Strategies to Ease the Negative Effects of Mobility on Academic Achievement.

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Strategies to Ease the Negative Effects of Mobility on Academic Achievement

A dissertation presented to the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

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August 2001

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ABSTRACT

Strategies to Ease the Negative Effects of Mobility on Academic Achievement

by

D. Kaye Reed Thomas

Mobility, the movement of students from school to school, affects students, classrooms, schools, and systems. Extensive research has been conducted on the relationship between mobility and student academic performance. Although the research has not determined that mobility is the cause of lower academic scores, it is certainly a contributing factor. Most students with high mobility rates also have difficulty in math, reading, or language. Teachers of classrooms with these students tend to “flatten” the curriculum by reviewing more than usual. Long-range planning for these students can be difficult. Schools and systems may plan programs for students who have moved on by the next year or not have needed programs in place for new students. This study determined strategies that the educational community can use to ease the transition of students from school to school. Using the Delphi technique, a panel of experts suggested, refined, and prioritized strategies for use by the classroom teacher, the school, the school system, and the community. This panel was comprised of persons who had experience working with or studying mobile students. Researchers and directors of organizations whose primary function dealt with mobile students were members of the panel. School administrators, teachers, social workers, and guidance counselors from schools who not only have a high mobility rate but also have developed programs for these students served on the panel as well. Through the use of three rounds of questionnaires, consensus was reached on a number of strategies. The highest ranked strategy for students transferring into and out of the school dealt with the quick retrieval of complete and up-to-date records. Whenever possible, a transfer slip with pertinent information should be sent with the student. Making the student feel welcome and a part of the school was deemed highly important as was helping the family become familiar with the community. Systems should not only provide staff development in schools with high mobility but also fund programs geared to meet the needs of these students. Using the strategies suggested by the Delphi Panel, the negative effects of mobility may be lessened.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband, John Thomas. Without his love and support, this endeavor would not have been possible. He understood and encouraged my constant search for more knowledge, even at a time when he was ready to slow down the pace of our lives. He truly is my friend, my partner, my love in all aspects. I cherish the memories we continue to make together.
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I am grateful to the entire cohort group for the comraderie that we developed during our study.

Special recognition goes to my son, Brian, and daughter, Alexis. Both have turned major milestones since I began this program. I am proud of them both for their lives and for their accomplishments. Alexis, Brian, his wife Tina, and children, Bailey and Josh, are continuing sources of enjoyment.

Lastly, I thank my parents, Wilbur and Jean Reed, for a strong sense of values in life and family. I consider myself very fortunate to be part of a loving and caring family.

Special memories are always with my mother-in-law, Elizabeth Tarwater Helton, who passed away during this time of study. She taught me, by example, to be able to say, “I don’t know, but I’ll find out.” This constant quest for knowledge has been and continues to be my life goal.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY
- Statement of the Problem: 9
- Purpose of the Study: 10
- Background to the Study: 10
- Significance of the Study: 11
- Limitations and Delimitations: 11
- Assumptions: 12
- Overview of the Study: 12

### Chapter 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
- History of Mobility in the United States: 13
- Reasons for Movement: 14
- Effects of Mobility on Academic Performance: 15
- Effects of Mobility on Others: 17
- Strategies to Aid in Transition: 19
- Summary of the Literature Review: 20

### Chapter 3. METHODS AND PROCEDURES
- Research Design: 22
- Delphi Group Selection: 26
- Instrumentation: 27
- Summary: 27

### Chapter 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS
- Demographics of the Panel: 28
Survey Distribution and Response Rate .................................................................30
Methodology of Content Analysis: Round One Questionnaire .............................30
Findings and Analysis of Round One ....................................................................31
   Research Question 1A..................................................................................31
   Research Question 1B..................................................................................34
   Research Question 2A..................................................................................35
   Research Question 2B..................................................................................37
   Research Question 3A..................................................................................38
   Research Question 3B..................................................................................40
   Research Question 4 ..................................................................................41
   Research Question 5 ..................................................................................43
Summary of Round One ........................................................................................45
Construction and Distribution of Round Two Instrument .....................................45
Findings and Analysis of Round Two ...................................................................46
Construction of Round Three Instrument ............................................................46
Distribution and Response Rate of the Third Questionnaire ...............................46
Methodology of Content Analysis: Round Three Questionnaire ..........................47
Findings and Analysis of Round Three ..................................................................47
   Research Question 1A..................................................................................47
   Research Question 1B..................................................................................52
   Research Question 2A..................................................................................54
   Research Question 2B..................................................................................61
   Research Question 3A..................................................................................63
   Research Question 3B..................................................................................68
   Research Question 4 ..................................................................................72
   Research Question 5 ..................................................................................76
Summary ................................................................................................................80

5. INTERPRETATION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..........81
   Review of the Study.......................................................................................81
   Research Question 1A Conclusions.............................................................81
   Research Question 1B Conclusions .............................................................83
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strategies for Use by Teachers for Incoming Students</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strategies for Use by Teachers for Outgoing Students</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Strategies for Use by Administrators for Incoming Students</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strategies for Use by Administrators for Outgoing Students</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strategies for Use by County or State Systems for Incoming Students</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Strategies for Use by County or State Systems for Outgoing Students</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Strategies to be Used by Community Leaders</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Strategies Concerning Mobility as It Relates to Accountability</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Alexis is enrolling in a school, her third one this school year. As her mother fills out the registration papers, she leaves the address, telephone number, and work place spaces blank. She leaves Alexis at a strange school in a strange city with strange people. Mother tries to find housing and a job before coming back to school at the end of the day to pick up Alexis. During the day Alexis thinks of her mother and wonders if she is being successful in finding a place to live and a job, or if they will simply move on to another town and another school in a week or two.

Statement of the Problem

There are many children like Alexis in schools today: children who move numerous times each year; children who move yearly; children who move several times during their K-12 school years. All of these changes affect the children’s lives and education and the lives and education of their families, classmates, and teachers. This study addressed the question, “How can schools, school systems, and classroom teachers best serve mobile students and their families?”

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine what strategies the educational community can use to lessen the negative effects of mobility. A panel of persons with expertise in working with or studying families who move frequently were surveyed. Using the Delphi Technique, a prioritized list of strategies was developed to aid districts in designing strategies to facilitate frequent transfer students in the transition from one school to another.

Background to the Study

In 1999, a preliminary study concerning mobile students was conducted by the researcher at a school in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. Because of the location near the mountains and in a thriving tourist center, the mobile population was very high. For the purpose of this study, student mobility or transience was defined as those students who transferred more
than once in a school year or those students who had been in three or more schools by the end of sixth grade. These moves did not include the normal progression from primary to middle school. During the 1998-99 school year, 49% of the students in the study had been in at least three schools. Some students had been in as many as eight schools by the time they reached eighth grade. Some had attended as many as four schools in one year. Many of these students had not attained all the necessary skills needed to be successful students. A larger than normal portion of them (19%) were special education students; the average for this state is less than 10%.

In the study of 22 students, 11 who had changed schools more than four times and 11 who had attended only this school and its feeder school, the mobile students scored lower on several criteria. On the Tennessee State standardized achievement test, Terra Nova, mobile students’ normal curve equivalent scores were lower than their less mobile peers’ scores were. Their grade point average in reading and math was also lower. In addition, they were referred to the office more frequently and were absent more often than their less mobile peers. The current study focused on strategies to lessen these negative effects of frequent mobility on the students, the classroom, and the school.

**Significance of the Study**

The problem of student mobility or transience is not unique to any school or area. Researchers like Evans (1996) in Chicago, Bolinger and Gilman (1997) in Indiana, and Paredes (1993) and Mao (1997) in Texas documented similar statistics. People across the United States are on the move. According to a United States General Accounting Office report (1994), 43 million (16.7%) Americans move every year. The United States has one of the highest mobility rates when compared to western countries and Japan. One out of six school-aged children move during a one-year period.

There are a growing number of research studies linking mobility to lower achievement and behavior problems (Evans, 1996; Kerbow, 1996; Mao, 1997). Evans, in studying sixth grade students in Chicago, found that those who had attended a single school for 5 to 6 years or even 3 to 4 years showed slight gains over those who had attended only 1 to 2 years when the state test was administered. In Texas, Mao also found that mobile students scored lower than non-mobile peers on state-mandated tests. This negative relationship became even stronger in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. When the family has limited or
recently-lost resources, such as may occur when a parent has lost a job or parents have divorced, the moves have an even greater effect (Mao, 1997). Mehana and Reynolds (1995), in a longitudinal study of urban Chicago students, found that the effects were most prominent in the earlier grades; and in most grade levels, the effect was stronger in math than in reading.

The students in the classroom of the mobile student are also affected by the influx of new students (Kerbow, 1996). Teachers must review records, evaluate, and, at times, re-teach students who may not be on the same level as students who have been in the classroom from the first day of school. While waiting on records from previous schools, students may not be placed in the most appropriate class (Hill, 1998). Teachers in classes with high mobility rates tend to teach more to the average student (Kerbow, 1996). Those classes are also more review oriented than others with less mobile students.

System and school curriculum planning is difficult when there is a high percentage of mobile students. Programs may be planned for specific students who may move before the program is fully implemented. School accountability is also a problem. Evans (1996), in an article written about Chicago schools, stated that those schools were actually making improvements in test scores, although the improvements were obscured by factors such as student mobility. Overall, mobility creates a broad range of issues for student learning, classroom management, classroom instruction, and school organization.

Using the findings of the current study, school systems may be able to develop strategies to aid in lessening the effects of mobility on learning. Staff development programs may be planned to train faculty and staff on the use of these strategies. Once the strategies are implemented, student learning may be affected less negatively. Because mobility is a widespread problem, the potential benefits of the study would not be limited to one specific area of the country.

Limitations and Delimitations

The following limitations and delimitations were relevant in this study:
1. This study was delimited to the study of strategies or programs that may lessen the negative effects of mobility on school children.
2. The study was limited by the nature of the Delphi Technique. Using this technique, a group of participants reached consensus concerning strategies and programs. No attempt was
made to determine the extent that these strategies have been successful in the educational community.

3. The study was further limited by the returned responses to the survey instruments constructed for the Delphi group and the depth of reflections those Delphi participants were willing to invest in this process.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were considered relevant to this study:

1. It was assumed that mobility does affect the learning and lives of children.
2. It was assumed that the members of the Delphi group represent persons with expertise in working with or studying mobile families.

Overview of the Study

The study was organized following the sequence described here.

Chapter 1 includes the introduction, statement of the problem, significance of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions, and overview of the study. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature dealing with issues related to mobility. These issues include the frequency of the movement of families, the effects of that movement on the children, the family, and the community, and programs used by schools to ease transition periods. Chapter 3 contains the description of the research methods and procedures, focusing on the Delphi technique. In chapter 4, the selection of the Delphi panel is described. It also contains a discussion of the questionnaires, the procedures used to administer them, and the findings from each questionnaire. Chapter 5 includes the findings and the interpretations of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations for practice and further study.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of the literature and research related to the study. The review of the literature is focused on five major areas: (a) history of mobility in the United States; (b) reasons for family mobility; (c) effects of mobility on academic performance; (d) effects of mobility on others; and (e) strategies to aid in transition.

History of Mobility in the United States

The problem of student mobility, or transience, is not unique to any school or area, nor is it a new phenomenon. People across the United States are on the move and have been since the time people left Europe to come to the New World. From the original colonists moving in different directions, 13 colonies were formed. From settlements along the Atlantic to the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, pioneers moved in search of a better life. This trend has continued throughout the history of the United States. In earlier days, entire families and even extended families moved to new areas to settle. Some moved into total wilderness areas to carve out a town or a community. Such was the case with the settlement of the area west of the mountains in the North Carolina Territory, now known as East Tennessee. A large number of people moved to this fertile land, made treaties with the Indians, and formed their own government, the State of Franklin (Wear, 1994). Land grants were issued and people pushed even more westward into the fertile lands, using the many rivers for navigation. From these settled areas, the State of Tennessee was later formed (Wear). Other settlers moved to towns already established where they set up their households. They were all in search of a better life and more opportunities for their families. If not for this migratory spirit, the United States might still be 13 colonies instead of stretching from ocean to ocean.

Today American society is still on the move. According to a U.S. General Accounting Office report (1994), 17% of third grade students in the United States have attended three or more schools. This means one child in six has moved three or more times by the time he or she is nine years old. This number increases to 25% for inner city children and to 30% for low-
income families (below $10,000). Forty percent of children changed schools in first, second, or third grade.

**Reasons for Movement**

Americans move today for many reasons. Current literature provides common reasons for transferring to another school (Hill, 1998; Marlett, 1993; Paredes, 1993). In the majority of studies, the predominant reason for moving was related to the employment of one of the parents. A parent may change or lose a job. With a better job may come a more expensive house in a different neighborhood. Conversely, with the loss of a job, the family may move to lower income housing. Divorce is another reason for moving given by many. In a divorced family, the student may move from living with one parent to another parent. Divorce may cause a loss of income, forcing some families to move constantly to avoid paying rent (Study of Student Mobility in Texas Public School, 1997).

Contrary to this line of thinking were the findings of a study completed by Jason (1992) in the Chicago Public Schools. He surveyed over 400 students and sorted the reasons for moving into seven categories: finances, peers, academics, religion, problems at school, family, and housing. Family reasons, including divorce, remarriage, death of family member, or joining of households, ranked among the least often reported reason for moving. The “peers” category, also low in frequency, included reasons such as trouble with other students at school, not liking the students at the school, or wanting to go to another school because certain students went there. Another low frequency category was finances. This included promotion or demotion in the workplace, new job, or the loss of a job.

In Jason’s study, schools, themselves, were the reason most often given by parents for transferring their children to another school. This included problems with teachers or principals, location of school, safety of school, new school attraction, or school closing. Many parents moved their child to a different school to challenge them academically. Few changed to avoid retention in a grade. Jason did question the reliability of this survey, as parents might have been more apt to answer that they moved for academic reasons than that they lost their job and were forced to move to lower income housing.

Kerbow (1996), when studying the Chicago Public Schools, and the Study of Student Mobility in Texas Public School (1997) in Austin, Texas, found that students tended to move less than 10 miles. Many of these moves were for reasons more school-oriented than parent-
oriented. They were looking for a safer school or just another school if behavior had been a problem. They were merely dissatisfied for some reason and moved to a different school.

Regardless of the reason for the move, children are affected emotionally, socially, and academically when they move from the familiar school to strange surroundings. The circumstances of the movement can either complicate or ease the transition process.

Effects of Mobility on Academic Performance

When discussing mobility, many people tend to have the opinion that students will proceed through elementary and secondary schools at a consistent pace and pattern. Given the many and varied experiences of students, however, this is a false assumption. Mobility or transience can be a barrier to student learning. Frequent changes in schools can result in gaps in the essential skills needed to work well in the classroom. Children with special learning needs have an even greater difficulty because teachers may not have records detailing their disabilities and plans for modifications.

Mobile students’ transitions into new schools are often hindered by the lack of information about their previous education, experiences, and needs. Schools have difficulty obtaining previous school records, especially if students have changed schools more than once in a short time period. This information is important not only for placement but also for future planning.

There are a number of research studies linking mobility to lower achievement. Evans, 1996; Mehana and Reynolds, 1995; and Kerbow, 1996, have studied this issue extensively as it pertains to the Chicago area. Research has been completed concerning mobility in Texas by Mao, 1997; Paredes, 1993; and Ligon and Paredes, 1992. Bolinger and Gilman conducted a study on mobility in Terra Haute, Indiana in 1997. In Denver, Colorado, Ingersall completed a study as early as 1988. A study entitled Student Stability: Some Relationships between Student Stability and Other Selected Variables for Mobility was done in 1989 in Cleveland, Ohio for the Cleveland Public Schools. This is an issue that is not new but is continuing to be in the forefront of research in areas across the United States, both rural and urban.

In studying sixth grade students in Chicago, Evans (1996) found that those who had attended the same school for 5 to 6 years or even for 3 to 4 years showed slight gains in reading and math over those who had attended only 1 to 2 years when the State test was administered. In
contrast, there were no significant gains in the reading and math scores of the students who had attended the same school for all six years. This is in contradiction to most studies where students who have not changed schools at all make significant gains. Evans reported that this might have been due to the size of the study and the failure to control for extraneous variables.

Paredes (1993) did control for variables in his study of students in the Austin, Texas public schools. This study was an outgrowth of one conducted by Ligon and Paredes (1992), in which actual formulas used to describe mobility in different systems were compared. Ligon and Paredes recognized that a common definition and reporting method was needed for systems to compare variables. In the later study, student records over a period of 13 years were examined with variables of mobility, income status, ethnicity, and grade level. There was a strong relationship between income status and mobility, but the relationship between ethnicity and mobility was less clear. There was a significant relationship between higher numbers of moves and lower test scores on the state tests. Although Paredes did not claim that mobility caused lower achievement, his study did support the idea that mobility was one factor in students’ lives that can negatively affect learning.

Mao (1997) also found that mobile students scored lower than non-mobile peers on state-mandated tests in both reading and math. This negative relationship was even stronger in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. His study examined the numbers of students in Texas public schools who moved, when and where they moved, and the income level of those who moved. He reported that mobility rates were higher for economically disadvantaged students, those at risk of dropping out, and those who received special education services.

The findings from Mehana and Reynolds’ (1995) study of students in the Chicago area were consistent with those from Texas in that poverty was a significant predictor of mobility and, thus, frequent mobility was a significant predictor of lower reading scores by sixth grade. They also found that the effects were most prominent in the earlier grades and, in most grade levels, the effect was stronger in math than in reading. This would seem likely because math skills must be built upon skill after skill. Frequent moves appeared to result in gaps in the learning process and in the skills taught.

Another study of student mobility in Chicago by Kerbow (1996) not only supported the idea of gaps in the learning process but also indicated that these may actually accumulate over
time. The lack of exposure to a skill may not be detrimental in that particular class but will be at a later time when a skill is introduced that requires the missing prerequisite skill.

In an extensive study of more than 83,000 students in the Cleveland, Ohio public school system (Student Stability: Some Relationships between Student Stability and Other Selected Variables for Mobility, 1989), several factors relating to mobility were also examined. Mobile students had lower family incomes, lower attendance rates, higher suspension rates, and lower scores on reading and math achievement tests. Mobile students in this study were described as those who were enrolled for less than 178 days and had transferred from one school to another during the 1987-88 school year.

In Terre Haute, Indiana, Bolinger and Gilman (1997) conducted a three-year study of a middle school. They considered such demographic variables as gender, ethnicity, and family income. Although the study did show a significant correlation between mobility and low scores on the language sub-test of the statewide achievement test, there was not a significant correlation between mobility and reading and math scores. Bolinger and Gilman surmised from their study that mobility was related to lower achievement but cannot be determined to be the causal factor.

Ingersoll (1988) reached much the same conclusions when studying over 60,000 students in the Denver Colorado Public School System. Even when using matched pair sampling to control for socioeconomic status, less mobile students consistently scored better on standardized tests.

All of this research indicated that frequent moves in a student’s educational career have an impact on academic performance. Some show a significant correlation between mobility and reading, some between mobility and math, and some between mobility and language. While all agree that mobility affects the student, there has been no research that determines mobility to be the causal factor. Research shows that mobile families are usually lower income families and have less education than less mobile families. All of these – lower income, less education, frequent moves – have been found to be related to lower achievement, but are not causal factors. Many other factors must be considered over a longer period of time to determine causality.

Effects of Mobility on Others

Many studies show that mobility has a direct impact on those students who transfer from one school to another. Additionally, mobility has an impact on the classrooms and schools.
involved. The students in the classroom of the mobile student are also affected by the influx of new students (Kerbow, 1996). Teachers must review records, evaluate, and, at times, re-teach students who may not be on the same level as students who have been in the classroom from the first day of school. Overall, mobility results in a broad range of issues for student learning, classroom management, classroom instruction, and school organization.

