Parent Perceptions of Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Decision-making in Tennessee Elementary Schools

John R. Clark
East Tennessee State University

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Parent perceptions of actual and ideal levels of involvement in decision-making in Tennessee elementary schools

Clark, John Roy, Jr., Ed.D.

East Tennessee State University, 1994
APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Graduate Committee of

JOHN R. CLARK JR.

met on the

4th day of April, 1996.

The committee read and examined his dissertation, supervised his defense of it in an oral examination, and recommended that his study be submitted to the Graduate Council and the Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean, School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Supervision and Administration.

Signed on behalf of
the Graduate Council

Signed on behalf of
Associate Vice-President for Research
and Dean, School of Graduate Studies
ABSTRACT

Parent Perceptions Of Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement In Decision Making in Tennessee Elementary Schools

by

John R. Clark, Jr.

The problem of this study was to determine differences between parent perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents, teachers and principals in decision-making at the elementary school level. This study was conducted in conjunction with two parallel studies that considered principal and teacher perceptions with the same hypotheses. The last chapter (six) presents a summary with conclusions and recommendations of all three studies.

A questionnaire, designed to examine parent perceptions of the actual and the ideal levels of involvement of teachers, parents, and principal in decision making in elementary schools in the areas of budget, personnel, and curriculum, was distributed to 1325 parents of elementary school children in East Tennessee. Five hundred three parents (38%) responded.

Based on the significant differences found, the conclusion was derived that parents desire more active involvement in decision making at the elementary school level for themselves and for the other stakeholders.

Recommendations were made for improvement in the decision-making structure at the elementary school level and for further study.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

This is to certify that the following study has been filed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.

Title of Grant of Project: Parent Perceptions Of Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement In Decision Making in Tennessee Elementary Schools

Principal Investigator: John R. Clark, Jr.

Department: Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Date Submitted: December 8, 1993

Institutional Review Board Chairman: Anthony J. DeLucia
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother

Ruth Gobble Clark
1924-1987
who always wanted to call her son, "doctor"
and to
Judith G. Celentano
who with patience, understanding, and friendship
attempted to teach to the author the art of written language.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With deep appreciation, I would like to acknowledge several individuals who have made significant contributions to this study.

My deepest gratitude is expressed to Dr. Charles W. Burkett who not only served as doctoral committee chairman and dissertation director, but also who, since my days as a M.A.T. intern has had a lasting influence on my career as a professional educator. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions and support the other members of my doctoral committee: Dr. Cecil Blankenship, Dr. Donn Gresso, and Dr. Russell West.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and inspiration of my friends, colleagues, and fellow researchers of the parallel studies, Rebecca Walters and Steve Dixon whose continuing presence and encouragement provided an inspiration throughout the conduct of this research project. It is also with great appreciation, I recognize Dr. James A. Street, Superintendent of Bristol Tennessee City Schools who allowed, supported, and encouraged my participation in doctoral studies.

I would like to give special recognition to my family, especially my wife Janet, who endured absence and provided love, understanding, consideration, and support, and my father, John R. Clark, Sr., who instilled in his children the love of God; respect for fellowman; and the belief that one's success depended, most of all, on one's own initiative and hard work. I also recognize and appreciate the love of my children Michael, Christopher, and Halley Katharine Clark.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The need to reform the American public educational system was acknowledged throughout the country during the past 20 years; indeed, education was assailed from many directions, including from that of professional educators themselves, for its failures. Typical was the landmark study by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk*, which suggested standardization of curriculum, improvement of test scores, and improvement of teacher performance as changes necessary to revolutionize practice and provide for a better education for all of America's children. Others looked beyond the educational system to American society itself for reasons for failure. Despite its "sanctimonious...handwringing over still another 'education crisis'," political scientist Benjamin Barber (1993, p. 40) observed in society a pervasive hypocrisy that epitomized the true nature of the crisis, for the nation's "smart kids learn...that it is much more important to heed what society teaches implicitly by its deeds and reward structures than what school teaches explicitly in its lesson plans and civic sermons" (p. 41). Along with the "deeds" and
"reward structures" readily mastered by the nation's children, Barber included ambition, greed, materialism, acquisitiveness, success, and commercialization (p. 42). Beyond such pervasive models so aptly internalized by children, Barber saw an even more fundamental source for the education crisis; "it stem[med] from a dearth of democracy: an absence of democratic will and a consequent refusal to take ...children, ...schools, and ...[the nation's] future seriously" (p. 45).

Within the ranks of the public education system itself, which did take seriously its livelihood of children and schools, initial reform efforts focused on centralized, bureaucratic programs (Valesky, Forsythe & Hall, 1990). In the "second wave" of school reform, school management became an increased focus (Clark, 1990, p.2). Traditional school management methods were viewed as not allowing the degree of stakeholder participation necessary to provide a shared vision and greater opportunities for success. Many states considered some form of participatory decision-making that increased stakeholder participation and moved the decision-making process closer to where decision implementation occurred. The call for greater decentralization and shared participation in management of schools focused upon the individual school as the place to be changed and upon those associated with the school as the persons to
effect the change (Goodlad, 1984).

