schools Act (P.L. 103-382) as a Title I school.

Tenure of the Principal and Other Administrators

The principal at Creole Elementary , Ms. Hebert, in Spring 1997 had been in place for two years. She had previously taught special education for eighteen years in the parish school system.

Ms. Hebert appeared focused on acquiring resources, providing more professional development for her faculty, increasing parental and community involvement, increasing pupil motivation and self-esteem, and providing effective teaching to all types of learners. The principal was seen in many areas of the school campus during the SEAP site visit. She appeared knowledgeable about all aspects of school life.

The assistant principal has been at Creole Elementary for twenty-eight years. He was a teacher at the school prior to assuming his administrative position. He was visible around the school during the site visit, primarily in his role as chief disciplinarian. The pupils seem to like him. He did not appear to be involved in instructional leadership activities during the SEAP site visit.

The principal at the time of the site visit said that Creole Elementary "has a lot of work to do to turn itself around." She had a low overall opinion of the school's current academic status and felt that instruction needed improvement. The school's pupils score below the national norm on achievement tests, but the

principal believed that they could change and improve. The principal believed that several teachers were making concerted efforts to use innovative teaching techniques. Faculty at Creole Elementary used the Assertive Discipline Policy in their classrooms and elsewhere on the school grounds. When in-school suspensions associated with the program were given, the pupils knew the consequences. The principal encouraged the "Harry Wong approach" of practicing proper routines and classroom procedures. She scheduled Dr. Wong to speak to her faculty about his philosophy on effective teaching and has used his Effective Teaching tapes and workshops in professional development sessions at the school.

The principal has encouraged teachers to write grants, and the school has received several which were used to buy educational materials. The school has obtained a LEARN grant for $7000. Title II funds for math and science and Title IV funds for libraries and supplies are also available. The principal also has received a grant with LSU to integrate technology into the classroom. The principal usually made the decision on how resources were spent, though she used teacher input in her decision-making. Additionally, the district office has provided the teachers a $600/year grant to use for classroom materials.

The principal has developed community partners for the school, including persons from the local sugar cane mild, a local grocery, and the local churches. The churches helped to provide transportation to the schools.

By having more than 50% of its pupils on free/reduced lunch, the school qualifies to become a Title I schoolwide program. However, the SEAP observation team saw no indication that such a program was planned or in operation at the school in 1996-97.

The principal of Creole Elementary during the Spring 1997 gave the school rather low scores in four areas associated with the overall academic status of the school: a score of 1.0 on the item rating the "General Reputation" of the school in the community; a score of 2.6 on the scale measuring the academic norms at the school; a score of 3.0 on the scale measuring expectations for pupils' success and academic ability; and a score of 3.2 on the scale measuring the quality of instruction at the school. The principal's ratings on these four scales are among the lowest recorded during the SEAP statewide site visits in the Spring 1997.

The principal's attitudes are consistent with the comments that she made during her interview. She had a low overall opinion of the school's current academic status and felt that improvement was needed in the quality of instruction. Her rating of 1.0, the lowest rating possible, on the school's "General Reputation" indicates the degree to which she felt the school needed to improve its image in the community. However, the principal's ratings on the other scales (i.e., collaboration, leadership, staff development, job satisfaction) were all 4.0 or better, indicating more positive attitudes in these areas.

The teachers rated the overall organizational leadership at Creole Elementary (the principal and administration) at 3.97, which is relatively high given their overall low rating of the school's reputation (only 2.08). The teachers rated collaboration between the faculty and administration at 3.6, which was slightly below the principal's rating of 4.0. Overall, the teachers appeared to have a higher opinion of the principal than they did of several other aspects of the school. In the focus group and in informal conversations, the teachers at Creole expressed respect for the principal as a professional and indicated they felt she was working extremely hard to improve the school.

All respondents rated the scale measuring how "safe and orderly" the school was at 3.4 to 3.6, which indicates some satisfaction and some dissatisfaction with that component of the school. This, along with "Academic Futility[3]" (at 3.5 to 4.0), were the only attitudinal measures that were generally consistent across all respondent groups.

A few teachers negatively remarked to the site visitors that they felt the principal had singled them out to write grants and assume other leadership roles, which made them feel overworked.

The principal indicated that some of the teachers were "very territorial" and rarely shared resources or ideas with other teachers. She attributed this to a lack of resources at the school and to the fact that the teachers were trying to protect what they had. Additionally, several teachers at the school appeared to want to maintain their traditional teaching techniques rather than use some of the innovative techniques that the principal had tried to implement.

Pupils were positive about Creole, based upon the attitudinal responses. They rated expectations for pupils' academic success and ability, academic norms, and quality of instruction higher than any other group (teachers, principal, parents). Mean pupil attitudinal scores on these scales were all above 4.0.

The pupils scored the scale measuring how "safe and orderly" the school was lower (3.38) than any other group, although the scores of the other groups were very similar. The pupils, faculty, principal, and parents all perceived the school as lacking some components of good "order" or discipline. In the focus group and in informal conversations, some pupils indicated that the "good" pupils were unfairly punished with the "bad" ones. They also indicated that they didn't like the fighting that occurred among some of the pupils.

Pupils expressed the highest sense of academic futility of the groups, a score of 3.5 on a scale on which five indicated "lack of futility." Several of the students expressed the desire to go into the Armed Services when they graduated from high school to escape negative home and community situations.

Parents rated the "General Reputation of the School" 3.43, which was significantly higher than the 1.0 rating from the principal or the 2.08 rating from the teachers. In general, the parents' ratings were similar to those of the teachers and students in several areas, particularly, safe and orderly environment, academic norms, academic futility, and quality of instruction. The parents had higher expectations for the pupils (3.81) than either the teachers (2.53) or the principal (3.0). The lowest rating from the parents was 3.31 for organizational leadership, which was considerably lower than the ratings from either the teachers (3.97) or the principal (4.6). The largest discrepancy between the ratings of parents and teachers occurred on the scale measuring the parent/school relationship: parents rated this a relatively high 3.96, while teachers rated it only 2.53. The parents' rating is in line with that of that of the principal (4.0) and the pupils (3.99). Apparently, the teachers perceive a more negative relationship with parents than do any of the other groups. This result, coupled with the discrepancy in pupil expectations that exists between the parents and teachers, indicates areas of potential conflict between the two groups.

Recommendations for Improvement

Recommendations for improvement were arrived upon by the SEAP team and the needs assessment completed by the school. The following seven were made for Creole Elementary:

(1) Inservice training aimed at raising the teachers' expectation levels for the students should be undertaken. The average score for teachers' expectations for their students (2.53) was considerably lower than either the parents' (3.81) or the students' (4.43), and among the lowest recorded in the SEAP site visitations during Spring 1997. High expectations for students has been a cornerstone of the research on effective schools for two decades, and it should be emphasized at Creole Elementary. There are a variety of inservice programs available aimed at raising teacher expectations, and the school improvement team should select (or develop) one that best suits the specific context at Assumption School #2.

(2) Inservice training aimed at improving the faculty's perception of the general reputation of the school should also be undertaken. This recommendation is a corollary of Recommendation #2. The faculty's rating of the general reputation of their school at 2.08 was among the lowest recorded in the SEAP site visitations in the Spring 1997 and was considerably below the perception of the parents (3.43). Teachers need to believe that their school is a good school, as well as believe that their students can learn. Again, there are a variety of inservice programs aimed at increasing the self-esteem of faculties, and the school improvement team should select (or develop) one that best suits the specific context at Creole Elementary.

(3) Focus on improving the fourth grade NRT scores, especially in the areas of reading comprehension, language expression, and mathematics concepts and applications. The school improvement team needs to establish some long-term academic goals for the school, and addressing deficiencies in these specific skill areas appears to be a good place to start. Of course, reading comprehension is key to future achievement in school, so this area may be the most important one initially.

(4) Provide staff development for all teachers in hands-on and interactive ways to present lessons. The low score in mathematics concepts and application at the fourth grade level may indicate the need for more hands-on and interactive methods in the classrooms at Creole School. According to the observers, most instruction at the school was text based and focused on the whole class. Classroom observational data revealed weaknesses in instructional practices in the areas of interactive learning, adjusting for individual differences, and higher order thinking skills. There was little evidence of hands-on learning or the use of a variety of materials in the delivery of instruction. Seeking out programs and techniques which build upon interactive teaching methods would move the focus of teaching away from the teacher and more toward the students.

(5) Focus staff development on specific teacher skill areas, especially at the first grade level. First grade is obviously crucial to the success of pupils, and LCET results indicate that there is a need for improvement in several skill areas at this grade level. Teachers at the second grade level may be used as models, since their LCET scores in several of these areas were higher than those of first grade teachers. Specific suggestions related to this recommendation include:

(a) Provide time for teachers to observe effective teaching, allowing master teachers to serve as mentors, utilizing appropriate outside resources (such as audio-visual examples).

(b) Behavior management plans should be provided to teachers who have difficulty with classroom management.