Kerbow (1996) charted the influx and exit of students over time. The composition of the classrooms changed continuously. The constant movement placed significant constraints on the instructional approaches of teachers. Long-term planning became more difficult. Students for whom a particular unit was planned may move away. Other students may move into the classroom setting in the middle of the unit and not have been exposed to all of the skills. This made assessment of the unit more difficult.

Classrooms in highly mobile areas focused more on the average student than the specific needs of the students in the classroom (Kerbow, 1996). Teachers reported less collaboration with their peers, less collective focus on student learning, and a lower orientation to innovation in instruction.

Kerbow (1996) also reported that teachers in classrooms of highly mobile students become more review-oriented in their lesson plans. Because new students have missed the specific instruction that was presented at the beginning of the unit, teachers review old material and introduce new material at a slower pace. New students may also be weak academically, necessitating tutorial work and repetition of material. Repetition slows the instructional pace of the entire class and disrupts the flow of instruction for all students.

Beyond the regular classroom, increased review by teachers affected curriculum planning for the entire school. Not only will new skills not be taught if time must be spent on review, but plans made for specific groups of students in the spring may not be needed if those students have moved away by fall. When Kerbow compared stable and highly mobile schools in curricular pacing, highly mobile fifth-grade classrooms had lost a year of instruction. It was also emphasized that this “flattening” of curricular pace limits the amount of material to which all students are exposed, not just mobile students. Therefore, highly mobile schools have a dilemma: how to incorporate the mobile students without sacrificing the learning of the other children.
Mobile students also take the time of the office staff in constantly requesting records. In some cases, a student’s records may not have arrived at the previous school before the student moved again (Hill, 1998). Without transfer records, placement in certain classes may or may not be appropriate.

In this time of school accountability, mobile students may skew the results of standardized tests. Evans (1996) cited a Chicago Tribune article entitled “School Statistics Can Be Misleading.” The author, Professor Robert Meyer of the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, (as cited in Evans) cautioned policy makers when making any judgments about school improvement based on standardized testing results. Meyer had found that individual Chicago schools were actually making improvements, but those gains were obscured by outside factors including student mobility. Just as many factors contribute to the academic achievement of a single student, so, too, must many factors be considered when evaluating a school or an entire school system.

Strategies to Aid in Transition

Although researchers (Ascher, 1991; Kerbow, 1996) advocate aiding parents in finding adequate housing to enable children to stay in the same school, educators really cannot control movement of students. However, parents can be educated about the potentially harmful effects of frequent changes in schools (Ascher; Kerbow). In addition, the educational community must develop other programs and strategies to lessen the effects of mobility.

The most widely suggested strategy (Ascher 1991; Cardenas, Taylor, & Adleman, 1997; Clayton, 1998; Hayes, 1999; Kerbow, 1996; Kindler, 1995; Newman, 1988) is the use of the “buddy system.” Another student or students may acquaint new students with the classroom and the school. They may give a tour of the building, eat lunch with them, introduce them to others at free time, or just be a familiar face in a new environment. Clayton suggested that all students wear nametags. This would enable the new students to learn names much more quickly and make friends more easily.

These authors also recommended that schools actively work with parents to orient them to the school and the community. Orientation programs or conferences may be held especially for parents of new students. Rules and procedures of the school as well as information about community resources may be shared at these meetings. Kerbow (1996), noted that the majority
of moves were less than 10 miles. If the family becomes an integral part of the community and the school, they may be less likely to move.

Another strategy mentioned by researchers was in-service training for teachers in areas with high mobility (Ascher, 1991; Hayes, 1999; Jalongo, 1994/95; Newman, 1988). By having an adequate familiarity with literature and awareness of the problems associated with mobility, the teacher can help the parent and the student adjust to new surroundings. The school counselor can be a chief catalyst in the adjustment process (Blakeman, 1993). The counselor may be part of the welcoming committee or just be available if the student needs to talk to someone.

It is also of utmost importance that teachers review records and place the students accordingly (Clayton, 1998; Hayes, 1999). If records are sparse or non-existent, assessment should be conducted to determine strengths and weaknesses. When needed, tutoring should be offered (Kerbow, 1996; Newman, 1988). Kerbow suggested that portfolios be kept on all students. These could be sent to the next school, thereby providing much more information than just grades. He also advocated sending information about the child’s previous curriculum. Because most of the mobility of students in the Chicago area was within the state, Kerbow suggested that a statewide-standardized curriculum be implemented. The fact that families moved short distances was mentioned in several studies. Standardized curriculum and books would greatly help those students.

In the studies reviewed, the above suggestions were merely mentioned. They had not been implemented, tried, or tested. Researchers had not collaborated as to the “best strategies”; therefore, there was no consensus of which might work better for any particular circumstance.

Summary of the Literature Review

The five portions of the literature review (history of mobility, reasons for movement, effects of mobility on academic performance, effects of mobility on others, and strategies to aid in transition) give an overview of literature and research on student mobility. This review reinforces the concept of mobility in the United States. Students do not begin kindergarten and graduate from high school in the same community. In fact, the studies in the literature review have shown that most students have moved several times during their school years.

Research has shown a negative correlation between mobility and academic achievement, especially math, reading, and language. Students who move frequently usually have lower
scores on state tests. However, they also are from families who have lower income and less education than those who move less often. All of these factors must be considered before any one can be determined to be the causal factor. In searching for ways to assist students with high mobility rates, these factors must be considered systemically.

Researchers not only agree that mobility affects students but that it also affects classrooms, schools, and school systems. Teachers must make accommodations for new students, both for academics and for classroom management. The normal flow of class is interrupted to acclimate a new student into the classroom environment. The school, too, must make adjustments. Large numbers of mobile students make long-range planning difficult. New programs may be planned and implemented for a group of students who do not remain at the school for any length of time.

Studies indicate that mobility will continue at a high rate. Although mobility may not be the direct cause of poor achievement or adjustment, it is a complicating factor for a student who has other at-risk characteristics. Schools may not be able to correct for socioeconomic factors or for a variety of other conditions that cause families to move. However, schools can influence many aspects of the school experience by easing the transition from one school to another. Different strategies are suggested in the literature to help in this transition.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the study was to determine what strategies the educational community can use to lessen the negative effects of mobility. Surveys were sent to a panel of persons with expertise in working with or studying families who move frequently. Using a Delphi Technique, a list of strategies was developed to aid in the transition of mobile students from one school to another.

Research has shown a negative correlation between mobility and academic achievement, especially math, reading, and language. Students who move frequently usually have lower scores on state tests. Researchers not only agree that mobility affects students but that it also affects classrooms, schools, and school systems. Teachers must make accommodations for new students, both for academics and for classroom management. The normal flow of class is interrupted to acclimate a new student into the classroom environment. The school, too, must make adjustments. Large numbers of mobile students make long-range planning difficult. Standardized test results, if used for accountability purposes, may be skewed.

Studies indicate that mobility will continue at a high rate. Although mobility may not be the direct cause of poor achievement or adjustment, it is a complicating factor for a student who has other at-risk characteristics. Schools may not be able to correct for socioeconomic factors or for a variety of other conditions that cause families to move. However, schools can influence many aspects of the school experience by easing the transition from one school to another. Different strategies are suggested in the literature to help in this transition.

Chapter 3 contains a brief review of literature concerning the Delphi technique including the creation of the technique, its components, and the appropriateness for use in this study. The selection of the Delphi group is also discussed. The first questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

Research Design

The Delphi technique uses an expert panel to examine a particular subject. The panel is brought together by written communication only. There are no face-to-face meetings, and no
panel member knows the identity of other panel members. Essentially, the Delphi consists of a series of questionnaires or iterations. The panel members are asked to respond to broad questions in the first questionnaire. The subsequent questionnaires are based upon the answers from the first. After each iteration, a summary of all answers is provided back to the panel. Panel members are then given the opportunity to respond again after knowing what the overall group responses were. The process stops when consensus has been reached among participants (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975) or when it becomes apparent that there will be little further progress toward consensus.

Helmer and Dalkey (as cited by Lang, 2000) developed the Delphi technique in 1953 at the RAND Corporation. Named after the Greek oracle at Delphi to whom the Greeks visited for information about their future, the Delphi technique is considered one of the best known qualitative, structured, and indirect interaction methods in use today. Heath, Neimeyer, and Pedersen (1988) also described the method as the best available forecasting tool, which gathers and combines the opinions of experts to obtain consensus about future development in a particular field. The earliest complete Delphi studies were conducted to forecast military and intelligence capabilities of the United States and the Soviet Union in the years after World War II (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).

The creation of the Delphi technique had its beginning in earlier work to overcome the shortcomings of human judgment for planning purposes. Douglas MacGregor’s study in 1936 (as cited in Lang, 2000) resulted in a term known as the “MacGregor effect.” This referred to his finding that predictions made by a group of people are more likely to be right than predictions made by the same individuals working alone. However, face-to-face meetings create several problems. Basic among these are: one or a few individuals may dominate, following one idea for long periods of time, exerting considerable pressure on participants to conform, and bringing in more information than necessary.

From its use by the RAND Corporation in the 1950s, the Delphi technique has been applied to forecasting the future in many fields. These include health care, education, business, geo-politics, technology, communications, agriculture, and the environment (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).

Lang (2000) described the Delphi as a process designed to make the best use of group opinion while minimizing the adverse qualities of interacting groups. Clayton (1997) stated that
the Delphi technique offers decision-makers a user-friendly, rigorous, and systematic strategy in the collection and dissemination of information. It has four basic features: structured questioning, iteration, controlled feedback, and anonymity of responses. The structured questioning is achieved through the use of questionnaires. This keeps a clear and concise focus on the study. Each questionnaire is based upon the responses of the previous one with all panel members receiving the responses of the whole group as well as their own response for their reconsideration. Anonymity is assured since no member knows of other members’ identity and, therefore, no one can exert pressure on another to conform to their ideas.

Linstone and Turoff (1975) established criteria to determine the appropriateness of using the Delphi technique:

1. When the problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from subjective judgments on a collective basis.
2. When the individuals needed to contribute to the examination represent diverse backgrounds with respect to experience or expertise.
3. When more individuals are needed than can effectively interact in a face-to-face exchange.
4. When the time and cost make group meetings infeasible.
5. When disagreements are so severe or politically unpleasant that the communication process must be refereed and/or anonymity assured.
6. When the heterogeneity of the participants must be preserved to assure validity of the results and to avoid domination by the strength of certain personalities.
7. When a supplemental group communication process can help the efficiency of face-to-face meetings.

This study met most of these criteria. Item 5, regarding severe disagreement, was not applicable. Because all the other criteria were met, the Delphi technique was used to conduct this study.

Delbecq, et al. (1975) identified three elements necessary to conduct a successful Delphi. They were adequate time, participants skilled in written communication, and high participation motivation. The Delphi should not be used when less than 45 days are available or when the participants have limited reading skills. In addition, the quality of responses is naturally linked
to participants’ commitment and interest. Because other people are not present to stimulate and maintain motivation, participants must be intrinsically motivated.

Because this study of the strategies to ease the transition of mobile students from one school to another meets most of the criteria set by Linstone and Turoff (1975) and the conditions identified by Delbeq et al., (1975), the Delphi technique was appropriate to use. Another rationale for the use was one identified by Helmer (as cited in Lang, 2000). It deals with the speed and magnitude of change. If change were not occurring at the pace it is, it would be feasible to make decisions based on past and present data. Although research has shown that people in the United States have always been a mobile people, the moves have not typically been as numerous in short time spans.

The Delphi technique has been criticized because of the difficulty in evaluating the accuracy and reliability of results. The technique is based on compilation of the opinions of panel members and the findings are person and situation specific. Each application of the methodology will be different, making it difficult to compare and measure (Lang, 2000). A random sampling of the population would not be appropriate because they would not have the specific knowledge that the members of the expert panel have.

Linstone and Turoff (1975) listed other criticisms of Delphi:

1. A key weakness is that if certain questions or items are not mentioned at the beginning of the study, they cannot be added later. Once the study is underway, additional topics cannot be introduced.

2. In the process of achieving consensus, extreme points of view may be suppressed, when they may provide important new information or insights.

3. The flexibility of the technique means that it can be adapted to a whole range of situations. This in turn can make it vulnerable to misrepresentation.

4. The imposition of the monitor’s views and preconceptions of the problem on the panel is also a weakness.

The Delphi technique does have limitations and problems, as do all other methods. The criticisms leveled at the Delphi technique could be true of many methods. Educators and researchers from many parts of the United States have studied mobility of students. It would be inconvenient to bring them together to discuss this topic. Even if such a group could be congregated, some people would be more persuasive than others would. Using the Delphi
technique, the panel can be from a wide range of expertise without time and travel restraints. Each member will be free to express his or her opinion without being persuaded by another. For these reasons, the Delphi technique was used to ascertain the strategies that may more effectively ease the transition of mobile students from one school to another.

**Delphi Group Selection**

Selection of the membership of the Delphi group is perhaps the most critical point in using the Delphi technique (Lang, 2000). The effective selection of the panel not only maximizes the quality of responses but also gives the results of the study credibility with the wider audience. Heath et al. (1988) agreed that the strength of a Delphi is its panel. Delbecq et al. (1975) listed four attributes that are required of effective participants in a Delphi:

1. Have expert knowledge of the problem.
2. Are willing to take the time needed for the Delphi process.
3. Feel personally involved in the problem.
4. Feel that the information garnered from the panel will be of value to them and to others.

Participants must be convinced of the importance of the study and the importance of their participation. The study should be fully explained in terms of objectives, the nature of the panel, obligations of participants, the amount of time involved, and the information that will be shared among participants (Delbecq et al., 1975).

The size of the panel can vary depending on the problem that is being examined. There needs to be a sufficient number to ensure that the results of the study do represent a true cross-section of experts. There is no exact formula (Delbecq et al. 1975). Three factors to consider when constructing are: a) it must be a true group of experts; b) the group must be large enough to represent an ample quantity of opinion; and c) the group should come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences to create a balance of diverse opinion (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).

I used these criteria in compiling the list of experts to serve on the Delphi panel. Foremost, the persons must have worked with or studied mobile students. Researchers in the field were not only asked to serve on the panel but, also, to suggest others who might have like experience. Guidance counselors, social workers, teachers, and administrators from schools with
high mobility rates were considered. In addition, persons who have had actual experience in moving from school to school were surveyed as to their personal experiences.

Instrumentation

Each member of the Delphi panel was contacted personally to give him or her an overall idea of the study. This was followed with a letter informing them in more detail of the rationale and timeframe of the study. The first questionnaire or iteration was open ended to allow the panel flexibility in suggesting strategies to aid classroom teachers, schools, and school systems in the transition of mobile students. These were brief statements or phrases without any attempt by the panel member to evaluate or justify the ideas at this time. Responses were compiled into a list by the researcher. The purpose of the second iteration was to refine the strategies. Panel members were asked if any strategy needed clarification or explanation. On the third questionnaire, the members were asked to rank the strategies according to effectiveness. A Likert scale, a quantitative selection scale, was used to rank the strategies.

Summary

Chapter 3 describes the Delphi technique and how it was used in determining strategies to ease the transition of mobile students in the classroom, the school, and the district. The selection of the Delphi panel was discussed as were the three questionnaires that were used.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter contains a summary of the results of the findings from the first, second, and final rounds of this Delphi study. Selection and demographics of the Delphi Panel, the distribution of the questionnaires, and the response rates are also included.

Demographics of the Panel

The selection of the Delphi Panel began in September 2000. Persons who had conducted studies and written about mobility were first asked to share with the panel and to refer others with whom they had worked in their studies. Ten authors of published studies, chosen from those mentioned in the literature review in this study, were originally asked to serve on the panel. Three agreed to be part of the panel and then referred others. Some did not feel they had the “hands-on” experience that was needed to make this study a success. School administrators and attendance supervisors who were participants at a conference on school attendance, sponsored by the Tennessee State Department of Education, were asked to refer schools with high mobility in which effective transition programs have been developed. Personal contacts with educators in other states and counties were asked to refer prospective panel members from schools with high mobility rates. Articles and research reports dealing with effective programs for coping with mobility were sought in current educational journals and other publications. Authors of these articles were contacted and asked to refer persons from the schools that had been mentioned in the articles or who had contributed to the article. The persons contacted from the articles also referred more individuals. The school principals referred from the above avenues were contacted. Of these, 12 agreed to share their programs and strategies while others stated that even though mobility was a problem at their schools, they had not developed any strategies to combat the situation. They eagerly await the results of this study. Names of guidance counselors, social workers, and teachers at schools that implemented effective programs to aid in the transition of students from one school to another were solicited from the principal or central office personnel. Persons who have actually experienced many moves were referred. Of these contacted, one agreed to contribute to the study. Not only did he move many times as a child, his
family now has moved several times as he has been transferred with his company. The researcher felt this would give a first hand experience perspective to the study.

After some members of the Delphi Panel were chosen, a list of participants at a conference on mobility held in Washington, D.C. was obtained. Several of the people chosen for the Panel had attended or presented at this conference, even travelling great distances to do so. Their attendance at this conference validated their interest and expertise in the area. Others who either presented or attended the conference were contacted concerning this study. Some agreed to share their expertise. After discussion with others, it was agreed that while they shared an interest in the problem they did not have the experience or expertise needed to contribute effectively to this study.

By late December 2000, 24 persons had agreed to work on the panel. After the first questionnaire was sent, an author of several articles on mobility decided that she did not have the practical experience that was required for this study. Of the 23 others, 12 of the panel members were principals of schools with effective programs in place to combat the negative effects of mobility. They are from schools across the United States in urban, suburban, and rural systems, some of which have very high mobility rates. The schools are of varying sizes, with student populations from 500 to 3,000. The two teachers, social worker, and guidance counselor are also from schools such as these. More administrators than teachers were chosen to serve on the panel because the researcher felt that the principal would have more knowledge of the programs in the entire school and strategies used by many teachers in the building than just one teacher in the building.

Three persons who agreed to share their expertise are working with organizations that recommend policy change to large metro school systems. These organizations have conducted research studies with thousands of students to address issues pertaining to mobility. They have not concentrated only on the school but have addressed issues dealing with the community as well. The two university professors on the Delphi Panel have also conducted extensive research on the issues of mobility. A list of the Delphi Panel members is included in Appendix E.

All potential members of the panel were contacted by e-mail, by telephone, or both. The results of the preliminary study on the effects of mobility, as well as information about the researcher, were shared with the potential panel members by e-mail. This correspondence is included in Appendix A. The prospective members agreed that the study was needed and would
look forward to the results. The researcher is confident that the members are a representative group with expertise in working with, studying, or experiencing the problems relating to mobility and strategies to combat these problems. All panel members agreed that mobility not only affects the student who is mobile but also students in the entering and exiting classrooms, schools, and systems. The panel mutually agreed that e-mail was the most effective means of communication.

**Survey Distribution and Response Rate**

An e-mail message was sent to all panel members reviewing the researcher’s perspective of the need for this study, the Delphi Technique, and the timeframe for the study. After several members mentioned in correspondence the issue of accountability as related to mobility, a question was added to the questionnaire concerning that topic before the first one was sent. Further instructions were sent with the first questionnaire.

The first questionnaire was sent in January 2001. Some responses were returned the same day that the questionnaires were sent. A follow-up message was sent to non-responders after one week. In some cases, the questionnaire was sent again, using a different e-mail address. Twenty-four questionnaires were sent and 23 were returned. After receiving the questionnaire, one panelist, a writer, said that she did not have the first hand knowledge to answer the questions. Many panel members not only listed strategies that were found useful in their systems but mailed entire packets of information about programs that have been developed in their areas.