Although this decision-making process was known by many names, School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) seemed the most common and most descriptive title. Valesky, Forthsythe, and Hall (1992) suggested that SBDM provided an increase in the authority of the individual school site. This authority included budget decisions, personnel decisions, and curriculum decisions.

Since all forms of shared decision making were evolving processes and not immediate solutions, no single “right” way was established for school-based management or shared decision making to work (National PTA, 1991). Rather, because many schools used shared decision-making models such as SBDM in different community settings, many working models, each with its own set of goals, bylaws, membership, guidelines, and scope of responsibilities, existed. Most SBDM models included, however, school site councils composed of school staff, parents, and community leaders who assisted in the governing of the school (Valesky, Forthsythe, Hall, 1992). This somewhat radical approach to school-level decision making assumed that all parties involved in the decision-making process wished to be actively involved and had sufficient knowledge of the school’s mission to be able to function to the benefit of the school organization. Because no single, clear
model of SBDM was widely accepted, the range of decisions and powers of the councils varied dramatically from one school site to another.

Since Tennessee through the Better Education Program legislation encouraged SBDM or some form of shared decision making, and parents and community members were certain to be actively involved in the process, more data were clearly needed to determine whether the school-based decision-making process, and particularly shared decision-making responsibilities inclusive in that process, worked effectively to make schools better. Even though a given school was not overtly characterized as employing SBDM, a shared decision-making structure might well have existed. A thorough investigation into the actual levels of participation in school decision making by all these groups was needed, as was an investigation to determine the ideal level of participation in order to make schools more effective. For the purpose of exploring levels of shared decision making, this study focused on parent and community involvement, specifically in the decision-making process, at the local school level.
**Statement of the Problem**

A difference between parent perceptions of the actual amount and ideal amount of involvement that parents, teachers and principals had in decision making at the elementary school level appeared to be present, but the extent of that difference was not known.

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the extent to which parents were involved in the school level decision-making process and compare that involvement to the extent of involvement that the parents felt necessary in order to make schools effective. This determination was necessary for planning to effectively involve parents in decision making in the future.

**Significance of the Study**

Reformers believed that participatory decision making was an important movement in school management reform. Many studies associated with the reform movement called for a better balance between centralized and decentralized management of American public schools. Many authors were also concerned that the move toward SBDM or shared decision making, by pushing too far in the direction of school autonomy, created a reaction and forced the
management pendulum to swing back toward centralization. One purpose of this study was to determine if through the formalization of the process itself that led to SBDM, such extreme vacillation between types of school management could perhaps be avoided. Further, if the SBDM process in fact succeeded in making schools more effective, an understanding of the function of all stakeholders in it, including parents, was a necessity. For this reason, empirical data were needed to determine the extent to which parents were involved in decision making and how that involvement could reach an ideal level. If more parent involvement in decision making had potential to improve schools, then systematic assessment of the actual and ideal status of their involvement was necessary to stabilize their role in the SBDM process and to allow it to function as a productive tool in true school reform.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses, stated in the research format, were developed to guide this study.

$H_1$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools.
$H_2$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

$H_3$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement principals should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

$H_4$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

$H_5$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

$H_6$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement principals should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

$H_7$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools.
H3: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

H3: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement principals should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

**Assumptions**

These assumptions were recognized as fundamental to the study:

1. All schools have some level of parent involvement in decision making, and that level can be assessed.

2. Areas and degrees of involvement in school level decision-making councils vary from school to school.

3. The ideal level of participation of teachers, parents, and principals in decision making can be determined through a careful review of available literature combined with a systematic survey of an identified sample of parents, teachers, and principals.

4. A valid and reliable instrument can be developed and tested to obtain information from parents, including items that allowed parents to identify levels of parent, teacher, and principal involvement in decision making, and to draw inferences about
decisional equilibrium for teachers, principals, and parents in decision making.

5. Parent have a vested interest in the education of their children and therefore an interest in decisional equilibrium in local school decision making.

6. Parents who actively participate to some degree in their children's schools have an adequate knowledge base from which to answer questions relative to teacher, principal, and parent involvement in decision making.

7. Although many two parent homes are represented in the schools, many homes with more than one child in the same elementary school are also represented. The study assumed that students have at least one parent/guardian or head of household who could be selected for the survey. Therefore, the population size was reasonably estimated by totaling the number of students enrolled in the elementary schools of the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee Department of Education.

Limitations

1. The study was limited to randomly selected elementary schools within the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee State Department of Education.
2. The study was limited to the time period from September, 1993 to March, 1994.

3. The study was limited to a random sampling of parents who were identified by the principal as being involved to some degree in school operations so that they had adequate knowledge of how elementary schools were and should be governed and so that they could therefore complete the survey in a knowledgeable manner.