(6) The school improvement plan could also include some of the following recommendations:

(a) Make sure teachers and parents understand the new content standards. Both the school and community must decide and agree on exactly what the students are to achieve.

(b) Work toward improving the relationship between teachers and parents.

(c) Establish an extensive staff development plan emphasizing specific grade level content standards, cooperative teaching and learning methods, LCET attributes, etc.

(d) Work on a better organization for recesses and better transitions from class to class as consistency and clarity appear to be lacking here.

(7) Establish a functioning school improvement team that will develop schoolwide goals leading to specific attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive changes. There is an obvious discrepancy in perception between the teachers and the parents as to strengths and weaknesses of Creole Elementary. The new principal needs to establish a school improvement process (inclusive of the entire school community) that will result in common perceptions and goals. From the academic end, perhaps the principal can utilize the Title I schoolwide program to develop common academic goals among the faculty members.

The recommendation for improvement in the administrative collaborative component is to establish a functioning school improvement team that will develop schoolwide goals leading to specific attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive changes. There was evidenced from the attitudinal surveys a discrepancy in perception between the teachers and the parents as to strengths and weaknesses in Creole Elementary. Ms. Hebert, the new principal, needs to establish a school improvement process (inclusive of the entire school community) that will result in common perceptions and goals. From the academic end, perhaps the principal can utilize the Title I schoolwide program to develop common academic goals among the faculty members.

The former principal at Creole Elementary encountered resistance in her efforts to initiate change at the school. Ms. Hebert should profit from this experience by allowing certain faculty members who do not wish to participate in school reform to "mark time" until their retirement. Obviously, the membership of the school improvement team is crucial to its success, so the principal should spend adequate time structuring it in a way that will increase its chance for success.

CONCLUSION

The integrated SEAP process (SEAP-I, SEAP-II, SEAP-III) assumes that context specific school improvement can be initiated through the intensive site based analysis associated with the mixed method school effectiveness research. A link is presumed between school effectiveness research and school improvement projects. While such a link is logical, many researchers in the past have worked exclusively

within either the school effectiveness or the school improvement paradigm. In fact, the SEAP process is an attempt to forge links between three separate research traditions: SEAP I operates largely within the school indicator area, SEAP-II within the school effectiveness research field (especially effective schools research), and SEAP-III within the school improvement tradition.

Leading scholars in the international arena are just now calling for such integrated programs involving school indicators, effectiveness research, and improvement efforts (e.g. Brown, Riddell, & Duffield, 1966; Fitz-Gibbon, 1996; Reynolds, Hopkins, & Stoll, 1993; STOL & Find, 1996; Willms, 1992). If SEAP progresses as planned, it will be one of the first, if not the first, large scale attempt at such an integrated approach.

While the components of SEAP are linked through integrated databases and research staffs, it should be remembered that from a practical point of view SEAP is a two-track, parallel system of statewide accountability and local improvement activities. Even though school accountability and improvement are theoretically linked to one another, each can have very different, independent goals.

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Tying School Improvement to School Accountability: A Review of the School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot Study Phase III (SEAP-III)

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Tying School Improvement to School Accountability: A Review of the School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot Study Phase III (SEAP-III)

Abstract: This paper summarizes activities associated with school improvement projects in 12 SEAP Cohort One schools during School Year (SY) 1997-98 and the plans for future improvement activities in SY 1998-89. Faculty and administrators at each of the 12 schools were supposed to voluntarily revise their current School Improvement Plans (SIPs), drawing on (a) recommendations from Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) reports based on SEAP-II findings from SY 1996-97 and (b) needs assessments obtained from the faculties as part of the SEAP-II process.

Two state educational representatives [one from the LDE and one from a Regional Service Center (RSC)] were assigned to assist each of the 12 schools. Their assistance was initiated by the 12 Cohort One schools and was consistent with the goals of the SIPs at those schools. The 12 Cohort One school improvement projects were undertaken in the schools in SY 1997-98 with varying degrees of success. Reasons for their relative success are discussed.

The tentative plans for school improvement efforts in Cohort One and Cohort Two schools (an additional 45 schools) in SY 1998-99, and in future years, are discussed as a final topic in this paper. A twofold purpose for this long term school improvement plan is discussed: "front loading" improvement of classroom teaching and building capacity to implement comprehensive reform.

SEAP site teams and external school improvement specialists can provide valuable external perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of schools and facilitate the delivery of needed resources and services to support school improvement. At times, the SEAP process may even serve as a mechanism for validating the staff's own preconceived needs. Ultimately, however, the direction and the impetus for improvement should come from the school itself, backed by the shared commitment of faculty, administrators, district, and community.

Tying School Improvement to School Accountability: A Review of SEAP-III

I. Introduction

The Louisiana Department of Education initiated a school improvement process in SY 1997-98 as part of the second year of the School Effectiveness and Assessment Pilot. Since the emphasis in SY 1997-98 was on SEAP-II, an intensive school assessment process, activities associated with SEAP-III, the school improvement process, were kept simple.

There are six stages to the current improvement activities associated with SEAP-III:

(1) Intensive on-site analysis of 12 Cohort One schools in the Spring 1997 using the SEAP-II process. (Described in a previous paper given in this session.)

(2) Generation of a SEAP-II School Report for each of the 12 Cohort One schools, including recommendations for school improvement. (Also described in a previous paper.)

(3) Presentation of the SEAP-II reports first to the Principal and Superintendent and then to the faculty as a whole. (Ending in October, 1997)

(4) Presentation of a School Improvement Conference for representatives of the 12 Cohort One Schools. (November, 1997)

(5) Refinement of School Improvement Plans by the 12 Cohort One Schools based on recommendations from SEAP-II reports. (This stage is voluntary.)

(6) Deployment of two person school assistance teams (one from the Louisiana Department of Education housed in Baton Rouge and one from the Regional Service Center in which the school is located) to the 12 Cohort One schools. (Beginning in January, 1998)

(7) Refinement of the SEAP-III school assistance model for SY 1998-99 and future years, based on several types of inputs.

The following report will include: a brief review of the recommendations from SEAP-II, a review of the process whereby schools were presented their SEAP-II report, a synopsis of the School Improvement Conference, a description of the experiences of the school assistance teams in the 12 Cohort One schools in SY 1997-98, and a description of a tentative plan for school improvement efforts in SY 1998-99 and future years.

II. A Brief Review of the SEAP-II Recommendations for Cohort One Schools

As indicated in the previous paper (Heroman, Pol, and Franklin, 1998), the two most frequently occurring categories of SEAP-II recommendations for Cohort One schools were in:

(1) leadership (typically associated with school level change) and

(2) professional development (typically associated with changing the behaviors of teachers in classrooms).

This two level approach to school improvement is consistent with the overall philosophy that has driven the SEAP process: meaningful school change must occur simultaneously at both the classroom and school levels. Therefore, assessment data must be gathered at both levels and recommendations for improvement must be made at both levels.

Change at the School and Classroom Levels: A Brief Literature Review

This philosophy of pursuing change at both the school and classroom levels came out of the school effectiveness and improvement literatures of the 1990's. During the early 1990's, several school improvement or "restructuring" models were widely adopted by schools and districts. Most reformers agreed that the main purpose of these school restructuring models was to transform teaching practice which in turn would lead to improvement in student learning (Elmore, 1995 and Finnan, 1996). Fullan (1993) indicated, however, that the "learning core", which consists of both instructional practices and teacher culture, is the most difficult area to change. Keller and Soler (1996) further reported that "deep changes in teacher behavior" are rare events, and when they occur, are a result of long-term internalization of beliefs and practices.

Elmore (1995) called for further research into teaching practice in restructuring schools, suggesting that the relationship between structural school changes and changes in teaching are mediated by factors such as teachers' skills and knowledge. Taylor and Teddlie (1992, 1996) presented such research in their analysis of a prominent restructuring district. Despite verbal support from top level district administrators, evidence indicated that restructuring had, in fact, not influenced the classrooms. Teachers in schools classified as "highly restructured" were no more likely to collaborate with their colleagues than were teachers from low participation schools.

Teacher-directed and whole-group approaches prevailed in classrooms of both schools types (high or low participation in restructuring), with group work and team teaching occurring rarely.

The link between school restructuring efforts and classroom behaviors in this highly restructured district had not occurred, and evidence from other studies indicates that this is not an isolated phenomenon. Another example comes from a study (Meza and Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie and Meza, 1998) of two supposedly restructured schools with very different classroom teaching indicators (one highly effective, one highly ineffective). The restructuring approach that these schools had both followed was one of the well known "special strategies" (Stringfield, Millsap, and Herman, 1997), which had a well articulated, systematic framework for improvement

The fact that two schools engaged in a similar restructuring effort differed on the quality of classroom instruction provides more evidence that participating in a restructuring process does not always impact the instructional core (Elmore, 1995; Fullan, 1993 and Levin, 1996). This result indicates that the direct assessment of classroom teaching quality should occur early in the school improvement process. This study also indicates that the Principal is essential in any improvement effort (Christiansen, 1996 ; Crone & Teddlie, 1995 and Teddlie & Stringfield 1993), since it was mainly differences in the two Principals' behaviors that led to the large differences in teachers' classroom behaviors.