**Methodology of Content Analysis: Round One Questionnaire**

Completion of Round 1 of the survey required the panel to answer five questions. Questions 1, 2, and 3 had two parts and, therefore, the questionnaire was treated as eight separate questions. As each questionnaire was returned, the researcher read the responses. When several questionnaires had been returned, the researcher began to compile the answers to each question separately, making certain to leave the writer’s intent in the listing of each strategy. Duplicate strategies were only listed if the panel member had a comment that showed it was used in a different manner than had previously been noted. The strategies listed for each question were not prioritized in any way. If specific programs were listed with no explanations given, the researcher e-mailed the panel member asking for more information about that program so that all
Findings and Analysis of Round One

The panel members responded with 176 strategies. Many of these were accompanied by information regarding the specific use of the strategy. Such information is provided in the form of direct quotes. There are, however, no citations accompanying the quotations.

Research Question 1A

What are strategies that have been effective for CLASSROOM TEACHERS to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? The Delphi Panel listed many and varied strategies in response this question. Many commented that the teacher has more direct contact with the student, and, therefore, more influence than other individuals or units.

There was definite consensus among panelists that assigning a buddy was an effective strategy. This “buddy” would take the new student on a tour of the school, eat lunch with him/her, play with him/her at recess, and introduce him/her to fellow students and school routines. Some suggested that the “buddy” be with the student during all of the first week while others suggested that a different “buddy” be assigned each day for the first week of attendance. Another response noted that a successful transfer student would be a great buddy. “This gives the [successful transfer] student a sense of belonging and acceptance.”

Panel members were consistent in believing that the school should create an individual achievement plan for all new students.

Because equal access in and of itself may not suffice in ensuring that migrant children have an opportunity to learn, a commitment is needed to make alternative educational strategies available that are specifically targeted to these students. It will require “more than equal” services and commitment to ensure that these students realize equity in the attainment of performance standards set for all students.
The individual achievement plan would require that students be assessed. Some participants stated that this assessment should be done before the student is assigned to a class so that the best placement could be made. Others suggested determining the strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. In order to complete an evaluation, short assessments would need to be obtained or created in the major subject areas of reading, math, and writing. “More often than not, the students are performing below grade level in reading and math and in need of individual plans.” Plans would be written for all new students, not just special education students, and would specify the actions needed to meet this child’s educational needs. This strategy was also mentioned in response to a later question as a responsibility of the school to provide a person to assess students prior to placement.

Several responses clustered around the theme of making the new student feel welcome in the classroom. Panelists suggested that classroom teachers should:

1. Create a booklet with autobiographies of classmates.
2. Always keep an extra desk in the classroom ready for new students.
3. Use his or her best judgment to determine how much emphasis to place on the new student coming into the room – more is required for some individuals than for others.
4. Do a personal interview with the new student. “Taking the time to sit down with the student privately and let him/her know you care is time well spent.”
5. Create a personal informational journal assignment. “Develop a list of five to ten personal questions that the student can answer in two pages. This will not only help the teacher know the student better but also provide a sample of writing skills.”
6. Ask a staff member to eat lunch with the new student.
7. Give school supplies or clothing if needed.
8. Incorporate the student into the classroom. Add his/her name to helper charts, birthday board, etc.

While most educators strive to maintain positive feelings and attitudes toward all children, they must appreciate that many children lack confidence in themselves and in their ability to succeed in school. Many children often do not live in environments that foster readiness for school. They are aware that their peers may have more resources at their disposal. This cognizance may contribute to negative attitudes toward school that are transferred as students move from school to school. This can be helped by having an increased awareness of the different cultural and lifestyle characteristics of children.
Many responses were generated pertaining to actual instruction in the classroom. One suggested that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and techniques. “Teaching strategies must comprise a variety of approaches that are appropriate to students’ learning styles, cognitive and language proficiency levels, and cultural backgrounds.” Panelists suggested that standing near the new student during the first week would allow the teacher to monitor the new student’s progress closely. Modifications or referrals may be made whenever necessary. Small group instruction or one on one tutoring may be helpful or an assistant may need to be assigned to the new student.

The use of cooperative learning activities and other activities that allow students to interact with each other was also mentioned. These activities enable the student who may have missed some of the concepts to still be a part of the group. In addition, the teacher may develop learning packets that give important background information and activities of key units. “This enables the new student who comes in the middle of a unit the opportunity to catch up without taking an undue amount of the teacher’s time.”

Panel members agreed that if parents are involved in the school and community that the negative impact of mobility is diminished. Responses pertaining to parent interactions and involvement are:

1. If transfer information is not brought with student from the previous school, the teacher should obtain needed information from the parent, not the student.
2. Teachers should meet with the parent to inform him or her of class expectations.
3. A regular means of communication should be instituted.
4. Parents and teachers should meet informally after the student has been in class for a few days.

The importance of records was mentioned throughout responses to the questionnaire. Records should include all previous school files and be kept up-to-date. “The teacher should be relentless in working with office personnel to get records from the previous school as soon as possible. This is especially true with special needs students, including those with Special Education, 504 programs, and health concerns.” Once these records have arrived, they should be reviewed as soon as possible to assess the past enrollment history of incoming students. “Our experience has shown that students with three or more previous school changes between grades one and eight are much more likely to change high schools and subsequently drop out of school.”
If these students are targeted early, programs can be developed to possibly counteract some of these actions.

Making parents, students, and teachers aware of the impact of mobility, socially and academically, was also a consistent theme. Panel members suggested that the teacher discuss the hazards of changing schools in midyear, while other panel members recommended this be done by the principal or counselor.

Research Question 1B

What are strategies that have been effective for CLASSROOM TEACHERS to ease the transition of students transferring from one school to another? The strategy listed most often for outgoing students was the use of a student transfer slip that would give the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. This would be sent with the student. Some panel members indicated that the teacher should fill out this form and others listed it as an office responsibility. A letter of recommendation written on behalf of the student was also listed with the same information mentioned above.

There was consensus among panelists that records should be sent as soon as possible. It was suggested that this be done electronically, if feasible. Phone calls are appropriate if the needs of the outgoing student are unique. All records should be up to date and complete. Reading and math levels should be included as well as specific texts studied.

The use of a portfolio was suggested as a strategy to show levels of work. This would be sent with the records. “Samples of work products are more meaningful than simple letter grades in assessing the student’s needs.”

Several panelists mentioned that teachers should take some time to visit with the departing student in an exit interview. An exit interview proves to be helpful so that the student leaves with good memories of a caring teacher.” When possible, addresses should be exchanged in order to initiate a pen pal system or to have the entire class send a note at a later time. Many times a student may leave, only to return in several months. If the family leaves with pleasant feelings, there is a good chance that returning will also be a good experience.

Panel members affirmed that the classroom teachers should speak positively about the new area where the student will move. “If the teacher knows where the student is moving, this is an excellent chance for a social studies lesson.” Some commented, however, that many times the
school finds out that the student has moved when the request for records arrives in the school office.

Sending extra work papers with the student was also mentioned. In the event, students do not enroll in another school right away, they will at least have schoolwork to occupy them. If families are traveling great distances, children may miss several days of school. Even in a move across town, there may be lost school time.

Research Question 2A

What are strategies that have been effective for SCHOOLS to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? The number one strategy listed was the fast retrieval of records. “The previous school should be called to request the records electronically, if possible.”

Numerous panel members cited the concern for proper placement. Many indicated that students should be assessed before placement in class. This would ensure correct placement and aid the teacher in preparing for the student. Some suggested that a literacy team, consisting of several teachers, develop an individual plan for the student. Other issues concerning placement were addressed. Many panelists suggested that schools provide different multi-age groupings, such as a Kindergarten/1st/2nd or 1st/2nd/3rd multi-age class. “This increases options exponentially for an optimal placement.” Developmentally appropriate grouping for students at all grade levels, in addition to heterogeneous grouping was also suggested. Others mentioned that a variety of schedules should be available to accommodate students. “This may consist of several reading and/or math periods per day, with several different teachers. Our philosophy is that all of the children are all of our responsibility.”

Another strategy regarding placement involved forming a transition classroom in the building.

In our school this classroom works strictly with the transient students who live at the homeless shelter and motels. Students are tested and brought as up to date as possible before placing them in the regular classroom. By having a Transition classroom staff, the school has someone who can track down student cumulative folders, shot records, past history reports from previous schools, etc. This helps ease the burden from the secretary who already has to deal with the records from the remaining school population, plus helps give the teacher some background info on the child.
Several panel members suggested that students should be made to feel welcome in the school immediately. Strategies dealing with this were:

1. The office staff and administration should have a welcoming attitude. “The office personnel are the first persons the family will meet in the new school. First impressions are important.”

2. A member of the school staff should be assigned to visit with the incoming student and their parents to acquaint them to unique features of their new school and make them feel welcome.

3. If the school requires uniforms, the student should be given the first uniform.

4. Translators should be provided for school meetings.

5. Newsletters written in the parents’ native language improve communication.

6. Be student advocates. Students may have a variety of needs; offer resources to meet those needs.

7. Compile a packet of information with a school handbook (listing rules and policies) and a school brochure (stating the aspirations for students at each grade level). This will provide new families with needed information about the school.

Delphi panel members suggested that staff as well as teachers should encourage students to become part of the school. “Urge new students to join extracurricular activities or, if appropriate, a counseling group.” As ways to make him/her feel a part of the school, the panel members suggested that school staff should create inviting packets on extra curricula activities to encourage participation. A policy of open enrollment for clubs and service organizations was mentioned as was the organization of a “new student” group to meet at lunch, school-wide “acquaintanceship” activities, or information booths at lunch to tell about activities and how to join. It was also suggested that all students wear nametags.

Panel members again expressed concern for instruction or the need for instruction on the level of each student. Strategies suggested that administrators of the school should:

1. Provide small group instruction or one-on-one tutoring for students, if needed.

2. Provide programs to help children who have deficiencies in reading.

We have developed a program similar to Reading Recovery which we call Read and Succeed. It helps first and second grade students decode works by identifying patterns or chunks. This program, while successful, is costly because, over a period of twelve weeks, we work with only one student at a time everyday for approximately 20 minutes.
The second program is SOAR to Success by Houghton Mifflin. A reading specialist works everyday for eighteen weeks with third, fourth, and fifth grade students on comprehension skills.

3. Create and train a group of student volunteer coaches who aid students who have transferred.

4. Develop programs specifically targeted at high-risk students. “Programs that target high-risk students – those who are most likely to leave a school – have been shown to dramatically reduce student mobility.”

5. Organize a staff or teacher-mentoring program that would aid those new students who might have difficulties academically or socially.

Panelists asserted that the overall quality of the school should be improved. “If the overall quality of the school is improved, students and parents are more likely to remain at a school than to leave in search of a more suitable educational environment.”

A limited number of participants mentioned strategies that are more suitable for high school. These panel members indicated that changing high schools in the middle of the semester might present more problems than doing so in the elementary grades. Students should be encouraged to enroll in a class without credit to gain experience and then re-enroll for credit at the next semester or new year. A very late-arriving student could be assigned to independent study where credit can be earned until the new semester begins.

Research Question 2B

What are strategies that have been effective for SCHOOLS to ease the transition of students transferring from one school to another? The most frequently received responses again concerned records. These strategies included the need for school staff to:

1. Keep records detailed and up-to-date.

2. Send records as soon as possible, electronically if feasible.

3. Send names and numbers of persons spoken with at previous school or schools in the event that additional information is needed.

4. Complete a student transfer slip with careful attention paid to the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. Send this with the student.

5. Call the next school to give them any special information concerning the student.

6. Schedule time for counselors to hold “exit interviews.”
Counselors can problem solve with a withdrawing student about how he or she could remain at least until the year ends. For example, suggesting that students use public transportation if they moved out of the neighborhood or be transported by a family member. Having a parent present is helpful to resolve these issues.

Panel members stressed making parents and students aware of the problems associated with high mobility. The school should be an advocate of “one school in one year.” “Be a resource or provide resources for them to enable this to happen.”

Respondents again indicated that the school staff and administration should say “goodbye” to the student and wish him or her well. This is not always possible when students just move without actually withdrawing from the school.

Research Question 3A

What are strategies that have been effective for the COUNTY/DISTRICT/STATE to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? Again, the number one response concerned records. Some were repetitive but the following were listed as the responsibility of the system or the state.

1. Establish records exchange processes that are quick and complete.
2. Simplify the entry requirements and make them fairly consistent from state to state. “Our state requires a shot record and birth certificate. When other states have similar requirements, it proves to be easier to admit a student without unnecessary delays.”
3. Develop an incentive system for transferring students to return books because withholding records hampers the correct placement of the student in the next school.
4. Work with neighboring school districts to provide integrated transition policies and transfer of records.
5. Have a common report card statewide.

The panel suggested that a quality teaching staff might be even more important in a school with a high mobility rate. These teachers would have the expertise, knowledge, and experience to deal with a variety of student needs. “A teacher who is confident in his or her abilities will model this positive attitude toward students.” Panel members also stressed providing staff development for teachers in these highly mobile areas.

Teachers should be given the opportunity to participate in training on the most appropriate instructional approaches for the various students they may be expected to
learn. Teachers need a solid grasp of content area and a wealth of strategies for conveying knowledge to a diverse student population.

The development of a county and/or statewide curriculum was advocated by many panel members. “Curriculum varies both within and between districts. Schools teach different material in the same grades, so that students who transfer within the district often find themselves far behind.”

Panel members indicated that funding was a problem in providing programs needed in highly mobile areas. Funds could be used to establish programs that improve integration of new students in the school. “The State Department of Education could provide grants to schools to develop, implement, and evaluate “newcomer” programs in schools with high mobility.”

The development of a uniform definition of mobility was mentioned. Many studies define mobility as the student having begun and ended the school year in a different school while others determine mobility by the number of schools attended in a certain number of years. A uniform definition would aid schools in comparative figures and in evaluation of programs.

The development or acquisition of short assessment tests for reading, math, and writing was seen as a responsibility of the system. These tests would be used as a way to determine the appropriate class placement and to meet the needs of the individual student.

Several strategies dealt with interventions to be used in the schools. Responses clustered around the need to:

1. Develop a program of routinely assessing the past enrollment history of incoming students in order to identify such students and target interventions for them.
2. Provide tutoring support, if needed. The use of Title One services at the school and the establishment of district Tutoring Centers were suggested.
3. Allow schools to be flexible in scheduling multi-age classes, smaller classes, or any variation that meets the needs of the students.
4. Create a referral process for students who have problems adjusting.
5. Create Parent Assistance Centers where parents can receive information about any school in the county.

The issue of raising awareness of the negative impact of mobility emerged again with this question. Panelists suggested that schools set a goal to keep all students in the school where they began the school year. Informational programs and written materials outlining the possible
consequences of changing schools could be developed. Still focusing on prevention, the group suggested using transportation services to keep students in the home school, possibly even investigating the availability of federally funded programs to help ease the burden of transportation of children to and from school when they move out of zone. If students must transfer, policies should be developed that ensure that the transfer process reduces the disruption of student learning and achievement.

**Research Question 3B**

What are strategies that have been effective for the COUNTY/DISTRICT/STATE to ease the transition of students transferring from one school to another? Again the number one issue was dealing with records. Most panelists agreed that a policy should be developed that requires the schools to send records as soon as requested. Some stated that a central storage facility would speed this transmittal, while others did not. A detailed progress report that would go with the child to the new school would tell the school immediately of the student’s progress. Because most schools withhold records until books are returned, an incentive system for transferring students to return books was suggested.

The development of a system-wide or statewide core curriculum was again mentioned. This strategy was perceived to help both incoming and exiting students.

Several issues were listed concerning prevention of the move. Many suggested that mobility could be reduced if affirmative measures were implemented. Strategies listed were:

1. Focus on preventing the transition, i.e. using transportation services to keep students in their home school. Aim to keep all students in the school where they began the school year.

   In Illinois, all children can finish the school year in the school they started. Homeless children get transportation as well and can stay for as long as they are homeless (broadly defined) and until the end of the year in which they acquire housing (with transportation). The law provides that if the child lives in one district and goes to another, the districts must work it out together or split the cost in half.

2. Develop a policy that schools must work affirmatively to prevent mobility. “Our energy is spent getting parents, teachers, clerks, etc. to focus on keeping kids in the same school. We try to make them aware that there are resources to help them.”

   The Board of Education should mandate that the principal inform the student’s parents about the consequences of changing schools and about options to remain at the same
school. At that time, principals should be responsible both for discussing the topic with the parents, and for giving them prepared documentation pertaining to mobility and the open enrollment policy.

3. Prepare a guidebook that addresses mobility issues for students and parents. It should describe the advantages and disadvantages of changing schools and provide information on actions they can take to prepare for the move and ease the transition into a new school. “At least some mobility could be prevented if students and parents were better informed about the risks and rewards of changing schools.”

4. Examine programs of schools that are doing a good job of reducing mobility.

5. Investigate the availability of federally funded programs to help ease the burden of transportation of children to and from school even when they move out of zone.


7. Prepare a guidebook for school districts that provides information on actions they can take to reduce unnecessary school transfers and to respond to the needs of transfer students. “Some schools actively encourage student transfers without considering the educational consequences. The State Department of Education could investigate the effectiveness of any programs and provide useful information on these programs to schools throughout the state.”

8. Initiate a study to examine the reasons students are leaving the school in order to address problems that may make students want to transfer.

9. Develop a system of mediation to resolve problems at schools that might result in transfer.

10. Initiate a program of exit interviews held by counselors with students and parents to “problem solve” ways in which the student could stay in the same school for the entire year.

Research Question 4

What are strategies that have been effective for the COMMUNITY to use to ease the transition of families from one area to another? Making educators, students, parents, and other community members aware of the academic and social consequences of student mobility was a common theme for this question. “Awareness is the first step in developing programs to prevent or to deal with mobility.”
Several strategies dealing with making the families feel welcome and encouraging them to become a part of the community were suggested. These were encouraging the community to organize welcome committees, such as Welcome Wagon Programs, to distribute brochures about the school and community. This would include area maps and information such as housing, utilities, laundromats, hospitals, and lists of doctors. Sports activities available in the community - junior league basketball, soccer, and football, as well as, dates and times of local community meetings could be included.

Providing services to families was also a common theme. The panelists agreed that parents who had their basic needs met were more apt to stay in one area. In order to accomplish this, respondents indicated that communities should be urged to:

1. Provide convenient support services for families. “Providing convenient support services for low-income families who have recently moved, as well as families already settled in the community, will reduce the likelihood that families will need to move as often.” “If at all possible, the same social worker or other professionals should remain with the family to establish some continuity.”

2. Encourage health care providers to be available at affordable prices.
3. Create a division of family services in the schools.
4. Establish abuse shelters and/or homeless shelters in the area.
5. Develop a program of Caring Communities.
6. Provide counseling for families.
7. Encourage an increase in safe, quality, affordable housing. “There is an urgent need in most communities for more units that are large enough for families with children, yet affordable.”

Without more housing – adequate, safe, and better-distributed housing – programs to strengthen families and neighborhoods are working with a great handicap. If families can experience stability in one aspect of their lives such as housing they have a better chance to begin, with the help of their communities, to build personal and family stability in other areas. Family stability also can be improved when social services and housing are linked.

8. Offer pre-school care as well as an organized program for school children after school, school holidays, and in summer.
9. Provide training for parents (English classes, volunteer in classroom, tutoring classes).

10. Work with schools to establish family centers that can be a resource for parents and their children.

11. Implement cooperative efforts among the schools, county governments, and rental housing to facilitate parents’ efforts to keep their children in the same school throughout the school year. Having leases come due in summer instead of mid school year is a good example of this type of cooperative effort.

The panelists agreed that the support of attendance policies was of utmost importance – not only monetarily, but also socially.

There is a critical need to improve attendance. The whole community has a stake in school attendance. Schools must lead the effort, but they must involve the whole community in helping students and their families understand the importance of attendance and act on that knowledge.

Cooperative programs with local universities to provide resources were mentioned. College students could be used as volunteer assistants while the college itself could offer degree programs and professional development for school staff.

**Research Question 5**

What strategies have been effective in dealing with student mobility as it affects accountability? Many of the same strategies listed in other questions were again listed in response to this question. This is understandable because any strategy that would help ease the transition and adaptation into the classroom may also aid in the testing process, which then leads to better accountability. The strategies generated for this question suggested that educational leaders should:

1. Share all diagnostic and performance data between the sending and receiving schools.
2. Immediately evaluate the student’s strengths and weaknesses to assure the proper level of instruction.
3. Provide programs to help children with deficiencies in reading and math.
4. Develop a core curriculum.

The fundamental principle of assessment is that students can be expected to demonstrate achievement mastery only of the content they have been taught. Assessments may be
interpreted as showing that the student has not met the standard, but what has really happened is that the student has not been provided an opportunity to learn the curriculum content. Educators must take great pains to ensure that tests overlap with curriculum content.

5. Establish developmentally appropriate grouping for students at all grade levels in addition to heterogeneous grouping.

6. Offer small-group instruction or one-on-one tutoring.

7. Create a work folder or portfolio to show abilities and special needs. “Students may carry samples of their work with them as they change schools to demonstrate to their next teachers their competencies and previous accomplishments.”

Making the community aware of issues pertinent to mobility was also listed in response to this question. The school system should develop a program to make the community and policy makers aware of the inappropriateness of using one-time testing to evaluate schools and teachers in schools with high mobility. Comparing test scores between several years may not be an accurate assessment of the school. “Comparing test scores for a school’s third grade and, three years later, for a school’s sixth grade may not provide an accurate indication of school improvement or decline.” The community should be urged to use assessment measures wisely. “Assessment results must be used proactively to improve teaching and learning rather than to penalize students by misplacing them in remedial or non-challenging courses.”

The panelists indicated that effective public relations between the community and the schools were very important. The school and the community should work together to meet desired goals. When the school makes those improvements, the group recommended that they have a celebration involving the whole community.

Several strategies were listed dealing with different ways of reporting accountability for mobile students. These included:

1. Separate students for accountability by the numbers of days they have been present in the school.

2. Track students by cohort.

3. Establish separate accountability protocols for mobile and less mobile students.

4. Ensure that mobile students are tested.
5. Allow exclusion of students from the accountability system if they have not attended school for a certain number of days.

**Summary of Round One**

The extensive lists of strategies and the depth of the comments showed the commitment of the panel members to this study. Many of the panelists have programs in place at their schools and were willing to share their experiences. This insight allows the reader to determine which strategies might work best in different situations. One concern that was voiced numerous times was the availability of records – for incoming and outgoing students. Many strategies were provided to improve the handling of records. Raising awareness was another continuing issue. Many indicated that if the schools, parents, and community were fully aware of the negative impact of mobility some transition could be prevented. All of the strategies provided the basis of the second round questionnaire.

**Construction and Distribution of Round Two Instrument**

The second questionnaire was a compilation of all strategies given in response to the questions on the first round questionnaire. Responses were not prioritized or categorized in any way. In some instances, the exact wording of the responses was used. In other cases, the researcher summarized or made the suggestion more concise, being careful to leave the intent of the panel member intact. Duplicate strategies were not listed even though all panel members may have suggested them. Many of the same strategies were listed under different questions. For example, the issue of awareness was listed as a strategy that classroom teachers, schools, and systems could use. For this questionnaire, these were repeated. Those items appeared in each section, as applicable, for the round two questionnaire. The entire list of strategies, as contained in the round two questionnaire, is contained in the Appendix C. The panel members were asked if any clarifications were needed or if any other strategies could be added.

The second instrument was sent by e-mail during the last week of January 2001. Panel members were asked to respond within two weeks if there were any questions, clarifications, or additional strategies that were needed before actually prioritizing the strategies in the next questionnaire.
Findings and Analysis of Round Two

No questions were asked or clarifications needed concerning the second questionnaire. All panel members indicated that they understood the strategies and were ready to rank them as to their effectiveness. Additional comments were made by panelists that awareness was an important part of this issue. This is again indicated by the number of strategies suggested to improve awareness of students, parents, teachers, and staff.

Construction of Round Three Instrument

The instrument used for round three was a refinement of the instrument used in round two. Some strategies were combined that addressed the same issue. A tally system was used to determine which responses were listed a number of times. Strategies that were mentioned by several panelists were included in the questionnaire. Panel members were asked to rate the strategy on a scale of 1 – 5, according to effectiveness. A response of “1” indicated that the strategy would have a highly ineffective or highly negative impact. A response of “2” indicated that the strategy would be ineffective or have a negative impact. Marking a “3” on the continuum indicated that the strategy would have no impact at all. A “4” response indicated that the strategy would have a positive impact. A choice of “5” indicated that the strategy would be highly effective or have a highly positive impact. A trial was conducted with a sample of teachers and administrators at a local school to ascertain if instructions were clear. All respondents in the sample indicated that the instructions and strategies listed were clear and concise.

Distribution and Response Rate of the Third Questionnaire

Identical copies of the round three instrument were sent by e-mail within the body of the e-mail and as an attachment to all panel members on February 20, 2001. Five responses to the final questionnaire were returned within the week. Another questionnaire was sent at that time to all panelists who had not corresponded with the researcher. This questionnaire, although identical in wording and format, allowed the panelists to simply click on the box next to the response to indicate their answer to each question instead of typing in the number for their response. Eight responses were sent within the next week. At the beginning of the third week, reminders were again sent with the questionnaire in the body of the e-mail and as an attachment.
Seven members were called. Of these, two had not received the e-mails. These were faxed that day and returned the next day. One panelist had trouble sending e-mail out of the county so that one was also faxed. The panelists who experienced difficulty with e-mail were ones using school or state addresses. The benefits of using multiple forms with identical wording enabled the researcher to obtain a higher response rate, which was considered more important than the possible differences in responses that might have been caused by using multiple methods of delivery. Sixteen responses were returned. This response rate was deemed sufficient to provide the depth of expertise necessary to conclude the study.

Methodology of Content Analysis: Round Three Questionnaire

As the responses were received, data were entered using SPSS for Windows. This program generated reports that indicated the number of responses for each of the choices on each continuum on the scale as well as a percentage of the total represented by responses to each item. Reports were also generated that showed the mean and the standard deviation of the responses for each strategy. Each question was considered separately.

Findings and Analysis of Round Three

This section of the study includes the results of the tabulation of the responses from the panel members ranking the strategies on a scale of 1 – 5 with 5 being the most effective. Each question is listed with the suggested strategies and statistical results summarized for each strategy.

Research Question 1A

What are strategies that classroom teachers might use to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? The statistical data for Research Question 1 are organized in Table 1.

Strategy 1 was to create a booklet with information about classmates. The Delphi Panel ranked this item 14th out of 15 strategies with a mean of 3.56 (SD = 1.15). A ranking of 5.0 was the highest possible ranking. With this ranking, it would appear that this strategy had little support among panel members. However, 50% of the members indicated that the strategy would be effective or highly effective, as indicated by their rankings of either 4 or 5.
Table 1
Strategies for Use by Teachers for Incoming Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>highly ineffective</th>
<th>ineffective</th>
<th>no effect</th>
<th>effective</th>
<th>highly effective</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retrieve records as soon as possible, electronically, if feasible.</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>13 81.3</td>
<td>16 4.81</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign a room buddy to each student.</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>11 68.8</td>
<td>16 4.69</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate the new student into the classroom.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>11 68.8</td>
<td>16 4.63</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the parents at the earliest possible time.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>6 37.5</td>
<td>9 56.3</td>
<td>16 4.50</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use cooperative learning and/or other activities to encourage interaction.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>16 4.44</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have an information packet ready with class rules and procedures.</td>
<td>2 13.3</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>8 53.3</td>
<td>15 4.40</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to other professionals as necessary.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>16 4.38</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a personal journal assignment that helps teachers know the student better and provides a sample of writing skills</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>16 4.13</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>highly ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>no effect</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>highly effective</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use small group instruction or one on one tutoring.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the student prior to placement.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an individual achievement plan for each new student.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When teaching, stand near the student the first week to make sure he/she is on track.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make students and parents aware of the need to stay in one school.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a booklet with information about classmates.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop learning packets that give important background information of key units.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 2 was to have an informational packet ready with class rules and procedures, schedules, field trips. This strategy was ranked sixth of the 15. Analysis revealed a mean of 4.40 (SD = .74). With the exception of one panelist, all chose a response of either effective (4) or highly effective.

Strategy 3 was to suggest that the teacher stand near the new student during the first week to assure that he/she is on track. Panelists ranked this strategy 12th out of 15 in strategies for the classroom teacher. The mean value of the item was 3.75 (SD = .86).

Strategy 4 was to assign a room buddy to each new student. The buddy will introduce the new student to the class, give a tour of building, eat lunch with him/her, etc. The Delphi group asserted that assigning a room buddy would be an effective strategy by ranking it second of the 15 strategies. Responses indicated that 100% of the group selected either effective or highly effective on the scale which resulted in a mean of 4.69 (SD = .48). This strategy was also listed by a majority of panelists in Round One.

Strategy 5 was to create a personal informational journal assignment that helps the teacher know the student better and provides a sample of writing skills. The mean value of this strategy was 4.13 (SD = .96) with a ranking of eighth out of 15. One panelist indicated that this strategy would have a negative impact on the student while 75.1% indicated that it would be effective or highly effective.

Strategy 6 was to develop learning packets that give important background information and activities of key units. This strategy was ranked last of the 15 strategies with a mean of 3.38 (SD = .81) with only one panelists marking the item as highly effective. Many panelists (43.8%) indicated that it would have no effect at all.

Strategy 7 was to make student and parents aware of the need to stay in one school. Panelists ranked this strategy 13th out of 15 with a mean of 3.63 (SD = 1.26). Two participants responded that this strategy would have a highly negative impact on students. The majority (62.5%) stated that it would be effective or highly effective.

Strategy 8 was to use small-group instruction or one-on-one tutoring. The use of small-group instruction or one-on-one tutoring was moderately supported by the Delphi panel with 11 of the 15 members ranking the strategy effective or highly effective. It was ranked ninth out of 15 with a mean value on the scale of 3.94 (SD = .77).
Strategy 9 was to create an individual achievement plan for each new student. This strategy was ranked 11th by the panel with a mean of 3.81 (SD = .91). While one panel member indicated that this strategy would have a negative effect, 62.5% selected effective or highly effective on the scale.

Strategy 10 was to evaluate the student prior to placement in the classroom. Analysis of the data revealed that this strategy was ranked 10th out of 15 strategies for use by the classroom teacher to aid students transferring into the classroom with a mean of 3.88 (SD = 1.02). Two respondents or 12.5% stated that this strategy would have a negative effect on students while 62.5% indicated that it would have an effective or highly effective impact on the student.

Strategy 11 was to look for signs that the student is struggling with classwork or having problems of social adjustment and to refer to other professionals as necessary. Hearty support was given to the idea of referring students to professionals when necessary. Even though the ranking of the means indicated this strategy to be seventh out of 15, 93.8% of the respondents indicated that this strategy was effective or highly effective. The mean value for this item was 4.38 (SD = .62).

Strategy 12 was to work with office personnel to obtain records as soon as possible. The use of electronic communication (telephoning, e-mail, faxes, etc.) was recommended for use when feasible. Panelists also suggested that these records be reviewed as soon as they are available. This strategy received the highest support among panelists with 100% agreement that it would be effective or highly effective. In response to this item, 81.3% selected this strategy as highly effective. It was ranked first out of 15 with a mean value was 4.81 (SD = .40).

Strategy 13 was to use cooperative learning and/or other activities that encourage the students to interact with each other. Responses to this item by the Delphi panel illustrated strong consensus that cooperative efforts will have a positive impact on the classroom. Panelists ranked this item fifth with a mean score of 4.44 (SD = .63).

Strategy 14 was to meet the parents at the earliest possible time in an informal manner to inform them of class expectations, rules, field trips, and other pertinent information. The Delphi group asserted that this strategy would be useful for teachers as indicated by its fourth ranking. Fifteen of the 16 panel members indicated that it would be beneficial for teachers to meet parents of new students. The mean value was 4.50 (SD = .63).
Strategy 15 was to integrate the new student into the classroom – make him/her feel welcome. Panelists also suggested that the teacher schedule a time to talk privately or eat lunch with him/her. There was strong consensus that this strategy would be important to the new student with 93.8% of the panelists agreeing that its use would be effective or highly effective. The mean of 4.63 (SD = .62) ranked this strategy as third in strategies for the classroom teacher to use to ease the transition of students transferring into the classroom.

Research Question 1B

What are strategies that classroom teachers might use to ease the transition of students transferring from the current school? The results of the analysis of this question are in Table 2.

Strategy 1 was to talk about the new school positively. Only one panelist disagreed that talking about the new school positively would be effective or highly effective. This support made this strategy rank number three out of nine with a mean value of 4.50 (SD = .63).

Strategy 2 was to send detailed and up to date records as soon as possible, electronically, if feasible. There was strong consensus that this strategy was the most effective with 86.7% ranking it as highly effective and 13.3% as effective. The mean was 4.87 (SD = .35). Strategies dealing with record accessibility were ranked the highest in each question where it was applicable.

Strategy 3 suggested that the teacher send, with the student, a completed transfer slip with careful attention paid to the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. There was also strong support for the effectiveness this strategy with 81% of the panelists expressing the belief that a transfer slip would have a positive impact on students transferring from the school. This ranked it as second out of nine with a mean of 4.81 (SD = .40).

Strategy 4 suggested that the class become pen pals with students who have left. No panelists ranked this strategy as highly effective. While 50.0% ranked it as effective, the others ranked it as either having no impact or a negative impact. This resulted in the strategy being ranked eighth out of nine with a mean of 3.38 (SD = .72).

Strategy 5: Send extra work papers for the student in case they do not enroll in another school right away. This was the lowest ranked strategy with only 31.3% indicating that the strategy would have any impact. Analysis on the item revealed a mean score of 3.19 (SD = .66).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>highly ineffective</th>
<th>ineffective</th>
<th>no effect</th>
<th>effective</th>
<th>highly effective</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send detailed and up to date records.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give the student a transfer slip with current levels of performance and</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special academic or health needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about the new school positively.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a recommendation for the student including strengths, reading and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>math levels, texts used, and placement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give complete name and address of school to student and parent.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct an “exit interview” with the student.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the class send a note to the student.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become pen pals with students who have left.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send extra work papers for the student.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 6 was to make some time to visit with the departing student in an “exit interview. The panel of experts ranked this as sixth out of nine with a mean of 3.94 ($SD = .99$). The responses were divided across the scale with one respondent marking negative impact, five marking no impact, four selecting effective, and six choosing highly effective.

Strategy 7 was to write a recommendation for the student to give to his/her new teacher. Include the child’s strengths, his/her reading and math levels with the titles of text he/she was using and the placement. There was strong consensus for the effectiveness of this strategy, enabling it to be ranked fourth out of nine with a mean value of 4.50 ($SD = .89$). A majority of panelists, 87.6%, marked it effective or highly effective.

Strategy 8 was to give the complete name and address of the school to the student and the parent. As evidence of the strength of consensus regarding the effectiveness of this strategy, 81.3% of the panelists agreed that giving the complete name and address of the school to the student and parent would help the outgoing student. Again this shows the high support for retrieving records quickly. The mean value for this item was 4.38 ($SD = .80$), and it was ranked fifth out of nine.

Strategy 9 was to have the class send a note to the student at his or her new school. There was division as to the impact of this strategy with 50.0% indicating that the strategy would be effective while 50.0% indicated that it would have no impact or a slightly negative impact. The mean was 3.75 ($SD = .85$), and it was ranked seventh out of nine.

**Research Question 2A**

What are strategies that administrative leaders of the school might use to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? The results of the analysis of the data from this question are in Table 3.

Strategy 1 was to request records electronically from the previous school – grades, shot records, behavior records, and Individual Education Plans. In response to this strategy, 100% of the panel selected a ranking on the scale of either effective or highly effective with 81.3% choosing highly effective. The strong consensus resulted in this strategy being ranked number one out of 24 with a mean of 4.81 ($SD = .40$). Again, in this question, quick retrieval of records is of utmost importance to the panel.
Table 3

Strategies for Use by Administrators for Incoming Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>highly ineffective</th>
<th>ineffective</th>
<th>no effect</th>
<th>effective</th>
<th>highly effective</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request records electronically from the previous school.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide families with a packet of information, including school handbook</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and grade level expectations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make new students feel welcome.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule the school counselor to meet with the student several times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during the first few weeks of school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide translators for parent meetings.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a staff or teacher-mentoring program for new students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign school staff to visit with the incoming student and their parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to acquaint them with features of school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>highly ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>no effect</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>highly effective</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
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<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer the opportunity for after hours (evening or Saturday) parent conferencing.</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>16 4.31</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize and train a group of student volunteer coaches to aid transferring students.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>10 62.5</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>16 4.25</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange for tutoring, if needed, before or after school.</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>6 37.5</td>
<td>16 4.25</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide school newsletter in parent language.</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>6 37.5</td>
<td>16 4.19</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide small group instruction or one on one tutoring, if needed.</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>10 62.5</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>16 4.13</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate student prior to placement in class.</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>16 4.13</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create inviting information packets of extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>9 56.3</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>16 4.06</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a “New Student” group to meet with the counselor.</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>16 4.06</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a policy of open enrollment for clubs and service organizations.</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>16 3.94</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>highly ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>no effect</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>highly effective</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a literacy team to develop an individual plan for the student.</td>
<td>3 31.3</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize school-wide “acquaintance” activities.</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create different multi-age groupings that increase options for placement.</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>7 46.7</td>
<td>3 20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide nametags for all students.</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer before and after school care at the school building.</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>6 40.0</td>
<td>3 20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a Transition Classroom to work with the most mobile population.</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>6 37.5</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize student to provide weekly on-going information booths to explain extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a variety of schedules so that a student may have several reading and/math periods per day.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>9 56.3</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 2 was to provide the school newsletter in parents’ language. Analysis of the data revealed a ranking of 11\textsuperscript{th} out of 24 with a mean of 4.19 (SD = .75).

Strategy 3 was to provide translators for parent meetings. The expert panel expressed the need to provide translators for parent meetings by ranking this strategy 5\textsuperscript{th} in a group of 24 with a mean of 4.50 (SD = .75). Fourteen (87.5\%) stated that it was either effective or highly effective.

Strategy 4 was to make new students feel welcome and let them know that the school staff is available as a resource. Strong support was shown for this strategy, with 100\% of the panel ranking it effective or highly effective. With a ranking of third out of 24, the mean value of this item was 4.63 (SD = .50).

Strategy 5 was to form a Transition classroom in the building to work with the most mobile population. Less support was given to the idea of a transition classroom. Analysis showed that it was ranked 22\textsuperscript{nd} of 24 with a mean of 3.69 (SD = 1.08).

Strategy 6 was to assign school staff to visit with the incoming student and their parents to acquaint them to unique features of their new school and make them feel welcome. The panel agreed that this strategy was important by ranking it seventh out of 24. Only one panelist did not rank it effective or highly effective. Analysis revealed a mean score of 4.44 (SD = .62).

Strategy 7 was to evaluate new students prior to placement in class. The experts on the Delphi panel asserted that new students should be evaluated prior to placement in the classroom. They ranked this strategy 13\textsuperscript{th} out of 24 with a mean of 4.13 (SD = .89). Forty-three percent of the panelists indicated that this strategy was highly effective.

Strategy 8 was to offer before and after school care at the school building. Support was not as great concerning childcare with only 20\% of respondents marking highly effective. This strategy was ranked 21\textsuperscript{st} of 24 with a mean of 3.73 (SD = .88).

Strategy 9 was to provide nametags to all students. Support of this item was split with 8 members stating that nametags for students would be effective and 8 indicating that it would have no impact. This ranked the strategy 20\textsuperscript{th} out of 24 with a mean of 3.75 (SD = .87).