The failure to find evidence of improved teaching in some restructured schools stands in contrast to research that has linked effective teaching with effective schooling. While the teacher effectiveness and school effectiveness literatures evolved separately, several studies have fruitfully merged the methods from these two areas over the past decade (Teddlie, 1994). Researchers conducting sophisticated school effectiveness research (e.g., Brookover, et al, 1979; Mortimore, et al, 1988; Rutter, et al, 1979; Stringfield, Teddlie and Suarez, 1985) began exploring classroom processes during the 1970's and 1980's, due to dissatisfaction with the explanatory power of extant economic and sociological models. These researchers used informal observations and survey proxies for teacher effectiveness variables, and they were able to explore aspects of the schooling process that had not been previously examined in school effectiveness research.

Starting in the mid-1980's, researchers working within the school effectiveness research paradigm began explicitly including classroom observations (and consequently teacher

effectiveness variables) in their research (e.g., Creemers, et al, 1996; Crone and Teddlie, 1995; Stringfield and Teddlie, 1991; Stringfield, Teddlie, and Suarez, 1985; Teddlie, Kirby, and Stringfield, 1989; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993; Virgilio, Teddlie, and Oescher, 1991). For example, Teddlie, Stringfield and their colleagues used the Stallings' Observation System (SOS) and an instrument composed of variables gleaned from Rosenshine's (1983, 1986) reviews of teacher effectiveness research in their school effectiveness research.

These studies of teacher effectiveness variables within the context of school effectiveness research revealed *consistent mean and standard deviation differences in classroom teaching between schools classified as effective or ineffective*. For example, results from Teddlie, Kirby, and Stringfield (1989) indicated that teachers in effective schools were more successful in keeping students on task, spent more time presenting new material, provided more independent practice, demonstrated higher expectations for students, provided more positive reinforcement, and so forth, than did their peers in matched ineffective schools.

In addition to these mean differences in teaching behaviors between effective/ineffective schools, interesting differences in patterns of variation were also found. For instance, the standard deviations reported for teaching behavior *were smaller* in more effective as opposed to less effective schools. This result indicates that there are processes ongoing at more effective schools (e.g., informed selection of new teachers, effective socialization processes) that result in more homogeneous behavior among teachers in which the "trailing edge" of teaching is somehow eliminated.

This reduced variance in teacher behavior associated with school effectiveness status is a dramatic illustration of the interaction between school and classroom variables. Some process, either selection or socialization or both, must be operating at the school level to result in the classroom level differences.

Therefore, SEAP employs information from both the school and the class levels in its assessment and improvement processes, because current research in school effectiveness and improvement indicate that it is necessary to do so in order to engender true change.

Commonalities Among Leadership and Professional development Recommendations for the 12 Cohort One Schools

Tables 1 and 2 present a content analysis of the frequency of SEAP-II recommendations for school improvement across Cohort One schools (Heroman, Pol, and Franklin, 1998). Table 1 presents the recommendations related to leadership, while Table 2 presents the frequencies related to professional development. It is interesting that there were so many similarities in SEAP-II recommendations across the 12 Cohort One schools, since they represented a cross-section of schools in Louisiana in terms of both demographics and effectiveness.

The three most frequent leadership recommendations involved:

(1) scheduling/planning/protecting academic time,

(2) school and classroom discipline policy, and

(3) classroom observations/feedback.

The three most frequent professional development recommendations involved:

(1) instructional methods,

(2) individual needs/special needs students, and

(3) classroom management.

The remainder of this section involves a discussion of specific recommendations for each of these six leadership and professional development recommendations. These recommendations were excerpted from two of the twelve Cohort One schools (Schools A-3 and B-1). These excerpts are included in this paper to give the reader a better understanding of the nature of the SEAP-II recommendations. The recommendations are located in Table 3.

Schools A-3 and B-1 were somewhat different from one another:

(1) School A-3 was a middle school in South Louisiana, which had a high percentage of low-SES students and which scored low on standardized tests. The school was in transition during the time of the SEAP-II visit: the Principal during SY 1996-97 was replaced in SY 1997-98, due to poor performance. The assessment team was aware of this as they wrote their report. They noted in the Recommendations section that: "The presence of a new Principal in SY 1997-98 will make this an important year for initiating change. The new Principal should use the school improvement team in these efforts."

Table 1
Frequency of SEAP-II Recommendations Across Cohort One Schools: The Leadership Dimension

Leadership Category	Number of Times Noted for Cohort One Schools
Scheduling/Planning/Protecting Academic Time	7
School and Classroom Discipline Policy	7
Classroom Observations/Feedback	4
School Improvement Team	2
Improve Communication/Collaboration	2
Class Size	2
New Principal	1
Reward Pupil Success	1
Homework Plan	1
Special Education	1
Student Involvement	1
Total Recommendations Associated with Leadership	29

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Table 2
Frequency of SEAP-II Recommendations Across Cohort One Schools: The Professional Development Dimension

Professional Development Category	Number of Times Noted for Cohort One Schools
Instructional Methods	7
Individual Needs/Special Needs Students	7
Classroom Management	4
Structure Opportunities/Staff Development Coordination	4
Higher Order Thinking Skills	2
Technology, Discipline, and Data Analysis	2
Learning Styles	1
Teachers on Self-Esteem	1
Cooperative Teaching	1
Total Recommendations Associated with Professional Development	29

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(2) School B-2 was an elementary school in North Louisiana, which served predominantly middle-class students and which scored above average on standardized tests. The assessment team noted in the Recommendations section that "Although the instructional staff at School B-1 has created and provides a generally positive learning environment, there is room for some improvement."

The example of Leadership Dimension 1, Scheduling/Planning/Protecting Instructional Time, came from School A-3: The administrators and faculty should place a high priority on conserving instructional time. (See Table 3 for more details.)

The example of Leadership Dimension 2, School and Classroom Discipline Policy, also came from School A-3: The school's discipline policies and regulations should be relevant and applied consistently. (See Table 3 for more details.)

The example of Leadership Dimension 3, Classroom Observations/Feedback, came from School B-1: The Principal/instructional leader should increase classroom visitations and corresponding teacher evaluations. (See Table 3 for more details.)

The example of Professional Development Dimension 1, Instructional Methods also came from School B-1: Faculty should be encouraged to use new curricula and instructional techniques. In conjunction, the variety of instruction should be increased to accommodate different learning styles among pupils. (See Table 3 for more details.)

The example of Professional Development Dimension 2, Individual Needs/Special Needs Students, came from School A-3: Instructional delivery should be diversified to accommodate the individual needs of all learners. (See Table 3 for more details.)

The example of Professional Development Dimension 3, Classroom Management, came from School A-3: Teachers should be encouraged to collaborate in their classroom management, instructional planning and delivery. (See Table 3 for more details.)

Table 3
Excerpts from SEAP-II School Improvement Recommendations, Cohort One Schools A-3 and B-1

Example of Leadership Dimension 1 - Scheduling/Planning/Protecting Instructional Time - School A-3

The administrators and faculty should place a high priority on conserving instructional time. Teachers cannot teach and pupils cannot concentrate when instructional time is abbreviated or segmented by interruptions. The school improvement team should take a look at the school schedule in order to identify and recover lost time. Special consideration could be given to:

(a) *restricting use of the public address system to schoolwide announcements* (as opposed to announcements aimed at specific individuals, but broadcast schoolwide), and limiting its use to one (or at most two) *brief* broadcasts each day;

(b) *reducing time lost during transitions to and from lunch*; and

(c) *providing inservice training for teachers on classroom management*, focusing on helping teachers improve transitions within instruction and make better use of instructional time.

Example of Leadership Dimension 2 - School and Classroom Discipline Policy - School A-3

The school's discipline policies and regulations should be relevant and applied consistently. There is a general sentiment among pupils and teachers that too much attention is paid to policing minor infractions, while more serious offenses carry inadequate penalties. This latter criticism particularly relates to misbehavior that is potentially embarrassing to the school and would result in more serious penalties for the pupil if reported to district staff. There is a general perception among pupils that some staff show partiality when enforcing school rules: for some pupils consequences are minimal for misbehavior that would carry serious penalties for others.

As a first step in improving the disciplinary climate, the Principal and staff should consider creating a committee to (a) review and revise the school code of pupil conduct, and (b) make professional development for rule enforcement. The committee should include representatives from the school administration, faculty, parents, and pupils—each elected by peers. An external professional (e.g., a child welfare and attendance officer from the central office or local juvenile justice professional) could prove a valuable resource to the committee and clarify the school's legal responsibilities relative to pupil discipline. Through deliberation, the committee could identify constructive ways to reduce misbehavior while encouraging pupil self-discipline. Discussions may also facilitate "buy-in" from those groups whose support is critical to the long-term enforcement of rules.