Strategy 10 was to arrange for tutoring, if needed, before or after school. There was strong support for this item with 87.5\% of the panelists ranking it effective or highly effective. Analysis of the data revealed that the mean was 4.25 (SD = .68) and that this item was 10\textsuperscript{th} of 24 in strategies for administrators to use to aid incoming students.
Strategy 11 was to schedule the school counselor to meet with the student several times during the first few weeks of school to monitor his/her transition. The counselor will also check with the classroom teacher to determine if other resources are needed. This strategy received high support with 93.8% of the respondents indicating that the school counselor could make a difference in the first few weeks of the transition. As evidence of the agreement among the panelists, the item received a ranking of fourth and a mean of 4.56 (SD = .62).

Strategy 12 was to organize a “New Student” group to meet with the counselor. Support was not quite so high for a group to meet with the counselor. This is shown by the ranking of 15th of 24 and a mean of 4.06 (SD = .77).

Strategy 13 was to provide families with a packet of information, including a school handbook and a school brochure, stating the aspirations that the school has for students at each grade level. As evidence of the strength of consensus, 100% of the panelists strongly agreed that a packet of information would aid in the transition of new students. The mean value of this item was 4.63 (SD = .50), and it was ranked second of 24.

Strategy 14 was to create different multi-age groupings, i.e., a Kdg/1st/2nd, 1st/2nd/3rd, etc. that would increase options for placement. Even though no respondents indicated that multi-age groupings would have a negative impact, 33.3% indicated that it would have no impact. Sixty-six percent indicated that it would be effective to group students in multi-age classes. Analysis shows a mean value of 3.87 (SD = .74) and a rank of 19 out of 24.

Strategy 15 was to organize a literacy team, consisting of all the teachers involved with the student, to develop an individual plan for the student. The panel of experts ranked this strategy 17th out of 24 with a mean of 3.94 (SD = .77). The majority of respondents (78.8%) did indicate that this it would be effective.

Strategy 16 was to establish a variety of schedules so that a student may have several reading and/or math periods per day, with several different teachers. Responses to this strategy were widespread. While 56.3% stated that there would be no impact, one panelist indicated that this schedule would have a highly negative impact and two indicated that it would be negative. Only four panelists, or 25%, indicated that this schedule would benefit students. This strategy received the weakest support of items with a ranking of 24th out of 24. The mean of 3.13 (SD = 1.03).
Strategy 17 was to arrange small-group instruction or one on one tutoring, if needed. The panel agreed that small-group instruction or one-on-one tutoring would help new students in the transition period. This strategy was ranked 12\textsuperscript{th} out of 24 with a mean of 4.13 (SD = .62).

Strategy 18 was to organize and train a group of student-volunteer coaches to aid students who have transferred. For this item, 93.8\% of the panelists agreed that student-volunteer coaches would be a way to aid those who had transferred. Respondents ranked this strategy ninth of 24 with a mean of 4.25 (SD = .58).

Strategy 19 was to create inviting information packets of extracurricular activities. The mean of 4.06 (SD = .68) illustrated the support of the Delphi panel for this item. It was ranked 14\textsuperscript{th} of 24 of strategies to aid those students transferring into the school.

Strategy 20 was to organize students to provide weekly on-going information booths at lunch where they explain the various extracurricular activities and how to join these activities. Panelists were evenly divided on the impact of this strategy. Eight panelists or 50.0\% indicated that it would have no impact while 50.0\% indicated that it would be effective. Analysis of the data revealed that it ranked 23\textsuperscript{rd} of 24 with a mean of 3.50 (SD = .52).

Strategy 21 was to establish a policy of open enrollment for clubs and service organizations. The panel of experts ranked this strategy 16\textsuperscript{th} of 24 with a mean of 3.94 (SD = .77). Only four panelists or 25.0\% indicated that this would be highly effective.

Strategy 22 was to organize a staff or teacher-mentoring program for new students who might have difficulties academically or socially. As evidence of the strength of consensus, 93.8\% of the panelists agreed that a mentoring program would aid students. Only one of the panelists stated that it would have no impact. This strategy was ranked 6\textsuperscript{th} with a mean of 4.44 (SD = .62).

Strategy 23 was to offer the opportunity for after hours (evening or Saturday) parent conferencing. The Delphi group expressed agreement in their response that after hours parent conferencing would be beneficial for new students. The panel ranked it eighth of 24 with a mean of 4.31 (SD = .79).

Strategy 24 was to organize school-wide “acquaintanceship” activities, such as a “new student” group to meet at lunch. Analysis on this item indicated a mean score of 3.88 (SD = .72) with a ranking of 18\textsuperscript{th} in the group of 24 strategies to aid students transferring into the school.
Research Question 2B

What are strategies that administrative leaders might use to ease the transition of students transferring from the school? The results of the analysis of the data from this question are in Table 4.

Strategy 1 was to establish a policy that assures that records are detailed and up to date. Strong support was again reported for a strategy dealing with records. One hundred percent of the expert panel marked this item effective or highly effective, ranking it equal with strategy 2 in strategies to help outgoing students. Analysis showed a mean of 4.63 (SD = .50).

Strategy 2 was to give the transferring student a transfer slip with careful attention paid to the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. As evidence of the strength of consensus, one hundred percent of the respondents ranked this strategy as effective or highly effective. As a result, the mean value of the item was 4.63 (SD = .50).

Strategy 3 was to schedule the counselor to talk to the student about the reason for the move and, if need be, contact the counselor at the next school. The panel members were evenly split between effective and highly effective giving this strategy a mean value of 4.50 (SD = .52). It was ranked fourth of five strategies.

Strategy 4 was to make extra effort to get the records to the new school as soon as possible, electronically, if feasible. Seventy-five percent of the panel indicated that sending records quickly would be highly effective in benefiting transferring students, which garnered this strategy the number one ranking for these strategies. The other 25% marked effective. This resulted in a mean of 4.75 (SD = .45).

Strategy 5 was to provide information making the parents aware of their rights concerning keeping the student in this school even if they have moved. Only two panelists disagreed that this strategy would be effective or highly effective. It was ranked fifth out of five even though 50% indicate it to be highly effective. Analysis of the data revealed that the mean was 4.38 (SD = .72).
## Table 4

**Strategies for Use by Administrators for Outgoing Students**

| Strategies                                                                 | highly ineffective F |  | ineffective F |  | no effect F |  | effective F |  | highly effective F |  | N | M | SD |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------||--|-------------||--|-----------------||--|---|---|---|
| Send records to the new school electronically if feasible.                | 4                    | 25.0 | 12             | 75.0 | 16           | 4.75 | .45          |
| Give the student a transfer slip with current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. | 6                    | 37.5 | 10             | 62.5 | 16           | 4.63 | .50          |
| Establish a policy that assures that records are detailed and up to date. | 6                    | 37.5 | 10             | 62.5 | 16           | 4.63 | .50          |
| Schedule the counselor to talk to student about the reason for the move and, if needed, call the counselor at new school. | 8                    | 50.0 | 8              | 50.0 | 16           | 4.50 | .52          |
| Provide information making the parents aware of their rights concerning keeping the student in this school even if they have moved. | 2                    | 12.5 | 6              | 37.5 | 8            | 50.0 | 16           | 4.38 | .72 |    |    |    |    |
Research Question 3A

What are strategies that the county/district/state might use to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? The results of the analysis of the data from this question are in Table 5.

Strategy 1 was to have a common student report card throughout the system. Although this strategy was ranked 14th out of 23, seventy-five percent agreed that it would be effective or highly effective which resulted in a mean of 4.25 (SD = 1.00).

Strategy 2 was to encourage staff stability. The panel of experts ranked this item 15th of 23 with a mean of 4.18 (SD = .91).

Strategy 3 was to investigate the availability of federally funded programs for transportation of children to and from school even when they move out of zone. Support was weak for this strategy as shown by the ranking of 21st out of 23. Analysis of the data revealed a mean of 3.88 (SD = .96).

Strategy 4 was to establish consistent entry requirements statewide. Only one panelist disagreed that this strategy was effective or highly effective, with 50% marking it as highly effective. This caused it to be ranked seventh of 23 with a mean of 4.44 (SD = .63).

Strategy 5 was to make entry requirements fairly consistent from state to state. Strong support was also evident for making entry requirements consistent from state to state. Fifty-six percent of the group indicated that this strategy would be highly effective resulting in a ranking of sixth out of 23 with a mean of 4.44 (SD = .73).

Strategy 6 was to establish District Tutoring Centers. This strategy received the weakest support of items in this list of 23 and was ranked 23rd. Analysis revealed a mean of 3.57 (SD = .81).

Strategy 7 was to investigate laws that allow students to stay in the same school even if they move. Support was also weak for this strategy. Panelists ranked it 20th out of 23 although 43.8% indicated that it would be highly effective. This resulted in a mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.03).

Strategy 8 was to work affirmatively to prevent mobility. This strategy was ranked 18th of 23 but still received 75.1% of marks for effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.06 (SD = 1.06).

Strategy 9 was to create a Parent Assistance Center where parents are able to receive information and registration procedures on any school. The Delphi group indicated that this
### Table 5

**Strategies for Use by County or State Systems for Incoming Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>highly ineffective</th>
<th>ineffective</th>
<th>no effect</th>
<th>effective</th>
<th>highly effective</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide funds for schools with high mobility to establish programs that improve the integration of new students into the school.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>12 75.0</td>
<td>16 4.69</td>
<td>16 4.69 .60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish records exchange processes that are quick and complete.</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>10 66.7</td>
<td>16 4.67</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow students to finish the year in the same school that they begin even if they move.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>10 62.5</td>
<td>16 4.50</td>
<td>16 4.50 .82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a program to monitor attendance closely.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>6 37.5</td>
<td>9 56.3</td>
<td>16 4.50</td>
<td>16 4.50 .63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a referral process for students who have problems academically or socially.</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>4 25.0</td>
<td>10 62.5</td>
<td>16 4.44</td>
<td>16 4.44 .73</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Make entry requirements fairly consistent from state to state.</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>5 31.3</td>
<td>9 56.3</td>
<td>16 4.44</td>
<td>16 4.44 .73</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish consistent entry requirements statewide.</td>
<td>1 6.3</td>
<td>7 43.8</td>
<td>8 50.0</td>
<td>16 4.44</td>
<td>16 4.44 .63</td>
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<tr>
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<td>no effect F</td>
<td>effective F</td>
<td>highly effective F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a uniform county/district curriculum.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop or acquire short assessment tests to be used as a means to determine placement.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide professional development for teachers in highly mobile areas.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>81</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with neighboring school districts to provide integrated transition policies.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a system of routinely assessing the past enrollment history of incoming students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>70</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide funding for schools with high mobility to be flexible in scheduling classes.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.25</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a common system-wide report card.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage staff stability.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.91</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop informational programs outlining the consequences of changing schools.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work affirmatively to prevent mobility.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a uniform statewide curriculum.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate laws that allow students to stay in the same school even if they move.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate availability of Federally funded programs for transportation of children who move out of school zone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a website containing information about the district/school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish District Tutoring Centers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
strategy would be effective with 81.3% marking effective or highly effective. One member disagreed, marking that it would have a negative effect. Analysis revealed a mean of 4.13 (SD = .89). It was ranked 16th of the 23 strategies.

Strategy 10 was to provide funds to schools with high mobility to establish programs that improve the integration of new students in a school. Panelists ranked this strategy number one with 75.0% marking highly effective. This resulted in a mean of 4.69 (SD = .60).

Strategy 11 was to establish a uniform county/district curriculum for all subject areas. Strong support was obtained for this strategy with 87.6% of the panelists marking effective or highly effective. Analysis on the item revealed a mean of 4.44 (SD = .73) and a ranking of eighth out of 23.

Strategy 12 was to establish a uniform statewide curriculum. Support was not so high for a uniform statewide curriculum. Only 68.8% indicated that this would be a good strategy to help students adapt in new schools. One panelist marked that it would have a highly negative effect. The mean value was 4.00 (SD = 1.16) with a ranking of 19th out of 23.

Strategy 13 was to provide funding to allow schools with high mobility to be flexible in scheduling multi-age classes, smaller classes, or any variation that meets the needs of the students. Even though this strategy was ranked 13th of 23, 81.3% of the group marked it as effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.25 (SD = .77).

Strategy 14 was to establish records exchange processes that are quick and complete. This strategy was ranked second with 100% of the expert panel marking effective or highly effective. Analysis of the data revealed a mean of 4.67 (SD = .49).

Strategy 15 was to create a website containing information about the district/school. Support was weak for creating a website for information concerning the school. It was ranked 22nd out of 23 with a mean of 3.87 (SD = .99).

Strategy 16 was to develop a program to recognize the importance of school attendance and to monitor attendance closely. A mean of 4.50 (SD = .63) illustrated the strong support of the Delphi panel for this item. With a ranking of fourth, 93.8% indicated that it would aid incoming students.

Strategy 17 was to create a referral process for students who have problems academically or socially. The group also concurred that a referral process would be beneficial by ranking this item fifth out of 23 with a mean of 4.44 (SD = .73).
Strategy 18 was to provide professional development for teachers in highly mobile areas. Strong support was given to the practice of providing professional development for teachers in highly mobile areas with 81.3% of panelists marking this item effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.38 (SD = .81) with a ranking of 10th.

Strategy 19 was to work with neighboring school districts to provide integrated transition policies. The panel members expressed the need for cooperation among school districts. This strategy was marked 11th with a mean of 4.38 (SD = .81).

Strategy 20 was to allow students to finish the year in the same school that they begin even if they move. While one panelist indicated this strategy would have a slightly negative effect, 93.8% indicated that it would benefit students. This ranked the strategy third out of 23 with a mean of 4.50 (SD = .82).

Strategy 21 was to develop informational programs and written materials outlining the consequences of changing schools. Support for this item was varied with marks across the continuum. Two (12.6%) panelists indicated it to have a negative effect while 50% indicated it to be highly effective. The mean was 4.06 (SD = 1.24) with a ranking of 17th.

Strategy 22 was to develop or acquire short assessment tests for reading, math, and writing as a way to determine the appropriate class. This strategy received high support with 81.3% of the panelists marking it as effective or highly effective. Analysis of the data revealed a mean of 4.38 (SD = .81) and a ranking of 9th out of 23.

Strategy 23 was to develop a system of routinely assessing the past enrollment history of incoming students in order to identify such students and target interventions for them. The group concurred that assessing the past enrollment history of incoming students would benefit students and their teachers. It was ranked 12th with 87.6% of the panelists marking effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.31 (SD = .70).

Research Question 3B

What are strategies that the county/district/state might use to ease the transition of students transferring from the school? Results of the data from question 3B are in Table 6.

Strategy 1 was to send records promptly, when requested. As with previous questions concerning records, this strategy was ranked first with 100% of the panelists marking it effective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>highly ineffective F</th>
<th>highly ineffective %</th>
<th>ineffective F</th>
<th>ineffective %</th>
<th>no effect F</th>
<th>no effect %</th>
<th>effective F</th>
<th>effective %</th>
<th>highly effective F</th>
<th>highly effective %</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send records promptly, when requested.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a detailed progress report that the student takes to new school.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a uniform district/county curriculum.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a uniform state curriculum.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow all students to finish the school year in the school they started.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiate a program of “exit interviews” to determine ways the student could stay in same school for the entire year.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop informational programs outlining the benefits of staying in one school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a system of mediation to resolve problems at schools that might result in transfer.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.90</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>no effect F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>effective F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>highly effective F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop an incentive system for transferring students to return books.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.85</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a central storage spot for records of outgoing students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a study to examine the reasons students are leaving the school and address those issues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
or highly effective. Fourteen members of the group or 87.5% marked it as highly effective. The mean was 4.88 (SD = .34).

Strategy 2 was to designate a central storage spot at the district headquarters for records of outgoing students. This strategy was ranked 10th out of 11 by the Delphi group. The mean was 3.88 (SD = 1.26)

Strategy 3 was to allow all children to finish the school year in the school they started. The group concurred that this strategy would benefit students with 81.3% marking in the effective or highly effective range. It was ranked fifth out of 11 with a mean of 4.19 (SD = .91).

Strategy 4 was to develop an incentive system for transferring students to return books since withholding records hampers the correct placement of the student in the next school. This strategy was ranked ninth of 11 with a mean of 3.94 (SD = .85). Seventy-five percent of the panel indicated that this system would help transferring students.

Strategy 5 was to develop a state core curriculum. Ranking this strategy fourth, the panel concurred that a core curriculum would benefit students. Analysis revealed the mean to be 4.18 (SD = 1.11). One member of the group marked that the uniform state curriculum would have a negative effect.

Strategy 6 was to develop a district/county curriculum. While 93.8% of the panel agreed that a core curriculum for the county would help students, one member indicated that it would have a negative impact. This resulted in a ranking of third and a mean of 4.31 (SD = 1.02).

Strategy 7 was to develop informational programs and written materials outlining the benefits of staying in one school. Members of the group marked across the continuum for this strategy. While 75% marked that it would be effective or highly effective, the others marked from highly ineffective to having no effect at all. This resulted in a ranking of seventh out of 11 and a mean of 4.06 (SD = 1.24).

Strategy 8 was to develop a detailed progress report that would accompany the child to the new school. As evidence of the strength of consensus, 100% of the panelists marked that a detailed progress report would benefit transferring students. Analysis showed a mean of 4.63 (SD = .50) and a ranking of second in this group of 11.

Strategy 9 was to assume the responsibility of a study to examine the reasons students are leaving the school and address problems that may make students want to transfer. Although this strategy was ranked last in the group of 11, 56.3% indicated that it would be effective or highly
effective. Twenty-five percent marked that it would have a negative impact. This resulted in a mean of 3.50 (SD = 1.27).

Strategy 10 was to develop a system of mediation to resolve problems at schools that might result in transfer. This strategy received support with 75.1% of the panelists marking effective or highly effective. It was ranked eighth out of 11 with a mean of 4.00 (SD = .90).

Strategy 11 was to initiate a program of “exit interviews” held with counselors, students, and parents to “problem solve” ways in which the student could stay in the same school for the entire year. The experts of the Delphi group asserted that this would be an effective strategy with 75% of them marking effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.06 (SD = .77) with a ranking of sixth.

Research Question 4

What are strategies that the community might use to ease the transition of families from one area to another? Results of the data from question 4 are in Table 7.

Strategy 1 was to establish homeless shelters in the area. This strategy was ranked 11th out of 15 by the Delphi panel. Analysis showed a mean of 4.13 (SD = .81).

Strategy 2 was to establish abuse shelters in the area. Support for this strategy resulted in a ranking of sixth out of 15 with 81.3% of the panel marking either effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.19 (SD = .75).

Strategy 3 was to establish a welcome committee to distribute brochures and/or maps about the school and community. Eighty percent of the group indicted that this committee would aid families in transition. The mean was 4.13 (SD = .74) with a ranking of eighth in 15.

Strategy 4 was to work with the schools to establish family centers that could be a resource for parents and their children. While 25% of the group marked that this would have not impact on families in transition, the remainder of the group indicated differently, ranking it fifth with a mean of 4.19 (SD = .75).

Strategy 5 was to provide training for parents (English classes, volunteer in classroom, tutoring classes). There was strong support for this strategy of providing training for parents with 81.3% marking effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.31 (SD = .79), and it was ranked third.
Table 7

Strategies to be Used by Community Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>highly ineffective</th>
<th>ineffective</th>
<th>no effect</th>
<th>effective</th>
<th>highly effective</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage an increase in safe, quality, affordable housing.</td>
<td>1 6.3 F</td>
<td>1 6.3 F</td>
<td>4 25.0 F</td>
<td>10 62.5 F</td>
<td>16 4.38 F</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage health care providers to be available at affordable prices.</td>
<td>2 12.5 F</td>
<td>6 37.5 F</td>
<td>8 50.0 F</td>
<td>16 4.38 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide training for parents (English or tutoring classes).</td>
<td>3 18.8 F</td>
<td>5 31.3 F</td>
<td>8 50.0 F</td>
<td>16 4.31 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement cooperative efforts among schools, county governments and rental housing to encourage students to remain in one school.</td>
<td>4 25.0 F</td>
<td>5 31.3 F</td>
<td>7 43.8 F</td>
<td>16 4.19 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish family centers to be a resource for parents and their children.</td>
<td>4 25.0 F</td>
<td>5 31.3 F</td>
<td>7 43.8 F</td>
<td>16 4.19 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish abuse shelters.</td>
<td>3 18.8 F</td>
<td>7 43.8 F</td>
<td>6 37.5 F</td>
<td>16 4.19 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the operation of day care/pre-school facilities near schools.</td>
<td>3 18.8 F</td>
<td>7 43.8 F</td>
<td>6 37.5 F</td>
<td>16 4.19 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
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<td>no effect</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>highly effective</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a welcome committee to distribute brochures and/or maps about school.</td>
<td>3 20.0 7 46.7 5 33.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the possibility of using local universities as resources.</td>
<td>3 18.8 8 50.0 5 31.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicize activities available in the community.</td>
<td>3 18.8 8 50.0 5 31.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish Homeless shelters in the area.</td>
<td>3 25.0 6 37.5 6 37.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicize dates and times of local community meetings and encourage parents to become active members of the community.</td>
<td>3 20.0 8 53.3 4 26.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support extra personnel hired to help with mobile students.</td>
<td>4 25.0 7 43.8 5 31.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make educators, students, parents, and other community members aware of the academic and social consequences of mobility.</td>
<td>1 6.3 2 12.5 5 31.3 7 43.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permit the same social workers and other professionals to follow students to new school.</td>
<td>2 12.5 2 12.5 4 37.5 6 37.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There was strong support for this strategy of providing training for parents with 81.3% marking effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.31 (SD = .79), and it was ranked third.

Strategy 6 was to encourage health care providers to be available at affordable prices. This strategy received very strong support from the Delphi panel with 87.5% choosing effective or highly effective. It received a rank of second out of 15 with a mean of 4.38 (SD = .71).

Strategy 7 was to publicize activities available in the community – junior league basketball, soccer, and football. There was less support for the idea of community activities, but 50.0% still indicated that this would be effective. It was ranked 10th out of 15 with a mean of 4.13 (SD = .72).

Strategy 8 was to encourage the operation of day care/pre-school facilities near schools. The group indicated that a day care would be an effective avenue to aid families in transition. This strategy was ranked seventh with a mean of 4.19 (SD = .75).

Strategy 9 was to investigate the possibility of using local universities to provide many resources, i.e. college students being volunteer assistants or the colleges offering masters classes and professional development for staff. The panel agreed that universities would be good resources with 81.3% of them marking effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.13 (SD = .72), and it was ranked ninth out of 15.

Strategy 10 was to implement cooperative efforts among the schools, county governments, and rental housing to facilitate parents’ efforts to keep their children in the same school throughout the school year. (i.e. having leases come due in summer instead of mid school year). Even though 25% of the group indicated that these efforts would have no impact, 43.8% marked that they would be highly effective. This caused the strategy to be ranked fourth and have a mean of 4.19 (SD = .83).

Strategy 11 was to support transition classrooms or extra staff members who are hired strictly to help with these children. There was less support for this strategy with only 31.3% marking highly effective and 25% marking that it would have no impact. The mean was 4.06 (SD = .77), and the ranking was 13th out of 15.

Strategy 12 was to make educators, students, parents, and other community members aware of the academic and social consequences of student mobility. Panel members marked across the continuum for this strategy. Two members marked that this would have a negative
impact on families while 75.1% indicated that it would be effective or highly effective. It was ranked 14th out of 15 and had a mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.21).

Strategy 13 was to permit the same social workers and other professionals who have worked with the student to follow them to new schools. Less support was given for this strategy – ranking it last in the list of strategies. Only 62.5% indicated that it would be helpful to permit the same social workers to continue to work with students when they move. The mean was 4.00 (SD = 1.09).

Strategy 14 was to encourage an increase in safe, quality, affordable housing. Panelists ranked this strategy number one of 15 aimed at helping families in transition. With 87.5% marking effective or highly effective, it had a mean of 4.38 (SD = 1.09).

Strategy 15 was to publicize dates and times of local community meetings and encourage parents to become active members of the community. Although 80% of the group indicated that this would be beneficial, it was ranked 12th out of 15 strategies. The mean was 4.07 (SD = .70).

Research Question 5

What are strategies that have been effective for schools to use in dealing with student mobility as it affects accountability? Results of the data from question 5 are in Table 8.

Strategy 1 was to establish good public relations with the community. A high measure of consensus was shown among the Delphi panel by the fact that 100% of the group marked effective or highly effective for this strategy. It was the number one strategy concerning mobility as it affects accountability. The mean was 4.76 (SD = .49).

Strategy 2 was to have BIG celebrations on improvements. Less support was given to this strategy, causing it to be ranked 11th out of 14. Only 60% indicated it to be effective with the other 40% marking no impact at all. The mean was 3.87 (SD = .83).

Strategy 3 was to provide data on the individual school achievements. Panelists were evenly divided on this strategy with 33.3% marking each of the data points of no impact, effective, and highly effective. The mean was 4.00 (SD = .84), and it was ranked ninth out of 14.

Strategy 4 was to share all diagnostic and other student performance data, with parent permission, between the sending and receiving school. Again, 100% of the group marked effective or highly effective on this strategy. It was ranked second with a mean of 4.67 (SD = .52).
Table 8

Strategies Concerning Mobility as it Relates to Accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>highly ineffective F</th>
<th>ineffective F</th>
<th>no effect F</th>
<th>effective F</th>
<th>highly effective F</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish good public relations with the community.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share all diagnostic and performance data between the sending and receiving school.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediately evaluate the student’s strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a program to make the community aware of the inappropriateness of using one-time testing to evaluate schools and teachers in schools with high mobility.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer small group instruction or one on one tutoring.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish developmentally appropriate grouping for students at all grade levels in addition to heterogeneous grouping.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>highly ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>no effect</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>highly effective</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>SD</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish consistency in curriculum and testing across the county and</td>
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<tr>
<td>state.</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>6 40.0</td>
<td>7 46.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a work folder to show abilities and special needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 20.0</td>
<td>7 46.7</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide data on individual school achievements.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow exclusion of students from the accountability system if they have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not attended school for a certain number of days.</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>3 20.0</td>
<td>4 26.7</td>
<td>6 40.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have BIG celebrations for improvements.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 40.0</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>4 26.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test all students, but establish separate accountability metrics for</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stable and mobile students.</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>3 20.0</td>
<td>7 46.7</td>
<td>3 20.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track student by cohort.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 13.3</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>7 46.7</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus more school resources on grades that will be taking the state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment tests.</td>
<td>4 26.7</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>2 13.3</td>
<td>7 46.7</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 5 was to immediately evaluate the student’s strengths and weaknesses. This strategy was ranked third out of 14 of strategies concerning mobility and accountability. Ninety-three percent marked effective or highly effective. Analysis of the data revealed a mean of 4.40 ($SD = .63$).

Strategy 6 was to establish developmentally appropriate grouping for students at all grade levels in addition to heterogeneous grouping. While there was strong consensus for this item, only 33.3% indicated that it would highly effective. It was ranked sixth out of 14 strategies with a mean of 4.27 ($SD = .59$).

Strategy 7 was to focus more of school resources on the students in the grades that will be taking the state assessment tests. This strategy received the least support of these strategies concerning mobility and accountability. Five panelists or 33.4% indicated that it would have a negative impact and only 6.7% marked that the impact would be highly effective. The mean was 3.00 ($SD = 1.41$).

Strategy 8 was to offer small-group instruction or one-on-one tutoring. There was strong support for this strategy with 100% marking effective or highly effective. Analysis showed that the mean was 4.33 ($SD = .49$) and that it was ranked fifth.

Strategy 9 was to track students by cohort. Less support was given to tracking students with only 6.7% marking highly effective and 13.3% marking that this strategy would have a negative impact. With a mean of 3.47 ($SD = .83$), it was ranked 13th out of 14.

Strategy 10 was to test all students, but establish separate accountability metrics for stable and mobile students. A variety of opinions were expressed regarding this strategy, with 13.4% indicating it to have a negative impact, but 20% marking highly effective. It was ranked 12th of 14 with a mean of 3.67 ($SD = 1.11$).

Strategy 11 was to create a work folder to show abilities and special needs. Eighty percent of the group indicated that this strategy would be effective making it rank eighth out of 14. The mean was 4.13 ($SD = .74$).

Strategy 12 was to establish consistency in curriculum and testing across the county and state. As evidence of the agreement among the panelists, this item received a ranking of seventh with 86.7% marking effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.27 ($SD = .88$).

Strategy 13 was to allow exclusion of students from the accountability system if they have not attended school for a certain number of days. While 67.7% of the Delphi group marked
that this strategy would be effective highly effective, 13.4% indicated that it would have a negative impact. The mean was 3.87 (SD = 1.25). This strategy was ranked 10th out of 14.

Strategy 14 was to develop a program to make the community aware of the inappropriateness of using one-time testing to evaluate schools and teachers in schools with high mobility. That this strategy would be beneficial was strongly supported by the Delphi group with 93.4% marking effective or highly effective. The mean was 4.40 (SD = .63) with a ranking of fourth out of 14.

Summary

This chapter contained the analysis of the data used to determine the most effective strategies to be used by the educational community to ease the transition of students. The 116 strategies were organized within five questions. Three of these questions had two parts, therefore, the questionnaire was treated as having eight parts. The panelists were asked to rank each strategy on a Likert scale of 1 – 5 with “1” being highly ineffective to “5” being highly effective. Each section was analyzed separately to determine the best strategies for the classroom, the school, the system, and the community.

Chapter six contains the discussion of the analysis and conclusions of the study. Recommendations for practice and for further study are also included.
CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of the Study

A complete description of the Delphi Technique used in the study was contained in Chapter 3. The history, applications, methods of study, and criteria for use were discussed, as was the criteria of selecting the Delphi Panel. Chapter 4 contained a discussion of the selection of the Delphi Panel and the analysis of the data for the five questions asked of the panel in Round 1, 2, and 3. Round 1 asked the panel open-ended questions concerning strategies that would benefit students, classrooms, school systems, and communities where families are in transition. Panelists listed strategies or programs that had been successful in their situations. Round 2 was a compilation of those strategies. The Delphi group was asked to add to or clarify items in the list. Those results are included in Chapter 4.

The questionnaire for Round 3 was constructed from strategies that were listed by two or more panel members. Panel members ranked the strategies on a Likert scale of 1 – 5, with 5 representing most effective. Analysis of the data revealed that the panel expressed agreement in varying degrees concerning the strategies that would be effective to be used in different situations.

This chapter develops those expert opinions into conclusions and recommendations using the five research questions to focus the discussion. It should be noted that the Delphi Technique does not endeavor to produce strategies that are statistically proven to work but rather to show the perceptions of the expert panel of the strategies that are judged to be successful. It should also be noted that the panelists were not asked to rank the strategies as to the best strategy of the list but merely to rank them as to their effectiveness. The strategies were ranked according to their means for comparison purposes.

Research Question 1A Conclusions

What are strategies that have been effective for classroom teachers to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? According to the Delphi panel, the most effective strategy to aid classroom teachers would be quick retrieval of records. It is interesting to note
that record keeping, in some form, was mentioned in answer to all five questions. Complete records would not only be useful for the initial placement, but would also aid the teacher in determining plans within the classroom. There were many narrative comments concerning this strategy and its importance. Panelists noted that it was especially important for records to arrive in a timely manner in order to more effectively serve students with special academic and/or health needs.

There was strong consensus from the panel and the studies in the literature review that the assignment of a “room buddy” is an effective strategy. This strategy was suggested by more different studies than any other. Likewise, it was suggested by most panel members to have a “buddy” for each new student. Members of the group suggested that this “buddy” introduce the new students to others, give tours of the school, eat lunch with him/her for a few days, and, generally, be a friend. This led to another highly effective strategy – integrating the new student into the classroom. Panel members agreed that teachers should make the new student an integral part of the class. This can be accomplished by adding his/her name to all charts and lists, assigning duties and books, and, overall, making the new student feel a welcome part of the class. There was also consensus that teaching techniques such as cooperative learning would encourage the new student to interact with the other classmates. A narrative note was made concerning the fact that while teachers should integrate the students into the classroom as quickly as possible, cultural differences must be considered as well. Cultural and/or individual differences might make strategies that are effective for some students less effective for others.

The members of the panel agreed that teachers should meet parents of new students soon after enrollment. Comments were made that meeting the parents on the day of enrollment was not as helpful as meeting the parents after a few days when the teacher has had a chance to observe the student. The teacher should, however, be informed of any special needs on the day of enrollment.

A packet of information with rules and procedures should be ready for new students, according to the Delphi group. This packet would contain information that would help the child to know the rules, regulations, and procedures of the classroom and the school. Dress codes, field trips, beginning and dismissal times, and homework policies should be addressed.

The panel recommended that teachers should refer new students to other professionals as necessary. It was noted that students come from many different backgrounds and have
experienced many situations; therefore, the teacher cannot be expected to deal with the student alone. Referral might result from information found in the record in conjunction with observations made and documented by the teacher during the child’s enrollment.

These strategies were ranked the most effective by the Delphi panel for use by the classroom teacher with students transferring into the classroom. While many others were suggested, analysis showed that panelists agreed that these strategies would be the most useful to classroom teachers in providing an effective transition for mobile students.

**Research Question 1B Conclusions**

What are strategies that have been effective for classroom teachers to ease the transition of students transferring from one school to another? There was strong consensus that the sending of detailed and up-to-date records quickly would be an effective strategy to aid the transferring student and the new school. In fact, the consensus was also great for the student to take a transfer slip that indicated current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. In the narrative, there was discussion whether the classroom teacher would complete this transfer slip or if it would be the responsibility of the office personnel. Many of the Delphi panel members stated that the teachers should write a recommendation for the student including strengths, reading and math levels, texts used, and placement. Regardless of the format, there was consensus among the panel that the new classroom teacher would be more adept in planning for this new student if records were readily available.

While a majority of panelists agreed that the teacher should talk about the new school positively when the student is moving, they commented that many times they learn that the students had moved only when a request for records arrives at the school. In such cases, there is often no time for closure or goodbye; the student is just gone. Many stated that this situation is difficult for remaining students as well as those who move.

**Research Question 2A Conclusions**

What are strategies that have been effective for schools to ease the transition of students transferring into the school? As evidence of the high level of consensus on the availability of records, this strategy was again the number one choice of the panel members. Many even suggested that records should be sent electronically, if possible. While some form of record
keeping strategy was the number one strategy suggested by panelists in response to five out of six questions directly related to schools, it was not widely mentioned in the studies in the review of literature.

Panel members not only expressed that schools should have student information but also agreed that parents should have abundant information concerning the school. Comments were made that this information should not be limited to school policies, rules, and procedures but should include expectations and goals for each grade level.

Many strategies were suggested that the researcher grouped together as “making new students welcome.” The panel agreed this was a highly effective strategy for the school staff and faculty to use to aid the new student in transition. In addition to the information mentioned above, parents and students should be given a tour of the school with unique features cited. Students should be encouraged to become a part of the school by joining organizations, teams, or clubs. Although strategies such as “New Student” groups and “Acquaintance” activities did not receive the high ranking of some other strategies, many panelists stated that these were important. In addition, parents should be made to feel welcome and needed as a vital part of the team. The Delphi group stressed the importance of the availability of a translator for conferences as a way to make new parents feel welcome.

Panel members indicated by their responses that counselors could have an impact upon the smooth transition of students into the new school. They may be a friendly face or an advisor or someone to talk to if a problem arises. The group also suggested a staff or teacher-mentoring program to aid new students both socially and academically.

In Round 1 of the survey, many panelists suggested that students should always be evaluated before placement. There was even discussion in the narrative of who would evaluate the new students. Some suggested a special person, called a transition coordinator; others suggested the classroom teacher would assess. However, there was not consensus on this item in the final questionnaire.

Availability of tutoring or small-group instruction also received a high ranking. Many of the Delphi panel members mentioned in the narrative that students were frequently grade levels behind their peers. Some even suggested multi-age classes or developmentally appropriate classes, but the group did not reach consensus on these items.
Research Question 2B Conclusions

What are strategies that have been effective for schools to ease the transition of students from one school to another? There was a high level of consensus among the Delphi panel members concerning strategies for use by school staff for students transferring from the school. The group expressed by their responses that schools should not only send records quickly, but that they should be detailed and up to date. A transfer slip with current levels of performance and special academic or health needs received high marks once again.

For the first time in the questionnaire, there was consensus that the counselor would discuss the reason for the move and options available to prevent the move. While awareness of the negative impact of mobility was mentioned frequently in Round One, this is the first time in Round Three that the group reached consensus on an awareness strategy. Because there was considerable mention in Round 1 concerning the person responsible for discussing the negative impact of mobility with parents and students, the consensus in these responses may be due to the fact that the members felt it was not a duty of the classroom teacher, but, rather, one that was best handled in the administrative or counselor’s office.

Research Question 3A Conclusions

What are strategies that have been effective for the county/district/state to ease the transition of students from one school to another? There was strong consensus among the Delphi panel concerning availability of funds to establish programs to improve the integration of new students into the school. Consensus was reached on several such programs. Some members suggested special programs, such as multi-age or developmentally appropriate classes, tutoring – before, during, and after school, and parent assistance centers. Special reading programs were also suggested in order to bring students to grade level in reading. However, there was greater consensus for smaller class size than the multi-age or developmentally appropriate classes because this would not be removing the students from their classroom peers. Respondents showed strong support for a referral system to recommend students to the above-mentioned academic programs or to such programs for students who may have problems with social adjustment. The panel agreed that a proactive stance on attendance was needed. Hearty support was also given for professional development programs for schools with high mobility rates. Panel members indicated that teachers need to be trained to deal with the special issues that
mobile students face daily. This is in agreement with a number of studies from the review of literature.

Record exchange again received strong support. In order to simplify this program, panel members stated that consistent entry requirements across the state and nation would help students who are moving from school to school. A system to routinely assess records received strong support, with members commenting that frequent moves were good indicators of future problems.

The Delphi panel indicated support for a policy to allow students to remain in the school they have been attending, even if they move. Most suggested that transportation would be the responsibility of the parents in these cases. Fewer members of the group suggested the system work with other systems to provide transportation for the remainder of that school year. It was even suggested that federal funds might be available for such endeavors.

**Research Question 3B Conclusions**

What are strategies that have been effective for the county/district/state to ease the transition of students transferring from the school? The issue of records returned to the top of the list as panel members identified strategies for the system to consider in assisting students who transfer from the schools. There was almost as strong a consensus for a detailed report to be sent with the student to the new school. Members suggested this report contain not only grades but also placement in reading and math and any specific needs of the student - academic, health, or social. In addition, the panel members agreed that an incentive system to encourage transferring students to return books to the previous school would be beneficial. When the previous school holds records to obtain books, the new school has no information to work with in planning a program for this new student. Most members of the Delphi panel indicated that a central storage facility for records would be advantageous. However, some wrote in the narrative that this might just become an additional step for obtaining records since most requests come directly to the school and would then have to be forwarded to the central storage facility.