Example of Leadership Dimension 3 - Classroom Observations/Feedback - School B-1

The Principal/instructional leader should increase classroom visitations and corresponding teacher evaluations. The strong sense of collaboration between Principal and faculty should be a good foundation for school improvement. Teachers should receive regular feedback regarding their performance in the classroom, especially since there is a natural variance in this performance over time.

Example of Professional Development Dimension 1 - Instructional Methods - School B-1

Faculty should be encouraged to use new curricula and instructional techniques. In conjunction, the variety of instruction should be increased to accommodate different learning styles among pupils. The use of new technology in the classroom was limited and should be increased. Teachers should also receive training that will enable them to incorporate technological aids in their instruction. The training should go beyond the basic instruction for usage and should include techniques for incorporating technology efficiently and effectively in the classroom. An expanded emphasis on technology also will help teachers to increase the variety of materials used, thereby better addressing the needs of children who are auditory learners, visual learners, kinesthetic learners, etc. Teachers also would benefit from inservices aimed at improving their classroom management skills, especially with regard to maximizing the amount of time available for instruction.

Example of Professional Development Dimension 2 - Individual Needs/Special Needs Students - School A-3

Instructional delivery should be diversified to accommodate the individual needs of all learners. It appears that most of the instruction at School A-3 is whole-group instruction, and that teacher-directed discussion aimed at the average pupil is the primary method of instruction. In too many classes, brighter pupils appeared bored, waiting for their classmates to complete an assignment. Similarly, some pupils may fall behind or become disruptive, attempting to follow a lesson that is too fast-paced. Inservices on various aspects identifying and accommodating individual differences among students should be part of the staff development activities at the school.

Example of Professional Development Dimension 3 - Classroom Management - School A-3

Teachers should be encouraged to collaborate in their classroom management, instructional planning and delivery. The site team found little evidence that teachers regularly meet to coordinate management techniques across classrooms or to coordinate their instruction from one discipline to the next or one grade to the next (e.g., planning lessons so that concepts learned in science reenforce concepts learned in math, or that content taught in fifth grade English is reinforced in sixth grade English).

The teachers should solicit inservice training from the administration on classroom management, focusing on helping teachers improve transitions within instruction and make better use of instructional time. A coordinated behavioral management program across grade should be adopted or developed.

Classes are scheduled in a manner that prohibits joint planning times. Therefore, rearrangement of the school schedule may be necessary to find time for collaborative planning. For instance, the staff might consider a team-teaching approach to scheduling. That is, pupils could be divided into groups, with each group receiving all their instruction from a cross-disciplinary team of four to five teachers. The team could be assigned a common time to plan or discuss the needs of specific pupils (perhaps while the pupils are at physical education or lunch). Several middle schools in Louisiana are using the team-teaching approach with notable success.

III. A Review of the Feedback Sessions Held in Cohort One Schools, October, 1997

The information contained in Sections III and IV comes from evaluations conducted at the School Improvement Conference for Cohort One Schools, November, 1997 (Teddlie, 1997). At that conference, Cohort One Principals and teachers were asked to complete evaluation forms concerning both the feedback sessions that had been held in their schools in October, 1997 and the School Improvement Conference they had just attended.

The following section summarizes the participants' responses to a survey assessing their reactions to the feedback that they had received in October regarding their school site visits from the Spring 1997. This survey was completed by 49 teachers and Principals at the end of the first day of the School Improvement Conference. Altogether the survey contained three closed-ended items and two open-ended items.

Responses to the Closed-Ended Items Regarding the October Feedback

The teachers, Principals, and central office personnel responded to the following closed-ended items:

(1) Was the feedback regarding your school <u>informative</u>?

(2) Was the feedback regarding your school <u>accurate</u>?

(3) Was the feedback regarding your school <u>useful for improvement at your school</u>?

All these closed-ended items had five point response categories ranging from the most negative response (1) to the most positive response (5). For example, the response categories for the first item ranged from (1) not informative to (5) informative. Table 4 contains the means and standard deviations for the participants' responses to the three closed-ended items. Altogether 49 participants completed the evaluation forms.

The average scores for all three closed-ended items was between 4 and 5 on the five point scale, indicating that the participants were generally pleased with the feedback. The highest average score was for the item concerning how informative the feedback was (4.449), while the lowest average score was for the item concerning how accurate the feedback was (4.102).

Table 4

Participants' Responses to the Closed-Ended Items Assessing their Reactions to the October Feedback

Item	Number of Respondents	Average Score of Respondents	Standard Deviation of Responses
1. Was the feedback regarding your school informative?	49	4.449	0.937
2. Was the feedback regarding your school accurate?	49	4.102	1.085
3. Was the feedback regarding your school useful for improvement at your school?	49	4.429	0.979

Note. All these closed-ended items had five point response categories ranging from the most negative response (1) to the most positive response (5). For example, the response categories for the first item ranged from (1) not informative to (5) informative.

The standard deviations were moderate sized (around 1.00), indicating that there was some variance among the responses. The distribution of responses indicated that the majority of respondents (44) rated the items mainly 5s, with some 3s and 4s. A minority of respondents (5) rated the items 1, 2, or 3. More information on these negative responses will be included later in this section.

Responses to the Open-Ended Items Regarding the October Feedback

In addition to answering these closed-ended questions, the participants responded to the following open-ended items:

(1) What was the most useful aspect of the feedback you received?

(2) How could the feedback process be improved for other schools in the future?

As noted above, altogether 49 participants completed the evaluation forms. Their open-ended responses were analyzed using the constant comparative method described by Lincoln and uba (1985), which involves unitizing and categorizing the responses. This constant comparative method was used to analyze open-ended data that will be described throughout this report, including the evaluations of the October feedback, the School Improvement Conference, and the experiences of the school assistance teams in the 12 Cohort One schools in SY 1997-98.

The unitizing aspect of the constant comparative method involves breaking down responses into the smallest pieces of distinct information. In this case, unitizing meant taking each person's responses and breaking them down into the different useful aspects of the October feedback. Thus, the responses from some participants yielded multiple units of information (if they listed more than one useful aspect), while the responses from others yielded no units of information (if they did not respond to the question).

Once the responses were unitized, they were then categorized. This involves giving a label or name to each of the distinct open-ended responses. For instance, if the respondent stated "The feedback gave us objective information regarding our school", this response might be coded "Objective feedback".

Altogether, 59 separate units of information emerged from the categorization of the responses to the question regarding most useful aspects of the October feedback. Table 5

contains a summary of the responses to the question regarding the most useful aspects of the October feedback.

The most frequently occurring response (33.9% of the total responses) was that the feedback session provided recommendations for improvement or mentioned specific areas that needed improvement. Typical responses included the following:

"The information regarding the areas that need improvement. Our team now knows where to begin."

"It provided insights on the 'specifics' in our school that needed improvement."

"It gave us direction for our school improvement"

Altogether, 56 separate units of information emerged from the categorization of the responses to the question regarding ways to improve the feedback in the future. Table 6 contains a summary of the responses to the question regarding ways to improve the feedback in the future.

The three most frequently occurring responses were:

(1) provide more specifics in the recommendations (17.9%),

(2) give feedback before the visit, provide quicker feedback (12.5%), and

(3) provide evaluations of individual teachers (10.7%).

Altogether, these three categories accounted for over 40% of the total number of responses. Typical responses from these categories included:

"More feedback on test scores and improving them."

"The recommendations could be more specific. Leave nothing to question or assumption."

"Presentation to the school staff of findings prior to on-site feedback session in order that staff can review and prepare for questioning."

"Provide immediate feedback."

"Be sure to let each teacher know their strengths and weaknesses individually."

"Give individual teachers their evaluation report."

Most of the categories In Table 6 are self-explanatory, but the "inaccurate feedback" category needs some explanation. While only three participants made this response, they represent a minority of school site personnel who were upset at the feedback they had received.

Table 5
Participants' Responses to the Open-Ended Item Assessing their Perceptions of the Most Useful Aspect of the October Feedback

Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Recommendations for Improvement, Specific Areas Needing Improvement	20	33.9%
Objective Feedback, Outsider Point of View	8	13.6%
Assessment of School's Strengths	7	11.9%
Assessment of School's Weaknesses	7	11.9%
Helped Us to Evaluate Our School, Initiate Discussions About Improvement	5	8.5%
Pointed Out Differences in Perceptions	4	6.8%
Provided Positive, Courteous Feedback	2	3.3%
Information on How to Write Goals	2	3.3%
Miscellaneous	4	6.8%
Total	59	100.0%

Note. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 6
Participants' Responses to the Open-Ended Item Assessing their Perceptions of Ways to Improve the Feedback Process in the Future

Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Provide More Specifics in the Recommendations	10	17.9%
Give Staff Feedback Before the Visit, Provide Quicker Feedback	7	12.5%
Provide Evaluations of Individual Teachers	6	10.7%
Make Site Visits Earlier in the Year, Spend More Time in the Site Visits	5	8.9%
Explain Questionnaires, Surveys	4	7.1%
Inaccurate Feedback	3	5.4%
Provide Recommendations in Areas That the School Can Control	3	5.4%
Site Visitors Should Write Reports, Provide Feedback	3	5.4%
Tone of Feedback Was Too Negative	2	3.6%
Positive Comments	2	3.6%
Miscellaneous	11	19.6%
Total	56	100%

Note. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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Based on conversations at the School Improvement Conference, these individuals came primarily from one school, with one or two persons from a second school. At the preliminary August meetings between LDE personnel, local superintendents, and Principals, the Principal from one of the 12 schools objected to the feedback received as being "inaccurate". A typical response from this school is as follows:

"I felt as other teachers in our faculty that a 'true picture' of our teaching strategies were not totally observed fairly. The visiting team came for a day and observed in our classrooms for 30-45 minutes and may have seen the same teachers."