According to the consensus of the panel, a uniform county and state curriculum would benefit students who transfer. Panelists remarked numerous times of situations such as students who transferred from one county or state to another and found that a major topic, such as multiplication, had been introduced the previous year at that school.
Strategies concerning awareness received consensus as several of these were ranked highly. The expert group recognized the fact that students would be more likely to succeed if they stayed in the same school all year. There was consensus on several of these strategies: 1) to allow all students to finish the school year in the school they started; 2) to initiate a program of “exit interviews” to determine ways the student might stay in the same school for the entire year; 3) to develop a system of mediation to resolve problems at schools that might result in transfer; and 4) to conduct a study to examine the reasons students are leaving the school and address those issues. Consensus was also received on the idea of developing informational programs outlining the benefits of staying in one school.

Research Question 4 Conclusions

What are strategies that have been effective for the community to use to ease the transition of families from one area to another? The Delphi panel showed strong consensus on many strategies that communities could use to effectively acclimate new families into the area. Number one on the list was suggesting that the community leaders address the issue of safe, quality, affordable housing. The panel’s consensus regarding this topic confirms what was found and reported in the review of literature; that the issue of safe, quality, affordable housing is frequently given as a major reason families move. Families move for economic reasons, usually pertaining to employment, whether it is the loss of the job, promotion, or changing locations of employment. If other housing is not available in the school area, students must change schools. Several panel members from large urban areas commented in the Round 1 portion of the study that communities and owners of large housing complexes were working together in making leases come due for renewal in the summer months rather than using the calendar year. If families choose to move at that time, it would not be as disruptive in the school life of the child. Panel members also suggested that the community should be made aware of the boundaries of the school zone. In this way, parents who must move may be able to find housing in the same school area.

Evidence showed the panel agreed that parents who are involved in the community would stay in that community. There was consensus that community leaders should establish a welcome committee to distribute brochures and/or maps about the community, should publicize dates and times of local community meetings and activities, and should encourage parents to
become active members of the community. The panelists also asserted that the community should offer the opportunity for parents to obtain training, such as in English.

Responses indicated that the Delphi panel agreed that communities should establish homeless and/or abuse shelters in different areas so children in these situations can remain in their school. In Round 1 of the study, it was mentioned that in some large urban areas, students in a homeless situation have the right to remain in their schools even if they have to live in another area in a shelter. Transportation issues were addressed in that some federal funds may be available to offset costs or that some school systems may split the costs of transportation. The expert group gave strong support to the possibility of using a local university as a resource in the community, both to help parents and the school. Narrative remarks were made suggesting that students from the university could tutor students or parents or that the university could be a resource for professional development for teachers.

A further area of consensus was the availability of day care facilities near the school. Again the committee emphasized that if the family needs are met in the community, they will remain in that community if possible and, therefore, the children can remain in the same school.

Research Question 5 Conclusions

What strategies have been effective in dealing with student mobility as it affects accountability? Analysis of the data for this question revealed a strong consensus that the Delphi panel agreed that the school should develop good public relations with the community. In this way the community will be aware of the mobility rate for the school and the issues that surround a school with a high mobility rate. Consensus was almost as high for a program to make the community aware of the inappropriateness of using one-time testing to evaluate schools and teachers in schools with high mobility. In the narrative of Round 1, some panel members commented that the third grade might be a totally different group of students than was at the school three years before in first grade and that any comparison or indication of “progress” was, therefore, inappropriate. For that reason, longitudinal studies would not be a reliable or valid means of measuring student growth. Even yearly scores may be affected when students move in or out in the weeks just prior to testing.

Again the panel ranked records high when indicating that schools should share all diagnostic and performance data for students who transfer. In this way the receiving school will
not spend time evaluating the student again. There was consensus, however, that students should be evaluated immediately to determine strengths and weakness. From the results of the evaluation, students could be placed in remediation programs in order to have special needs addressed in a timely manner. The group supported small-group instruction, one-on-one tutoring, and developmentally appropriate grouping for students at all grade levels in addition to heterogeneous grouping.

In response to other items in this study the panel had not reached a high level of consensus on the strategy of evaluating students. In Round 1, many panelists mentioned that students should be tested immediately, even before placement. Others indicated that teachers should do this in the classroom, but that all incoming students should be tested to determine their performance levels. There was even mention that the system should have the responsibility to acquire the testing materials. However, until this point in the Round 3 questionnaire, testing has not been a strategy that received a high ranking.

As in previous responses, the panel did reach consensus that consistency in the curriculum and testing across the county and state would help the student in a state-testing situation. Approximately one third of the group disagreed with the premise of excluding students from the accountability system who have not attended the school for a certain number of days. That same number disagreed with establishing separate accountability metrics for non-mobile and mobile students. Most members commented in Round 1 that all students should be tested even if they would not be included in the accountability system.

Implications of the Study

The researcher found it interesting to note that the Delphi Panel listed many strategies concerning promoting the awareness of the impact of mobility in Round One. However, in Round Three, the strategies ranked the highest were of a more practical and immediate nature. The quick and efficient transfer of records was of high priority. Sending these records with the students when they move was ranked high on the strategy list, even though, realistically, the Panel members noted that, in a majority of cases, the teacher and school know that the student has moved when a request of records arrives from another school.

Many strategies were listed that would require no change in policy, no outlay of finances, just a caring, compassionate school faculty and staff. Immediately making the student
welcome and a part of the school environment costs no money. Neither does the practice of having a packet of information concerning the school and the classroom available, putting the new student’s name on charts and bulletin boards, taking time to talk to him or her individually, or assigning a classroom “buddy.”

Again, while making parents aware of the negative impact of mobility on student’s education is a worthwhile goal of the school community, the hard truth is that parents must be able to earn a living and find affordable housing in the community. If these needs cannot be met, the family will move. This will happen in spite of the fact that the parent may be somewhat aware of the negative impact on the student’s education, but the basic needs, food, housing, clothing, will be considered first. This leaves the educational community to deal with these issues on a day to day basis. Many strategies have been given by the Delphi Panel to aid in this endeavor.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

As a result of this study, the following recommendations are offered for consideration.

A study is recommended to determine a uniform definition of mobility. Some systems determine mobility from the fact that the student did or did not begin and end the school year in the same school. Others count the number of schools in a certain number of years. Still others determine mobility as to the number of days present in a particular school. A uniform definition would allow educators to compare the statistics concerning mobility, the impact of mobility, and strategies to alleviate this impact.

Development and testing of specific intervention strategies to determine the best possible means to address mobility is the second recommendation. While this study has suggested many strategies, none of these have been tested in a controlled environment to determine which strategies might have the most impact on children’s education.

Addressing the issue of mobility as it relates to accountability of schools and teachers is a third recommendation. Schools must be accountable for the education of students, but different criteria should be used for mobile and non-mobile students. These standards could be addressed in a study to determine the most effective and fair methods of evaluating students, teachers, and schools.
Additionally, a study to determine the most efficient means to transfer records of students would be beneficial. According to the Delphi Panel, the immediate availability of records would have a major impact on the education of the transferring student – not only in initial placement, but also in the day-to-day expectations.

Further research on the impact that homelessness of children has on education is another issue. An increasing number of children in the United States do not have a permanent home. This study barely acknowledged the impact that these students have on the educational system or the impact that their homeless state has on their education. Research should be considered that would ascertain the most effective means to work with these children and their families.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE DELPHI PANEL

Hello,

I enjoyed talking with you today. Let me tell you more about my study and myself. I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. Sevier County, where I am an assistant principal at Pigeon Forge Middle School, has a transient rate of over 25%. For this statistic, a student is transient if he/she does not begin and end the school year at the same school. Our school has many students who have attended as many as six schools by the fifth grade. Since we are located at the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains in a tourist mecca, many people come to the area in the spring, work though the summer and fall, and leave during the winter.

I have done research studies that show that this mobility does affect overall GPA, reading and math scores on the Tennessee Comprehensive Testing Program, discipline, and attendance. For my dissertation, I will use the Delphi Technique to determine the best strategies to use to lesson the effects of this mobility of students. That is why I need your help. I propose to use the following procedure:

Persons who have studied, worked, or been involved with the education of mobile students will answer a questionnaire asking about the best strategies to use to lesson the effects of mobility on the student, the classroom, and the school system and return it to me. I will compile all the strategies from the panel and return them for refinement or additions. When this list is complete, the panel will rank the strategies on a scale of 1 – 5 as to their effectiveness in their professional opinion.

After these are returned to me, a list of the best strategies will be compiled. I will send you a copy of the results. I will use this not only for my dissertation, but to help our county to combat the effects of mobility.

I greatly appreciate your help and expertise. Also, if you know of others who might be willing to share information, please send their names and e-mail addresses.

Thank you, Kaye Thomas
Dear Delphi Panel Members,

Thank you, again, for agreeing to work with me on my study in search of strategies to lessen the negative effects of transience or mobility. It is becoming even more apparent that programs must be established to work with these students who move from one state to another, and also those who just move across town. The mobility rate in our school has risen since I began my preliminary studies on this topic. Of course, I am eager to complete the research for my dissertation, but I am also earnestly desirous to find those strategies that will help these students to be successful in their move from one school to another.

In this first questionnaire, please list any strategy that you have found to be helpful. I realize that all strategies will not work in all situations. If you did not find a strategy to be helpful in one case, but successful in another, list it with a note concerning the circumstances since there are panel members from across the United States. Anecdotes or success stories on those strategies that have proven to be most effective for you would be wonderful.

When these questionnaires are returned to me, I will compile a list of all strategies suggested. This entire list will be returned to you for refinement or clarification. When that is done, I will ask you to rank the effectiveness of the strategies. My goal, as I stated as the purpose of my study, is to determine what strategies the educational community can use to lessen the negative effects of mobility.

Sincerely,

Kaye Thomas
Strategies to Lessen the Negative Effects of Mobility

1. What are strategies that have been effective for classroom teachers to ease the transition of students from one school to another? (Please use as much space as needed.)
   - Incoming students
   - Outgoing students

2. What are strategies that have been effective for schools to ease the transition of students from one school to another?
   - Incoming students
   - Outgoing students

3. What are strategies that have been effective for the county/district/state to ease the transition of students from one school to another?
   - Incoming students
   - Outgoing students

4. What are strategies that have been effective for the community to utilize to ease the transition of families from one area to another?

5. What strategies have been effective in dealing with student mobility as it affects accountability?

Return this questionnaire to me via e-mail at ThoKaye17@aol.com or to Kaye Thomas, 1470 Chapman Highway, Sevierville, TN 37876.
Hello, Delphi Panel Members,

Below is a list of all strategies suggested. They are in no particular order. I have attempted to list strategies only once although many of them were listed by each of you. Thank you again for the completeness in which you have answered the questions.

Please e-mail me with any questions or clarifications by January 30, 2001. At that time, I will send the questionnaire in which you will rank the strategies as to their effectiveness. Thank you again for your willingness to share.

Kaye
1. What are strategies that have been effective for classroom teachers to ease the transition of students from one school to another?

**Incoming students**
- Have students in each class create a booklet with information about the class.
- Have Open House at the beginning of each year.
- Schedule tours of the school.
- Assigning a room buddy to each new student. Buddy takes new student on tour of school, eats lunch with them, plays with them at recess, and introduces them to fellow students and school routines.
- Always keeping extra desk in the room ready for new students.
- Using good judgment on how much emphasis to place on the new student coming into the room. Sometimes a lot and sometimes just going on with little notice.
- Doing a personal interview with the new student. Taking the time to sit down with the student privately and let them know you care is time well spent. Staff member may eat lunch with them.
- Assigning an assistant to that student or group of new students.
- Working on an individual achievement plan for that student. Doing diagnostic work to find the student’s strengths and weaknesses immediately is invaluable in meeting the student’s needs.
- Evaluate the student prior to placement in classroom.
- Keeping up to date records on each student. Being relentless in working with office personnel to get records from the sending school to the receiving school as soon as possible. This is especially true with special needs students, including those with Special Ed and 504 programs and other health concerns.
- Personal communication (telephoning, e-mail, faxes, notes, etc.)
- Give school supplies or clothes if needed.
- Cooperative learning activities and other activities that get the students interacting with each other are beneficial.
- Meeting the parent at the earliest possible time in an informal manner is valuable.
- Small group instruction or one on one tutoring.
- Make students and parents aware of the need to stay in one school. If they must move, provide them with resources to move with as few obstructions as possible.
- Incorporate the new student into the classroom – make him/her feel welcome.
- Develop learning packets that give important background information and activities of key units so that when a student comes in the middle of a unit they can try to catch up.
- Create a personal informational journal assignment. Develop a list of 5 to 10 personal questions that the student can answer in two pages. This will not only help the teacher know the student better but also provide a sample of writing skills.
- Create a reading, math, and writing assessment test.
- Review past history as soon as possible.
- Meet with the parent to inform them of class expectations and to discuss the hazards of changing school midyear.
- When teaching, stand near the new student during the first week to make sure they are on track.
Look for signs that the student is struggling with the classwork or having problems of social or psychological adjustment. Refer to other professionals as necessary.

Have an informational packet ready with class rules and procedures, schedules, field trips, etc.

**Outgoing Students**

- If the teacher knows where they are going, talk about the new place positively.
- Sending records as soon as possible, electronically, if possible.
- Completing a student transfer slip with careful attention paid to the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. Send this with the student.
- Keeping records detailed and up to date.
- Sending extra work papers for the student so if they do not enroll in another school right away they will have something to work on.
- Taking some time to visit with the departing student in an “exit format” proves to be helpful so that they leave with good memories of a caring teacher.
- Write a recommendation for the student to give to his new teacher. Include the child’s strengths, his reading and math levels with the titles of text he was using and the placement.
- Give complete name and address of school to student and parent.
- Make special cards with address and phone numbers of the students so that the student can keep in touch.
- Have class send a note to the student at his new school.
- Become pen pals with students who have left.

2. **What are strategies that have been effective for schools to ease the transition of students from one school to another?**

**Incoming students**

- Call the previous school for information---shot records, behavior, IEP's, etc.
- Have a Transition Coordinator, hired with Federal Homeless funds, that meets with the highly transient parents and student to ease their transition into our school.
- Give them their first school uniform and let them know that we will help them in any way possible.
- Form a Transition classroom in the building. (The classroom works strictly with the transient students who live at the homeless shelter and motels. Students are tested and brought as up to date as possible before placing them in the regular classroom.) By having a Transition classroom staff, the school has someone who can track down student cumulative folders, shot records, past history reports from previous schools, etc.... This helps ease the burden from the secretary who already has to deal with the records from the remaining school population, plus helps give the teacher some background info on the child, which they would not have time to research themselves.
- Assigning school staff to visit with the incoming student and their parents to acquaint them to unique features of their new school and make them feel welcome is time well spent.
- Assess their reading level the first day they arrive or at the earliest possible time.
- Be a student advocate and source of reliable information.
- Have a welcoming attitude.
- Arrange for tutoring, if needed, before or after school.
• The school counselor meets with the student several times during the first few weeks of school to monitor his/her transition. Counselor also checks with the classroom teacher to determine if other resources are needed.
• At the beginning of the school year, form a “New Student” group to meet with the counselor.
• Provide families with a packet of information including a school handbook and a school brochure stating the aspirations that the school has the student at each grade level.
• Have different multi-age groupings i.e., a Kdg/1st/2nd, 1st/2nd, or 1st/2nd/3rd, etc. This increases options exponentially for an optimal placement.
• Once a child is placed, a literacy team, consisting of all the teachers involved with the student, develops an individual plan for the student.
• Establish a variety of schedules so that a student may have several reading and/or math periods per day, with several different teachers.
• Arrange small group instruction or one on one tutoring.
• Create and train a corps of student volunteer coaches who aid students who have transferred.
• Create inviting information packets of extracurricular activities.
• Organize students to provide weekly on-going information booths at lunch where they explain the various extracurricular activities and how to join.
• Have an open enrollment for clubs and service organizations.
• Provide a “new student” group to meet at lunch.
• Provide after hours (evening or Saturday) parent conferencing.
• Provide school-wide “acquaintanceship” activities.
• All students wear nametags.
• Have a staff or teacher-mentoring program for new students who might have difficulties academically or socially.
• Provide “Question Boxes” in which students may place questions about the school
• Assembly programs
• Offer before and after school care.

Outgoing students

• Call the other school if there are issues.
• Organize a Transition staff to work on the incoming records. This helps assure that the outgoing records will be as complete as possible.
• Transition staff keeps names and numbers from locating the info from the previous school or schools and they can pass that along to the next school.
• The staff can talk with the next school and give them any additional information they found while the child was at their school.
• Make extra effort to get the records to the new school as soon as possible.
• Saying "goodbye".
• Provide information making the parents aware of their rights to keep student in this school even if they have moved.
• Complete a student transfer slip with careful attention paid to the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs. Send this with the student.
• Keep records detailed and up to date.
• Send records as soon as possible, electronically, if possible.
• Give any supplies that are needed so that they will go to the next school prepared.
• Counselor will talk to student about the reason for the move and, if need be, contact the counselor at the next school.

3. What are strategies that have been effective for the county/district/state to ease the transition of students from one school to another?

**Incoming students**

• Using Title One services.
• Encouraging staff stability.
• Investigate the availability of Federally funded programs to help ease the burden of transportation of children to and from school even when they move out of zone. Also to supply any school materials they might need which helps relieve any undo financial worries. Simplifying entry requirements and making them fairly consistent from state to state proves helpful. For example, our state requires a shot record and birth certificate. When other states have similar requirements, it proves to be easier to admit a student without unnecessary delays.
• Focus on preventing the transition, i.e. using busing and transportation to keep kids in the home school. Aim to keep all students in the school where they began the school year.
• Investigate laws that allow students to stay in the same school even if they move. (In Illinois, all children can finish the school year in the school they started. Homeless children get transportation as well and can stay for as long as they are homeless (broadly defined) and until the end of the year in which they acquire housing (with transportation). The law provides that if the child lives in one district and goes to another, the districts must work it out together or split the cost in 1/2.
• Spend energy on getting parents, teachers, clerks, etc. to focus on keeping kids in the same school and being aware that there are resources to help them.
• Schools should work affirmatively to prevent mobility.
• Present a welcoming attitude.
• Provide tutoring support, if needed.
• Establish a uniform curriculum for all subject areas, so students moving within the county have at least been exposed to some parts of it.
• Establish a uniform statewide curriculum.
• Allow schools to be flexible in scheduling multi-age classes, smaller classes, or any variation that meets the needs of the students.
• Establish records exchange processes that are quick and complete.
• Fund programs for students who are not on grade level.
• Since attendance fluctuates widely during the first six weeks period, use enrollment figures from the second six weeks period to determine membership of school.
• Develop a uniform definition of mobility
• Provide professional development for teachers in highly mobile areas.
• Provide funds for smaller class size in areas of high mobility.
• Work with neighboring school districts to provide integrated transition policies.
• Proactive monitoring of student attendance.
• Allow students to finish the year in the same school that they begin even if they move.
• Develop policies that ensure that the transfer process, when necessary, reduces the disruption of student learning and achievement.
• Develop informational programs and written materials outlining the consequences of changing schools.
• Develop or acquire short assessment tests for reading, math, and writing as a way to determine the appropriate class.
• Create a referral process for students who have problems adjusting.
• Develop a program of routinely assessing the past enrollment history of incoming students in order to identify such students and target interventions for them.
• Develop an incentive system for transferring students to return books since withholding records hampers the correct placement of the student in the next school.
• Create a Parent Assistance Center – parents are able to receive information and registration procedures on any school
• District Tutoring Centers

**Outgoing students**
• Sending records promptly, when requested.
• Having a central storage spot at the district headquarters for records of outgoing students.
• Allowing all children to finish the school year in the school they started with.
• Providing homeless children transportation and allowing them to stay in their school
• Providing that if the child lives in one district and goes to another, the districts must work it out together or split the cost in 1/2.
• Energy is spent getting parents, teachers, clerks, etc. to focus on keeping students in the same school.
• Make families aware that there are resources to help them.
• Schools must work affirmatively to prevent mobility.
• Develop a state core curriculum.
• Develop a district/county curriculum.
• Provide resources to allow schools to evaluate students in reading and math before placing them in a class and send these evaluations to next school.
• Develop informational programs and written materials outlining the consequences of changing schools.
• Develop a detailed progress report that would go with the child to the new school that would tell the school immediately of the student’s progress.
• Assume the responsibility of a study to examine the reasons students are leaving the school and address problems that may make students want to transfer.
• Develop a system of mediation to resolve problems at schools that might result in transfer.
• Initiate a program of “exit interviews” held with counselors, students, and parents to “problem solve” ways in which the student could stay in the same school for the entire year.
• Develop an incentive system for transferring students to return books since withholding records hampers the correct placement of the student in the next school.
• Provide a guidebook for students and parents on mobility that describes the advantages and disadvantages of changing schools and provides information on actions they can take to prepare for the move and ease the transition into a new school.
Provide funds to schools with high mobility to establish programs that improve the integration of new students in a school.