This feedback is very useful for SEAP personnel in terms of the development of the site visit process. Some tentative points may be made:

(1) The feedback regarding the inaccuracy of the responses was definitely a minority opinion. Only one of the twelve Cohort One schools was unified in this response, with a second having some reservations. The other ten schools were in agreement that the feedback was accurate and useful.

(2) The SEAP-II procedure involves sampling in several areas: the classroom observations, the parents selected to receive the surveys, the students and teachers selected for the focus groups. It is possible that some unintended biases may emerge from these sampling procedures. This is one reason why a draft report was given to the Principals in advance of the feedback visits, so that they could make suggestions for changes in the final report. This is also one reason why the school's faculty was asked to complete needs assessments, so that the report could be written with the input of those who know the school best.

(3) Feedback concerning perceived inaccuracy of SEAP-II school reports will probably become more common as the process is used to examine schools "in crisis". The experiences with Cohort One schools should help LDE personnel in the future in terms of responding to individuals who perceive the SEAP-II reports to have inaccuracies.

Changes to be Incorporated in Feedback Procedure As a Result of the Evaluations

With regard to the feedback provided to the schools, the following actions will be taken, to the degree possible, in the next round of visits:

(1) Conduct the school visits earlier in the year. For the Cohort Two schools in SY 1997-98, these visits are scheduled to occur in January-March. (This in fact has occurred: all SEAP-II site visits in SY 1997-98 were completed before April.)

(2) Get feedback to the Principals and Superintendents more quickly. This feedback should occur more quickly in SY 1997-98 since templates of the reports have been prepared, and site team members will be able to follow a heavily prescribed outline, with much information already completed, as they write the reports.

(3) Cohort Two faculties will be given preliminary feedback before the school visits, so that they can be better prepared to ask questions and respond to the report.

(4) The surveys and questionnaires will be explained in more detail in the feedback to the faculties.

(5) Individuals who conducted the site visits will be more involved in the writing of the reports and in the delivery of the feedback to the Cohort Two schools.

(6) Perceived inaccuracies in the reports will be taken into consideration in the production of the final report and in the generation of the commendations and recommendations.

IV. A Synopsis of the School Improvement Conference for Cohort One Schools, November, 1997

A School Improvement Conference was held for the twelve schools Cohort One schools, selected LDE and RSC employees (including those individuals who were on the school assiatance teams), LSU employees, and other interested parties in Baton Rouge on November 3-4, 1997. This training was intended to prepare the participants to conduct SEAP-III school improvement activities during SY 1997-98.

Altogether 108 individuals attended the workshop, including: 49 Principals and teachers from the 12 Cohort One schools, 11 district central office personnel, 43 members of the LDE staff, and 5 others (from LSU, the state school boards association, representatives of teacher unions, etc.)

The agenda for the School Improvement Conference included:

(1) four team breakout sessions for the school site teams, (2) an overview of the current state accountability initiatives, (3) an overview of the school improvement process, (4) a presentation by Sam Stringfield, from Johns Hopkins University, on special strategies for school improvement, (5) presentations on using achievement data to make decisions and on developing measurable goals, (6) a presentation on examining attitudinal and behavioral data in developing school improvement plans by Charles Teddlie, from Louisiana State University, (7) a presentation on forming school improvement teams, (8) a presentation by Jim Meza, from the University of New Orleans, on school reform in Louisiana 1990-97, (9) presentations on implementing planned change through staff development and content specific school improvement strategies, (10) presentations on finding resources to support school improvement by LDE, SRC, and university staff, and (11) a separate breakout session for the Principals. The Principal session was added due to feedback received at the conference regarding the importance of getting the Principals together for networking purposes.

Numerous training materials were also prepared and distributed at the meeting.

The survey assessing the participants' reactions to the School Improvement Conference was distributed at the end of the second day of the conference. The survey contained three closed-ended items and three open-ended items. This survey was completed by all conference

participants, including school site personnel, central office personnel, and LDE personnel. Altogether 77 participants completed the evaluation forms. The remainder of the participants, primarily LDE employees who attended only one day of the conference, did not complete the evaluation forms.

Responses to the Closed-Ended Items Regarding the School Improvement Conference

The evaluation form contained the following closed-ended items:

(1) Was the School Improvement Conference informative?

(2) Was the School Improvement Conference useful?

(3) Was the School Improvement Conference relevant to improvement at your school?

All these closed-ended items had five point response categories ranging from the most negative response (1) to the most positive response (5). For example, the response categories for the first item ranged from (1) not informative to (5) informative. Tables 6-8 contain the means and standard deviations for the participants' responses to the three closed-ended items, broken down into groups based on where the participant was employed.

The average scores for all three closed-ended items for all groups was between 4 and 5 on the five point scale, indicating that the participants were generally pleased with the School Improvement Conference. The highest average score for the item concerning "how informative" was the conference was given by the central office personnel (4.833), while the lowest average score was given by school site team members (4.256). The overall mean score across all participants was 4.481, with a standard deviation of 0.736. (See Table 7.)

The highest average score for the item concerning "how useful" was the conference was given by the LDE personnel (4.708), while the lowest average score was given by the school site team members (4.230). The overall mean score across all participants was 4.455, with a standard deviation of 0.787. (See Table 8.)

The highest average score for the item concerning "how relevant"was the conference to improvement at your school(s)" was given by central office personnel (4.833), while the lowest average score was given by the school site team members (4.230). The overall mean score across all participants was 4.346, with a standard deviation of 0.883. (See Table 9.)

Table 7. Participants' Responses to the Closed-Ended Item Assessing How Informative the Conference Was

Group	Number of Respondents	Average Score of Respondents	Standard Deviation of Responses
School Site Team	39	4.256	0.818
Central Office	6	4.833	0.408
LDE Personnel	24	4.708	0.550
No Designation	8	4.625	0.744
Total	77	4.481	0.736

Note. The response categories for this item ranged from (1) not informative to (5) informative.

Table 8. Participants' Responses to the Closed-Ended Item Assessing How Useful the Conference Was

Group	Number of Respondents	Average Score of Respondents	Standard Deviation of Responses
School Site Team	39	4.230	0.872
Central Office	6	4.667	0.516
LDE Personnel	24	4.708	0.624
No Designation	8	4.625	0.744
Total	77	4.455	0.787

Note. The response categories for this item ranged from (1) not useful to (5) useful.

Table 9. Participants' Responses to the Closed-Ended Item Assessing How Relevant the Conference Was to Improvement at Their School

Item	Number of Respondents	Average Score of Respondents	Standard Deviation of Responses
School Site Team	39	4.230	0.930
Central Office	6	4.833	0.480
No Designation	7	4.571	0.787
Total	52	4.346	0.883

Note. The response categories for this item ranged from (1) not relevant to (5) relevant.

Responses to the Open-Ended Items Regarding the School Improvement Conference

In addition to answering these closed-ended questions, the participants responded to the following open-ended items regarding the School Improvement Conference:

(1) What was the most useful aspect of the School Improvement Conference?

(2) What actions will you take as a result of this conference?

(3) How could the School Improvement Conference be improved in the future?

Altogether, 116 separate units of information emerged from the categorization of the responses to the question regarding the most useful aspect of the School Improvement Conference. Table 10 contains a summary of the responses to the question regarding the most useful aspects of the School Improvement Conference.

The three most frequently occurring responses to this question were:

(1) small group team meetings (25.9% of the total responses),

(2) speakers (25.0%), and

(3) focus on improvement, goal setting (19.8%).

Thus, 70.7% of the respondents indicated that these three aspects of the conference were the most useful. Typical responses regarding the small group team meetings were as follows:

"Small group sessions that could discuss 'real life' situations"

"Sharing in small groups. At this conference I think our team was clearly able to see in what direction we need to move."

"The small groups where we walked through the processes with lots of information."

The speakers were seen as a strength of the conference, and several of them were mentioned by name. Typical responses regarding the speakers were as follows:

"The information given by the speakers was very useful in developing our plan."

"Having some 'new blood' share ideas with us."