4. **What are strategies that have been effective for the community to utilize to ease the transition of families from one area to another?**
   - Establish Homeless shelters in the area.
   - Establish abuse shelters
   - Develop a program of Caring Communities
   - Create a division of family services in the schools
   - Constant contact with families
   - Provide Health services
   - Provide Counseling for families
   - Offer Pre-school
   - Local universities providing many resources i.e. College students being volunteer assistants, masters classes and professional development for staff
   - In order for the community to ease the transition of students, they need to be made aware of the problem in the first place.
   - Community should support Transition classrooms or extra staff members who are hired strictly to help with these children.
   - Give help and support to these families.
   - Keep the same social workers and other professionals who have worked with the student.
   - Work with the schools to establish family centers that can be a resource for the parents and their children.
   - Focus energy on making parents and teachers aware of the resources available.
   - Invite parents to local meetings in order for them to feel a part of the community.
   - Establish a relationship with families.
   - Welcome wagon representatives.
   - Welcome committee to distribute brochures about school and community.
   - Committee to provide area maps and information.
   - Implement cooperative efforts among the schools, county governments and rental housing to facilitate parents’ efforts to keep their children in the same school throughout the school year. (i.e. having leases come due in summer instead of mid school year)
   - Recognition of the inappropriateness of using one-time testing to evaluate schools and teachers in schools with high mobility.
   - Provide convenient support services for families.
   - Encourage an increase in safe, quality, affordable housing.
   - Show the importance of school attendance.
   - Making educators, students, parents and other community members aware of the academic and social consequences of student mobility.
   - Publicize activities available – junior league basketball, soccer, football.

5. **What strategies have been effective in dealing with student mobility as it affects accountability?**
   - Good PR
• Working constantly on helping people change their paradigm, on what student achievement in our school really means.
• Having BIG celebrations on improvements
• Involving the whole communities - neighborhood
• Providing data and more data on the individual school achievements
• Develop Transition classroom to help ease the burden of the transient child, their families, the teacher, and the school staff. By making the transition as smooth as possible we have given the child a sense of security in his very unstable life. This in turn hopefully will help the child feel comfortable and successful in his new class, with his new peers, and with his new teacher.
• Sharing all diagnostic and other student performance data, with parent permission, between the sending and receiving school.
• Immediate evaluation of the student's strengths and weaknesses helps start the student at the proper level of instruction.
• Utilize programs to help these children with reading. (Examples are a program (similar to Reading Recovery) which we call Read and Succeed, helps first and second grade students decode words by identifying patterns or chunks. This program, while successful, is costly because, over a period of twelve weeks, we work with only one student at a time everyday for approximately 20 minutes. The second program is SOAR to Success by Houghton Mifflin. A reading specialist works everyday for eighteen weeks with third, fourth, and fifth grades students on comprehension skills.)
• Developmentally appropriate grouping for students at all grade levels in addition to heterogeneous grouping.
• We focus more of our school resources on the students in the grades that will be taking the state assessment tests.
• Small group instruction or one on one tutoring.
• Separate students for accountability by their tenure.
• Track students by cohort.
• Establish separate accountability metrics for stable and mobile students.
• Ensure mobile students get tested.
• Create a work folder to show abilities and special needs.
• Communication between parent and teachers.
• Consistency in curriculum and testing across the county and state.
• Allow exclusion of students from the accountability system if they have not attended school for a certain number of days.
• Development of new accountability measures for mobile students.
Hello, Delphi Panel Members,

Below is the third and final questionnaire. I appreciate your willingness to share your expertise with me. I have listed the strategies that you suggested in no particular order. I have only listed the strategy once even though some of them were suggested by all of you. If, however, the strategy was listed under a different question, it is repeated. Naturally some strategies could be used by the teacher and the school or vice versa.

When I asked a few of the teachers at my school to respond to this survey, they took from 20-30 minutes to complete it. I realize that you are busy people, but it would help me greatly if you would respond as soon as possible. Please rank these strategies as to their effectiveness on a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the most effective.

5 – Highly effective (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
4 – Effective (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
3 – Neither effective nor ineffective (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
2 – Ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
1 – Highly ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)

I’m sending this as a Word attachment and in the e-mail. If you have trouble opening the attachment, just use the e-mail. I realize that the numbers are not exactly in the right places. This happened when I went from Word to the e-mail. You will need to copy to Word, place the cursor on the line before typing the number on each question, and then copy back to e-mail. I felt we needed both since many of you mentioned that you had problems with attachments. Let me know if you have a problem.

Kaye Thomas

P.S. I’ll get the results back to you as soon as possible so that you may use any of the suggestions in your school.
### Round 3 Questionnaire

1A. Strategies that classroom teachers might use to ease the transition of students transferring INTO the school.

**Classroom teachers should:**

1. Create a booklet with information about classmates.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

2. Have an informational packet ready with class rules and procedures, schedules, field trips, etc.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

3. When teaching, stand near the new student during the first week to make sure they are on track.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

4. Assign a room buddy to each new student. The buddy will introduce new student to class, give a tour of building, eat lunch with him/her, etc.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

5. Create a personal informational journal assignment that helps the teacher know the student better and provides a sample of writing skills.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

6. Develop learning packets that give important background information and activities of key units.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

7. Make students and parents aware of the need to stay in one school.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

8. Use small group instruction or one on one tutoring.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

9. Create an individual achievement plan for each new student.
   - 1 2 3 4 5
   - Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective
10. Evaluate the student prior to placement in classroom.  
1 2 3 4 5  
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

11. Look for signs that the student is struggling with classwork or having problems of social adjustment. Refer to other professionals as necessary.  
1 2 3 4 5  
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

12. Work with office personnel to get records as soon as possible. Use electronic communication (telephoning, e-mail, faxes, etc.) if feasible. Review these records as soon as they are available.  
1 2 3 4 5  
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

13. Use cooperative learning and/or other activities that encourage the students to interact with each other.  
1 2 3 4 5  
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

14. Meet the parents at the earliest possible time in an informal manner. Inform them of class expectations, rules, field trips, etc.  
1 2 3 4 5  
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

15. Integrate the new student into the classroom – make him/her feel welcome. Schedule a time to talk privately or eat lunch with him/her.  
1 2 3 4 5  
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

1B. Strategies that classroom teachers might use to ease the transition of students transferring FROM the current school.

5 – Highly effective (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
4 – Effective (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
3 – Neither effective nor ineffective (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
2 – Ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
1 – Highly ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)

Classroom teachers should:

1. Talk about the new school positively.  
1 2 3 4 5  
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective
2. Send detailed and up to date records as soon as possible, electronically, if feasible.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

3. Complete and send with the student a transfer slip with careful attention paid to the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

4. Become pen pals with students who have left.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

5. Send extra work papers for the student in case they do not enroll in another school right away.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

6. Take some time to visit with the departing student in an “exit interview.”

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

7. Write a recommendation for the student to give to his/her new teacher. Include the child’s strengths, his/her reading and math levels with the titles of text he/she was using and the placement.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

8. Give complete name and address of school to student and parent.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

9. Have the class send a note to the student at his new school.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

2A. Strategies that the administrative leaders of the school might use to ease the transition of students transferring INTO the school.

5 – Highly effective (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
4 – Effective (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
3 – Neither effective nor ineffective (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
2 – Ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
1 – Highly ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)
Administrators or office staff should:

1. Request records electronically from the previous school – grades, shot records, behavior, IEP's, etc.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

2. Provide school newsletter in parents’ language.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

3. Provide translators for parent meetings.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

4. Make new students feel welcome and let them know that the school is available as a resource.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

5. Form a Transition classroom in the building to work with the most mobile population. Students are tested and brought as up to date as possible before placing them in the regular classroom. The Transition classroom staff tracks down student cumulative folders, shot records, and past history reports from previous schools.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

6. Assign school staff to visit with the incoming student and their parents to acquaint them to unique features of their new school and make them feel welcome.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

7. Evaluate student prior to placement in class.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

8. Offer before and after school care at the school building.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

9. All students wear nametags.

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Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective

10. Arrange for tutoring, if needed, before or after school.

    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    |   |   |   |   |   |
Highly Ineffective                      Highly Effective
11. Schedule the school counselor to meet with the student several times during the first few weeks of school to monitor his/her transition. Counselor will also check with the classroom teacher to determine if other resources are needed.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

12. At the beginning of the school year, form a “New Student” group to meet with the counselor.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

13. Provide families with a packet of information, including a school handbook and a school brochure, stating the aspirations that the school has the student at each grade level.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

14. Create different multi-age groupings i.e., a Kdg/1st/2nd, 1st/2nd, or 1st/2nd/3rd, etc. that increase options for optimal placement.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

15. After a child is placed, a literacy team, consisting of all the teachers involved with the student, should develop an individual plan for the student.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

16. Establish a variety of schedules so that a student may have several reading and/or math periods per day, with several different teachers.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

17. Arrange small group instruction or one on one tutoring, if needed.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

18. Create and train a group of student volunteer coaches to aid students who have transferred.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective

19. Create inviting information packets of extracurricular activities.

Highly Ineffective  Highly Effective
20. Organize students to provide weekly on-going information booths at lunch where they explain the various extracurricular activities and how to join these activities.

Highly Ineffective 1  2  3  4  5 Highly Effective

21. Establish a policy of open enrollment for clubs and service organizations.

Highly Ineffective 1  2  3  4  5 Highly Effective

22. Have a staff or teacher-mentoring program for new students who might have difficulties academically or socially.

Highly Ineffective 1  2  3  4  5 Highly Effective

23. Offer the opportunity for after hours (evening or Saturday) parent conferencing.

Highly Ineffective 1  2  3  4  5 Highly Effective

24. Organize school-wide “acquaintanceship” activities, such as a “new student” group to meet at lunch.

Highly Ineffective 1  2  3  4  5 Highly Effective

2B. Strategies that administrative leaders might use to ease the transition of students transferring OUT of the school.

5 – Highly effective (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
4 – Effective (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
3 – Neither effective nor ineffective (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
2 – Ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
1 – Highly ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)

The administrator or staff should:

1. Establish a policy that assures that records are detailed and up to date.

Highly Ineffective 1  2  3  4  5 Highly Effective

2. Complete and send with the student, a student transfer slip with careful attention paid to the current levels of performance and special academic or health needs.

Highly Ineffective 1  2  3  4  5 Highly Effective
3. Schedule counselor to talk to student about the reason for the move and, if need be, contact the counselor at the next school.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

4. Make extra effort to get the records to the new school as soon as possible, electronically, if feasible.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

5. Provide information making the parents aware of their rights concerning keeping the student in this school even if they have moved.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

3A. Strategies that the county/district/state might use to ease the transition of students transferring INTO the school.

5 – Highly effective (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
4 – Effective (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
3 – Neither effective nor ineffective (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
2 – Ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
1 – Highly ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)

The county/district/state officials should:

1. Have a common student report card throughout the system.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

2. Encourage staff stability.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

3. Investigate the availability of Federally funded programs for transportation of children to and from school even when they move out of zone.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

4. Establish consistent entry requirements statewide.

1 2 3 4 5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective
5. Make entry requirements fairly consistent from state to state.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

6. Establish District Tutoring Centers.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

7. Investigate laws that allow students to stay in the same school even if they move.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

8. The district/state should work affirmatively to prevent mobility.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

9. Create a Parent Assistance Center where parents are able to receive information and registration procedures on any school.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

10. Provide funds to schools with high mobility to establish programs that improve the integration of new students in a school.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

11. Establish a uniform county/district curriculum for all subject areas.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

12. Establish a uniform statewide curriculum.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

13. Provide funding to allow schools with high mobility to be flexible in scheduling multi-age classes, smaller classes, or any variation that meets the needs of the students.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

14. Establish records exchange processes that are quick and complete.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

15. Create a website containing information about the district/school.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective
16. Develop a program to recognize the importance of school attendance. Monitor attendance closely.

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17. Create a referral process for students who have problems academically or socially.

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18. Provide professional development for teachers in highly mobile areas.

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20. Work with neighboring school districts to provide integrated transition policies.

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21. Allow students to finish the year in the same school that they begin even if they move.

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22. Develop informational programs and written materials outlining the consequences of changing schools.

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23. Develop or acquire short assessment tests for reading, math, and writing as a way to determine the appropriate class.

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24. Develop a system of routinely assessing the past enrollment history of incoming students in order to identify such students and target interventions for them.

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3B. Strategies that the county/district/state might use to ease the transition of students transferring FROM the current school.

- **5 – Highly effective** (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
- **4 – Effective** (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
- **3 – Neither effective nor ineffective** (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
- **2 – Ineffective** (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
- **1 – Highly ineffective** (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)
**County/district/state officials should:**

1. Send records promptly, when requested.

2. Have a central storage spot at the district headquarters for records of outgoing students.

3. Allow all children to finish the school year in the school they started.

4. Develop an incentive system for transferring students to return books since withholding records hampers the correct placement of the student in the next school.

5. Develop a state core curriculum.

6. Develop a district/county curriculum.

7. Develop informational programs and written materials outlining the benefits of staying in one school.

8. Develop a detailed progress report that would go with the child to the new school that would tell the school immediately of the student’s progress.

9. Assume the responsibility of a study to examine the reasons students are leaving the school and address problems that may make students want to transfer.

10. Develop a system of mediation to resolve problems at schools that might result in transfer.
117. Initiate a program of “exit interviews” held with counselors, students, and parents to “problem solve” ways in which the student could stay in the same school for the entire year.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

4. Strategies that the community might use to ease the transition of families from one area to another.

5 – Highly effective (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
4 – Effective (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
3 – Neither effective nor ineffective (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
2 – Ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
1 – Highly ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)

Community leaders should:

1. Establish Homeless shelters in the area.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

2. Establish abuse shelters

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

3. Establish a welcome committee to distribute brochures and/or maps about school and community.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

4. Work with the schools to establish family centers that can be a resource for parents and their children.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

5. Provide training for parents (English classes, volunteer in classroom, tutoring classes).

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

6. Encourage health care providers to be available at affordable prices.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective
7. Publicize activities available in the community – junior league basketball, soccer, and football.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

8. Encourage the operation of day care/pre-school facilities near schools.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

9. Investigate the possibility of using local universities to provide many resources i.e. College students being volunteer assistants or offer masters classes and professional development for staff

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

10. Implement cooperative efforts among the schools, county governments and rental housing to facilitate parents’ efforts to keep their children in the same school throughout the school year. (i.e. having leases come due in summer instead of mid school year)

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

11. Community should support Transition classrooms or extra staff members who are hired strictly to help with these children.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

12. Make educators, students, parents, and other community members aware of the academic and social consequences of student mobility.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

13. Permit the same social workers and other professionals who have worked with the student to follow them to new school.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

14. Encourage an increase in safe, quality, affordable housing.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective

15. Publicize dates and times of local community meetings and encourage parents to become active members of the community.

1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective      Highly Effective
6. Strategies that have been effective for schools to use in dealing with student mobility as it affects accountability?

5 – Highly effective (Use of this strategy would have a highly positive impact.)
4 – Effective (Use of this strategy would have a positive impact.)
3 – Neither effective nor ineffective (It would make no difference if you used this strategy.)
2 – Ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a negative impact.)
1 – Highly ineffective (Use of this strategy would have a highly negative impact.)

School officials should:
_____ 1. Establish good public relations with the community.
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

_____ 2. Have BIG celebrations on improvements
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

_____ 3. Provide data on the individual school achievements
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

_____ 4. Share all diagnostic and other student performance data, with parent permission, between the sending and receiving school.
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

_____ 5. Immediately evaluate the student's strengths and weaknesses.
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

_____ 6. Establish developmentally appropriate grouping for students at all grade levels in addition to heterogeneous grouping.
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

_____ 7. Focus more of school resources on the students in the grades that will be taking the state assessment tests.
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective

_____ 8. Offer small group instruction or one on one tutoring.
1  2  3  4  5
Highly Ineffective Highly Effective
9. Track students by cohort.

1. Highly Ineffective 2. 3. 4. 5. Highly Effective

10. Test all students, but establish separate accountability metrics for stable and mobile students.

1. Highly Ineffective 2. 3. 4. 5. Highly Effective

11. Create a work folder to show abilities and special needs.

1. Highly Ineffective 2. 3. 4. 5. Highly Effective

12. Establish consistency in curriculum and testing across the county and state.

1. Highly Ineffective 2. 3. 4. 5. Highly Effective

13. Allow exclusion of students from the accountability system if they have not attended school for a certain number of days.

1. Highly Ineffective 2. 3. 4. 5. Highly Effective

14. Develop a program to make the community aware of the inappropriateness of using one-time testing to evaluate schools and teachers in schools with high mobility.

1. Highly Ineffective 2. 3. 4. 5. Highly Effective
APPENDIX E
DELPHI PANEL MEMBERS

Dennis Arnold, Principal
Watertown, SD

Dr. Martha Jean Bratton, Principal
Knoxville, TN

Barbara Buell, Executive Director
Chicago Panel on School Policy

Anthony Harduar, Principal
Ferndale, WA

Jean Hendrickson, Principal
Oklahoma City, OK

Rene Heybach, Lawyer
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Elizabeth Hinz, Policy and Strategic Services
Minneapolis Public Schools

Robert Hitt, Principal
Biloxi, MS

Martha Lewis, Teacher
Knoxville, TN

Glynn Ligon, Researcher
Texas Education Agency

Alayna Lyles, Principal
Springfield, MO

Jonathan Marx, Ph.D., Professor
Winthrop University, SC

Craig McBride, Professional
Murfreesboro, TN

Sylvia O’Dell, Guidance Counselor
Knoxville, TN
J.D. Robbins, Principal
Sioux City, IA

Darrell Rudd, Principal
Billings, MT

Russell W. Rumberger, Professor
University of California

Shari Salyer, Principal
Clarksville, TN

Karen T. Smith, Principal
Cumberland, MD

Brenda Thomas, Teacher
Knoxville, TN

Cindy Whitlock, Social worker
Knoxville, TN

Karen Winters, Principal
Detroit, MI

Dr. Rosemary Young, Principal
Louisville, KY
VITA

DONNA KAYE REED THOMAS

Personal Data: Date of Birth: February 17, 1949
Place of Birth: Sevierville, Tennessee
Marital Status: Married

Education: Public Schools, Sevier County, 1966
Tennessee Wesleyan College
  Athens, Tennessee
University of Tennessee
  Knoxville, Tennessee
  Education, B.S., 1979
  Special Education, M.A., 1992
Lincoln Memorial University
  Harrogate, Tennessee
  Administration and Supervision, Ed.S., 1994
East Tennessee State University
  Johnson City, Tennessee

Professional Experience: Second grade teacher, Sevierville Primary School
  Sevierville, Tennessee, 1979-1992
Consulting Teacher, Special Learning Center
  Sevierville, Tennessee, 1992-94
Special Education Supervisor/Assistant Principal
  Pigeon Forge Middle School
  Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, 1994-2001

Honors: Sevierville Primary Teacher of the Year
  Sevier County Teacher of the Year
  East Tennessee Teacher of the Year
  Phi Delta Kappa, University of Tennessee Chapter,
   Assistant Principal of the Year