"Speakers were prepared, informative, and entertaining."

The focus on improvement and goal setting was the third most often mentioned "useful aspect" of the conference. Typical responses included the following:

"As a participant with a limited knowledge of school improvement measures, I feel I am leaving with a broader understanding of the concept."

Table 10
Participants' Responses to the Open-Ended Item Assessing their Perceptions of the Most Useful Aspect of the November 3-4 School Improvement Conference

Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Small Group Team Meetings	30	25.9%
Speakers	29	25.0%
Focus on Improvement, Goal Setting	23	19.8%
Networking, Bonding	9	7.8%
Facilitators	5	4.3%
Meeting with State, Regional Personnel; Meeting with School Administrators	5	4.3%
Information on Data Analysis Applied to Improvement	4	3.4%
Resources for School Improvement	2	1.7%
Negative Comments	2	1.7%
Miscellaneous	7	6.0%
Total	116	100%

Note. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

"Helped address strengths and weaknesses as focal points for goals and objectives."

"The most useful aspect of the conference was the information presented in helping with creating goals."

Responses to the open-ended question asking "What actions will you take as a result of this conference?" were broken into two sets of categories: those for the school site personnel (Table 11) and those for the other participants, such as central office staff and LDE employees (Table 12). As indicated in Table 11, 51 separate units of information emerged from the categorization of the responses to this question by the school site personnel.

The three most frequently occurring responses to this question were:

(1) develop improvement plans and goals, revise improvement plans (25.5% of the total responses),

(2) involve other faculty in process, more teamwork, revise improvement committee structure (21.6%), and

(3) implement improvement process (17.6%).

Thus, 65% of the respondents indicated that these were the actions that they would take as a result of attending the School Improvement Conference. All of these responses had to do with directly starting or improving a school improvement plan. Typical responses regarding developing improvement plans and goals or revising improvement plans included the following:

"Meet as a team at the school level to target goals and objectives."

"We will reexamine our school improvement plan so it can conform with ideas presented here."

Typical responses regarding involving other faculty in the process, promoting more teamwork, or revising the improvement committee structure included the following:

"Take back information to fellow faculty members."

"Reorganize school improvement committee structure."

"We hope to create two goals regarding reading. We will do this in a cooperative, small 'team' group setting."

Typical responses regarding implementing the improvement process included the following:

Table 11
School Site Personnel's Responses to the Open-Ended Item Assessing their Perceptions of the Actions That They Will Take as a Result of the November 3-4 School Improvement Conference

Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Develop Improvement Plans and Goals, Revise Improvement Plans	13	25.5%
Involve Other Faculty in Process, More Teamwork, Revise Improvement Committee Structure	11	21.6%
Implement Improvement Process	9	17.6%
Develop a More Enthusiastic and Open Approach	5	9.8%
Request and Employ Resources for Improvement	4	7.8%
More Staff Development	3	5.9%
Miscellaneous	6	11.8%
Total	51	100%

"Bring back to school and put into action plans we came up with."

"Put into action our goals."

As indicated in Table 12, 40 separate units of information emerged from the categorization of the responses to the question asking about actions "that they will take" by other personnel (central office personnel, LDE personnel). The four most frequently occurring responses to this question were:

(1) provide technical assistance to districts, schools (37.5% of the total responses),

(2) hold meetings regarding information, disseminate materials (12.5%),

(3) prepare to provide technical assistance (10%), and

(4) provide resources for school improvement (7.5%).

The final open-ended question asked "How could the conference be improved in the future?" As indicated in Table 13, 93 separate units of information emerged from the categorization of the responses to this question by the participants.

The most frequently occurring suggestion for improving the School Improvement Conference was to have "more small groups interaction, more discussion" (23.7%). Typical responses regarding this suggestion included the following:

"Additional time in small group meeting. Team likes to share and problem solve."

"Not enough time for individual team meetings."

"Longer group time to implement improvements."

"Spend more time discussing problem analysis and problem definition before the groups work on goal setting."

No other suggestion for improvement was made by more than 10% of the participants. The next five most frequently made suggestions were:

(2) better facilities (9.7%),

(3) revise schedule (7.5%),

(4) need a follow up workshop, need meetings at school (7.5%),

(5) provide further opportunities for networking (6.5%), and

(6) too much time in presentations (6.5%).

Table 12
Other Participants' Responses to the Open-Ended Item Assessing their Perceptions of the Actions That They Will Take as a Result of the November 3-4 School Improvement Conference

Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Provide Technical Assistance to Districts, Schools	15	37.5%
Hold Meetings Regarding Information, Disseminate Materials	5	12.5%
Prepare to Provide Assistance	4	10.0%
Provide Resources for School Improvement	3	7.5%
Adopt a School	1	2.5%
Miscellaneous	8	20.0%
Positive Comments	4	10.0%
Total	40	100%

Table 13
Participants' Responses to the Open-Ended Item
Assessing their Perceptions of Ways to Improve
the November 3-4 School Improvement Conference

Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
More Small Groups Interaction, More Discussion	23	24.7%
Better Facilities	9	9.7%
Revise Schedule	7	7.5%
Need a Followup Workshop, Need Meetings at School	7	7.5%
Provide Further Opportunities for Networking	6	6.5%
Too Much Time in Presentations	6	6.5%
Include Other Personnel	4	4.3%
More Time with Facilitators	4	4.3%
Prepare Participants for Conference	1	1.1%
Positive Comments	11	11.8%
Miscellaneous	15	16.1%
Total	93	100%

Changes to be Incorporated into the Conference as a Result of the Evaluation

It is unclear what type of School Improvement Conference will be held for Cohort Two schools in the Fall 1998, since there will be a much larger number of them (45). However, if such a conference(s) is held for Cohort Two schools, the following changes may be made:

(1) Schedule more small group sessions, since the Cohort One site team members found them so beneficial.

(2) Schedule a breakout session for the Principals, since the addition of this to the Cohort One conference was so successful.

(3) Provide more formal mechanisms for the schools to network after the improvement conference.

(4) Send the participants more information about the conference in advance of the meeting, so they can better prepare for it.

(5) Hold the meeting in a larger facility.

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IV. A Description of the Experiences of the School Assistance Teams in the 12 Cohort One Schools in SY 1997-98

The following section summarizes the responses of 17 individuals (10 LDE employees, seven RSC employees) to a questionnaire concerning their contacts with schools during the school improvement phase of the SY 1997-98 SEAP program. These participants had been assigned, as members of an assistance team, to 12 schools that had been intensively assessed the previous year (SY 1996-97) using SEAP-II procedures. Information in this section has been taken from an evaluation report based on responses to the questionnaire (Teddlie, 1998).

Two state employees (one from the LDE and one from the RSC in the region in which the school was located) were scheduled to visit each of the schools during the early part of 1998. They were to assist the schools in any way possible with the SEAP recommendations and with their School Improvement Plan (SIP). The nature of the assistance was to be determined by the school, not by the LDE and SRC employees, who were to make themselves available to the school personnel for whatever assistance they (the school personnel) deemed appropriate.

A meeting was held on February 26, 1998 at the LDE to solicit feedback from the school assistance teams regarding their activities with the 12 Cohort One School Improvement Teams. This meeting involved each team verbally summarizing its visits to the Cohort One schools and completing a questionnaire concerning those visits.

Methodology

The questionnaire that each assistance team completed included three closed-ended items:

(1) Is there an active school improvement process ongoing at the school you visited?

(2) What kind of impact did the SEAP process (the intensive school assessment, the fall school improvement conference, your visits) have on the improvement efforts at the school you visited?

(3) Did the school representatives that you met on your visit actively solicit further assistance from you in their ongoing school improvement process?

There were also four open-ended items:

(1) Who met with you during your visit to the Cohort One school in January or February

1998? When did the meeting occur?

(2) Describe the meeting that you had with the representatives at your school.

(3) Describe the school improvement activities that you have undertaken (or will undertake) at your school this year (SY 1997-98).

(4) What should the Department of Education and the Regional Service Centers do to assist Cohort One and Cohort Two schools in their improvement activities for SY 1998-99?

The three open-ended items were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and ranges of scores for each of the items. The four open-ended items were analyzed using the constant comparative method described in an earlier section of this report.

There were 17 members of the 12 Cohort One school assistance teams: 10 LDE employees and 7 SRC employees. Several of the team members, especially the SRC employees, were assigned to two or more schools. At the time of the February 26, 1998 meeting, reports were completed on only nine of the 12 schools. The other three schools had not been visited due to scheduling conflicts. Team members completed one questionnaire together for each school.

Results from the Closed-Ended Items

The mean response to the item concerning whether there was an active school improvement process at the school they visited was 3.89 on a five point scale, on which a response of "5" indicated a "very active process" and "3" indicated a "somewhat active process". The responses to this item included: two "5's", four "4's", and three "3's". (See Table 14.)

The mean response to the item concerning the impact the SEAP process was having on the improvement efforts at the school they visited was 3.22 on a five point scale, on which a response of "5" indicated a "large impact" and "3" indicated a "medium impact". The responses to this item included: two "5's", two "4's", two "3's", two "2's", and one "1". This wide range of responses indicates the importance of the individual differences among the schools in the study.

The mean response to the item concerning whether school representatives actively solicited further assistance from the team members was 3.11 on a five point scale, on which a response of "5" indicated "a lot of assistance" and "3" indicated "some assistance". The responses to this item included: two "5's", four "3's", and three "2's".

Table 14
Responses of the School Improvement Teams to the Closed-Ended Items

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range of Responses
(1) Is there an active school improvement process ongoing at the school you visited?	3.89	0.78	3-5
(2) What kind of impact did the SEAP process have on the improvement efforts at the school you visited?	3.22	1.39	1-5
(3) Did the school representatives that you met on your visit actively solicit further assistance from you in their ongoing school improvement process?	3.11	1.16	2-5

Note. Responses to item (1) ranged from 1 (not at all active) to 5 (very active). Responses to item (2) ranged from 1 (not impact at all) to 5 (large impact). Responses to item (3) ranged from 1 (they want no assistance) to 5 (they want a lot of assistance).

Results from the Open-Ended Items

Table 15-18 contain a summaries of the information from the four open-ended items after the responses had been analyzed using the constant comparative method described above.

As indicated in Table 15, the LDE/SRC School Assistance Team met with the Principal on eight of the nine scheduled visits. The only time the Principal did not meet with the school assistance team was due to a "major mix up on the part of the Principal", in which the Principal had mistakenly attended another meeting and had not informed his staff. The Assistant Principal met with the school assistance team instead, and another site visit was scheduled.

Teachers were involved in six of the nine meetings; there were as many as six teachers in two meeting and as few as one in two other meetings. The Assistant Principal attended three of the meetings, while the entire School Improvement Team (or planning committee) attended three meetings. Some parents attended one of the meeting, while a district central office supervisor attended another.

From the composition of the school representatives attending the school assistance meeting, it could be concluded that a good faith effort was being put forward in at least five of the nine schools. These schools had the following persons attending the meeting: (1) Principal, teacher, central office supervisor, randomly selected teachers (met informally after the scheduled meeting); (2) Principal, Assistant Principal, and six teachers; (3) Principal and planning committee; (4) Principal, Assistant Principal, and four members of the School Improvement Team; and (5) Principal, planning committee members, and parents.

Only the Principal attended two of the school meetings, and only the Assistant Principal (in the place of the Principal) attended at a third school. Furthermore, the six faculty members who attended at another school were "picked by the Principal" and seemed "happy with the status quo" according to the school assistance team.

The LDE/SRC assistance team provided more information regarding the SEAP school improvement recommendations at all nine schools, as indicated in Table 16. Details about what the school was doing with regard to their school improvement plans was forthcoming at seven of

Table 15
Summary of Responses to the Item Concerning Who the LDE/SRC School Assistance Team Met with During Their Visits to the Cohort One Schools

School Representatives	Number of Times the School Representatives Met with the LDE/SRC Representatives
Principal	8
Teachers	6
Assistant Principal	3
School Improvement Team, Planning Committee	3
Parents of Students	1
Central Office Representative	1

Table 16
Topics Discussed During Visits to the Cohort One Schools

Topic Discussed	Number of Times this Topic Was Discussed
LDE/SRC Representatives Provided More Specifics Regarding the SEAP School Improvement Recommendations	9
School Representatives Described their Activities Related to their School Improvement Plan or Title I Schoolwide Program	7
Participants Discussed Loss of Teaching Time, Off Task Behavior, Etc.	3
Participants Discussed Follow-up to Prescribed Staff Development Activities	2
Participants Discussed Other Specific Aspects of School Improvement	5

the nine schools. Thus, these scheduled school site visits could be characterized, in general, as two-way communication opportunities for both the school assistance team and the local school improvement representatives to exchange information regarding recommendations for school change and what had been ongoing thus far in terms of that change. Specific problems with teacher performance in the classroom and staff development activities were topics that emerged in several of the schools.

Responses by the LDE/RSC school assistance teams indicated that they had already initiated some type of school assistance in six of the nine schools before the scheduled site visit, as indicated in Table 17. The types of assistance included: giving demonstration lessons, providing resources, conducting workshops on school improvement plans, and providing assistance on new state testing plan. The list of resources provided was lengthy, including: research based practices, videos, standards based lesson plans, resource lists, and statewide school improvement plan formats. Of the three schools that had not been directly contacted before the site visit, two requested information of some sort that the school assistance team was to provide them in the future. The remaining school was the one in which the Principal had forgotten the meeting. Assistance to this school was "on hold" until a formal meeting occurred.

The final open-ended question asked the school assistance teams to suggest what the LDE and the RSCs could do to assist Cohort One and Cohort Two schools in their improvement activities for School Year 1998-99. (Cohort Two schools are being intensively assessed during the School Year 1997-98.) The responses to this question are summarized in Table 18. The four most frequent responses to this item were:

(1) Increase contact with schools by calling and conducting monthly meetings to discuss school improvement efforts. Use a structured protocol in these meetings. (Suggested by four school assistance teams.)

(2) Provide ongoing technical assistance (including staff development) and provide resources for continuous improvement as requested by the school site improvement team. (Suggested by four school assistance teams.)

(3) Provide more demonstrations of "hands on" solutions to teaching deficiencies. (Suggested by two school assistance teams.)

Table 17
Descriptions of School Improvement Activities Undertaken by LDE/SRC School Improvement Teams at Cohort One Schools, SY 1997-98

School Improvement Activity	Number of Times this Specific School Improvement Activity was Described
Visited Schools for Specific School Improvement Activity	6
Sent School Improvement Materials (e.g., research based practices, videos, standards based lesson plans, resource lists, statewide school improvement plan formats)	4
Gave Demonstration Lessons	2
Conducted Workshop on Writing School Improvement Plans	1
Provided Assistance on Increasing Parent and Community Interactions with the School	1
Provided Assistance on New Statewide Testing Program	1

Table 18
Suggestions for What the LDE and SRCs Can Do to Assist SEAP Cohorts One and Two in their School Improvement Activities During SY 1998-99

Suggestion	Number of Times the Suggestion Was Made
Call and Conduct Monthly Meetings to Discuss School Improvement Efforts. Use Structured Protocol. Increase Contact with Schools.	4
Provide Ongoing Technical Assistance (including Staff Development) and Provide Resources for Continuous Improvement as Requested by the School Site Improvement Team.	4
Provide More Demonstrations of "Hands On" Solutions to Teaching Deficiencies	2
Have LDE/SRC Assist in Writing/Revising School Improvement Plans. Include SEAP Recommendations in SIPs.	2
Provide Information on Funding Sources for School Improvement Efforts.	1
Document the Process of LDE/SRC Assistance in a Standardized Manner.	1
Develop Method for Informing the District Superintendent of the Results of the Improvement Efforts.	1

(4) Have the LDE and SRCs assist in the writing and revising of School Improvement Plans. Include SEAP recommendations in the revised SIPs. (Suggested by two school assistance teams.)

Conclusions

The verbal reports and written responses to the questionnaires indicated that:

(1) There was a sizeable impact of SEAP-II assessments on three of the schools, who were looking for considerable assistance from the LDE/SRC assistance teams.

(2) The SEAP-II assessment had some impact in four other schools, who were also looking for some assistance from the LDE/SRC assistance teams.

(3) The SEAP-II assessment had little impact in two schools, who were also not really interested in assistance from the LDE/SRC assistance teams.

There was a great deal of variance among the schools, and within the districts, in their responses to SEAP. The questionnaire responses indicated that the SEAP-II intensive assessment process had at least a medium impact on the school improvement processes at six of the nine schools. The three schools where this did <u>not</u> occur may be characterized as follows:

(1) One school had a Principal who was about to retire and who did not want any meaningful change to occur at his school. He had "handpicked" teachers for the scheduled meeting with the school assistance team who were satisfied with the status quo. This happened in a district with a superintendent who was willing to make changes and illustrates the power of a Principal to effectively, and unilaterally, block school reform.

(2) One school had a first year Principal, Assistant Principal, and secretary. The Principal indicated that he had been trying to straighten out procedural matters up until the time of the school assistance team's visit and was ready to begin "work on the instructional aspect" of the school. This school had just begun writing its school improvement plan. The school assistance team believed that the Principal would eventually seek out help from the LDE/SRC team.

(3) The third school was the one where the Principal had forgotten the meeting. This was also a first year Principal in a district where the Superintendent placed a lot of emphasis on continuous school improvement. The school assistance team indicated that the school

administration wanted a lot of assistance; they just hadn't got organized enough to request it.

There was also a great deal of variance among the schools with regard to their response to SEAP-III, the school assistance part of the program, which was just being piloted in SY 1997-98. The questionnaire responses indicated that six of the schools were asking for at least some assistance from the LDE/RSC school assistance teams in their ongoing school improvement processes . The three remaining schools, where this was rated a "2" , may be characterized as follows:

(1) The first school was the same one characterized above as having a Principal who was about to retire and who did not want any meaningful change to occur at his school.

(2) The second school was the same one characterized above as having a first year Principal and staff that were just beginning to write its school improvement plan.

(3) The third school also had a first year Principal, but she had very definite ideas about the direction in which she wanted to take her school. The school assistance members wrote that "We left with an understanding that they will call when they need assistance." It is interesting to note that a change in leadership was one of the recommendations that was made in the SEAP-II report for the school in the previous year. For this action, at least, the SEAP-II recommendations had been followed.

While there were some negative responses to the SEAP-II recommendations and SEAP-III school assistance teams in SY 1997-98, the majority of the school responses were positive. (Generally speaking, seven of the nine schools that were visited responded positively.) There were, in fact, some surprises in terms of the positivity of the response. The best example of this was a school which had responded very negatively to the SEAP-II feedback in the Spring 1997. This negativity had carried over into the November, 1997 school improvement meeting. Past that point, changes began to occur as the RSC school assistance member began to interact with the Principal and staff. The school's personnel decided that while the SEAP-II report was still "flawed", there was some merit to it and began to work on certain aspects of suggested school change. The LDE/RSC assistance team gave a response of "5" to the closed-ended "impact" item on the questionnaire, indicating that the SEAP process had a large impact on the improvement efforts at the school.

The variance across the schools' responses to the SEAP-III improvement process in SY 1997-98 indicates the need for more consistency in the following years. To a certain degree, this was to be expected, since the SEAP-III activities for SY 1997-98 were limited due to the emphasis on refining the SEAP-II process. One positive note regarding the SEAP-III process for SY 1997-98 concerns the interaction between the school assistance team members. At the February 26 meeting of the LDE and SRC team members, several spoke of the positive interactions that had occurred between them and also noted that they had learned from one another. The LDE personnel were particularly vocal about learning a lot about school improvement from the RSC personnel.

A number of suggestions for improving the process emerged from this evaluation:

(1) Name the LDE/RSC assistance team as soon as possible.

(2) Have the RSC person involved in the final stages of the writing of the SEAP-II report, so that they can be more familiar with the findings and have an influence especially on the writing of the recommendations.

(3) Start the school assistance process sooner, probably right after the faculty meeting in which the commendations and recommendations are presented (in September or October 1998).

(4) The school LDE/RSC assistance team should ask the Principal and School Improvement Team to bring their plans for addressing (or reasons for not addressing) the SEAP-II recommendations to the first scheduled meeting of the two groups.

(5) The SEAP-II recommendations should be seen as an enhancement to the School Improvement Plan that already exists at the school.

(6) The LDE/RSC assistance team should come to the first meeting with the School Improvement Team with a list of all available resources and services relevant to the SEAP-II recommendations.

(7) There should be regional school improvement conferences in the early Fall 1998 catering to the schools in the RSC regions who have gone through the SEAP-II process in the Spring semester 1998.

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IV. Plans for School Improvement in SY 1998-99 and Future Years

The overall plan for whole school improvement for the SEAP schools is designed with a twofold purpose. The first objective of this school redesign model targets improvement in classroom teaching behavior. This approach is founded on the assumption that the main purpose of restructuring schools is to transform teaching and learning. Improving schools can be thought as bringing the structure of the classroom in conformity with best available knowledge about teaching and learning. Transforming teaching practice in turn will lead to improvement in student learning (Elmore, 1995). The second purpose of the SEAP plan develops capacity at the school site to support these effective teaching practices through the implementation of comprehensive school reform. Comprehensive school reform is a dramatically different approach to school reform that focuses on reorganizing and revitalizing the entire school, rather than on isolated piecemeal reforms. This improvement strategy uses well-researched and well documented models of school-wide change supported by external technical assistance. Schools engaged in comprehensive school reform have challenging academic standards, engaged teachers, and strong parental and community support (United States Department of Education, 1998).

"Front Loading" Improvement in Classroom Teaching Behavior

Most researchers agree that it takes approximately five years to restructure a school (Levin, 1992). Meza & Teddlie (1998) report that deep changes in teaching practice are rare events and that instructional practice is the most difficult to change. The researchers further report that schools participating in a similar restructuring effort differed in teacher effectiveness. Evaluation reports of a Louisiana statewide restructuring effort indicate high levels of improvement in school contextual variables and process outcomes, such as, student attendance, school discipline, parental involvement and overall school climate. These outcomes occur frequently, and in some cases, during the first year of the change process. The studies also indicate improvement in academic achievement for the restructuring schools, however, there is very limited evidence of improved student achievement during the early years of the restructuring effort (Meza, Kennedy & Teddlie, 1997; Oescher, Brooks, & Meza, 1996).

The SEAP school improvement plan is an attempt to change this pattern of delayed and inconsistent outcomes in academic achievement for restructuring schools. The SEAP school improvement plan is designed to "front load" changes in teaching and learning through intensive professional development. Emphasis will be placed on developing special strategies for teaching disadvantaged children. Guided by the findings of the SEAP assessments, the SEAP schools, with assistance from the district and state, will develop professional development plans for the teachers and Principals. This approach to school improvement uses the teacher as the change agent. These teachers become the catalyst and energy behind transforming teaching practice in the school.

Building Capacity for Comprehensive School Reform

The second part of the SEAP school improvement plan consists of building capacity to improve the readiness level of the school for implementation of comprehensive school reform. Capacity building for the SEAP schools centers on three themes, 1) exploration and buy-in, 2) alignment, and 3) professional support systems.

Exploration and Buy-In

To assure SEAP schools are better prepared to implement a comprehensive change process, exploration and buy-in by the school communities is the first step in building capacity. Horsley & Kaser (1998) suggest that school change participants examine the values inherent in the proposed changes and specify ways that the change represents a good fit between the school or school district's values. The SEAP schools' full staff (administrators, teachers, para-professionals, and parent representatives) will carefully explore research based and effective comprehensive school designs. The schools, with assistance from the Louisiana State Department of Education and the school district, will consider a full range of comprehensive school reform models and determine which model is the best "fit" for their school. Agreement by 80% of the school community is needed before a model is selected. This high acceptance rate ensures that the school community is committed to implementing the design successfully. A written statement by the school district superintendent, supporting the decision of the SEAP school community, is an essential step in the early stages of building capacity for school wide change and establishing a

collaborative relationship between the school and the district's central office.

Alignment

The state and district expectations and administrative procedures governing SEAP schools need to be aligned to support the school's priorities in the restructuring process. Areas of alignment include; policies and reporting procedures, funding, and professional development.

The Louisiana State Department of Education, local school districts, and SEAP schools will work collaboratively to align state and district policy and amend administrative regulations to support the SEAP school improvement processes. One example of this collaborative effort is for the district and state to accept the SEAP school improvement plan as the Title I school improvement plan annually request by the district and state. A second example of regulatory alignment is for the district to use teacher and Principal evaluation instruments that are inclusive of teacher and Principal's strength and weaknesses which are reported in the SEAP assessment findings.

Odden (1995) indicates that teaching all students to high standards is a goal that may not be achievable with the way schools are fiscally managed today. In the SEAP plan, funding at the state and district level will be aligned and allocated to support the priorities established by the SEAP school improvement plans. One strategy is the state and district can use to support SEAP schools is to cluster federal, state, and local financial resources. Funding, including , Title I, Goals 2000, technology grant awards, Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, can be fenced under the umbrella of school improvement and allocate these funds to priorities of the SEAP schools. A second strategy is for the state, local school district, and school site to reallocate existent funding, specifically those monies currently dedicated to non-instructional areas, to professional development and other school improvement priorities. Reallocation of funding is a strategy that may be particulary effective for many schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families (Odden, 1995).

The Louisiana State Department of Education and local school districts of the SEAP schools will align professional development for Principals and teachers consistent and focused on the priorities established by the SEAP schools and the findings of the SEAP external assistance

school visits. This professional alignment includes state level training, such as, the Principal leadership training and workshops offered by the state's regional service centers.

Professional Development Support Systems

Haslam (1995) indicates that professional development is the cornerstone of school transformation. Professional networking builds on the strengths of the diverse experiences of members of the SEAP schools. Interactions with colleagues in other SEAP schools will also provide revitalization to sustain the hard work of school change. District and statewide networking opportunities, such as, grade level meetings, school visits, and periodic Principal meetings, will be offered to the SEAP schools. These professional meetings will provide opportunities for collaborative work, directly tied to improved performance for students, with colleagues in the SEAP network.

Schedule of implementation of SEAP schools' improvement plan:

Summer and Fall, 1998	Principals and Teachers begin intensive professional development on special strategies in teaching disadvantaged children.
Fall, 1998	SEAP schools conducts exploration and buy-in to a comprehensive school reform model.
Spring, 1999	School initiates implementation of comprehensive school reform process.

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