4. The gathering of data was limited to a one-time response from the participants.

5. The study was limited to the participants' understandings of key terms, such as "decision making," "curriculum," "budgetary process," and "personnel."

**Definitions**

Throughout this study, the following terms were used according to the given definitions.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy was used to mean the independence of groups in an organization from control by other parts of the organization or even by the whole organization (Hanson, 1991).

**Bureaucracy**

A governance plan that involved a hierarchy of authority
with structured rules, regulations, and a division of labor designed to attain specific goals effectively was a bureaucracy (Hoy & Miskel in Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

Centralization

This term referred to the focus of school management toward a more dominant, top-down decision-making system that was concentrated at some distance from where the actual decision was implemented.

Consensus

Consensus was a decision-making procedure whose goal was unanimous agreement, with no “winners” or “losers.” In building a consensus, a decision-making body fully discussed an issue, hearing all sides and airing all conflicts. In the end the group agreed on a common goal and course of action to achieve that goal. Though not always possible, consensus building was the preferred approach (over voting or compromise) used in shared decision making (National PTA, 1992).

Decentralization

Decentralization referred to the movement of school management from a more dominant, top-down decision-making system that was concentrated at some distance from where the actual decision was implemented to a system where decisions were
made by the individuals who were charged with implementation of the decisions.

**Decision**

A decision included "all judgments that affect a course of action..., [for the decision-making process not only means the decision, but also]...all the acts necessary to put the decision into operation and...affect the course of action of an enterprise" (Weber in Hanson, 1991, p. 4).

**Efficacy**

This term described "personal effectiveness, a feeling that one can control events and produce outcomes" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988, p.133).

**Elementary School**

An elementary school was defined as any single school listed in the sampling frame as having a composition of any series of grades beginning below grade five.

**Empowerment**

Empowerment was defined as the "deliberated effort to provide principals and teachers with the room, right, responsibility, and resources to make sensible decisions and informed professional judgments that reflect their circumstances" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988, p. 3).
First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee Department of Education

In 1966, the First Tennessee Economic Planning District was established by TCA 13-14-101, which was enacted in 1965. The purpose of the law was to provide a mechanism to assist local government officials with planning and with the orderly economic development of the region. The State Department of Education began to utilize this district organization structure to establish a planning vehicle for working within the school systems located in this ten-county region of the state. The district office was located in Johnson City, Tennessee on the campus of East Tennessee State University. The name was changed in 1993 to the First Tennessee Regional Office of the Tennessee Department of Education.

Governance

Governance was defined in the study "as control over the decision-making process" (Hanson, 1991, p.4).

School/Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM); Site/School Based Management (SBM)

Although many sources differentiated between these terms, for the purpose of this study, the terms were considered to be similar to the extent that they were used synonymously. Essentially, these terms described a process of decentralization in which the school became the primary unit of management and
educational improvement. This decentralization generally occurred through the redistribution of decision-making authority within the district and the school. However, the degree of decentralization of authority, the specific areas that were governed, as well as the persons involved, varied greatly from district to district.

School-based Management Council

This council, responsible for putting SBDM into effect, was defined as the decision-making body that was made up of all stakeholders of the school. Councils generally, but not always, included the principal, teacher representatives, and parent representatives. Additional members were community representatives, non-parents, parents of preschool or graduated students, student representatives, and support staff representatives. Council members were chosen in a variety of ways (Clark, 1990).

Shared/Participatory Decision Making

This style of school management allowed members of the school community to take part in decision making. New voices often included in shared decision making were teachers, parents, students and other community members. In this study, the terms shared and participatory decision making and SBM and SBDM were used interchangeably.
Restructuring

Restructuring was defined as systemic changes in work roles, organizational and governance structures in the school and its environment (Murphy, 1991).

Parallel Studies

Three parallel studies were conducted simultaneously as part of a comprehensive research project undertaken to identify perceptions of decision making within the entire school community. Parents' perceptions of involvement in school decision making were examined in this study, teachers' perceptions of involvement in school decision making were examined in another, and principals' perceptions of involvement in school decision making were examined in the third. The data compiled from all three studies were analyzed as a unit, with results presented in Chapter 6.

In order to insure a statistically correct compilation of the data in Chapter 6, portions of the three parallel studies were completed using similar procedures. Nine hypotheses were tested in each of the studies. Although each study measured a different stakeholder group's perceptions, hypotheses were worded semantically alike as research declarations and were measured with the same statistical test. The questionnaires used in the three
studies were tested for validity through the same pilot study. All
questionnaires used the same format and subscales with only minor
differences in terminology deemed more appropriate for each group
of respondents.

Population samples for each study were drawn from the
elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee
Department of Education. This allowed each of the researchers to
genitalize findings to educational communities in the same
gographical region.

Procedures

The procedures of the study were as follows:

1. A thorough search of related literature was conducted, using all available resources.

2. Schools considered in the sampling were chosen from the 1993-94 Directory of Public Schools, Approved Nonpublic, Special State Schools, and the State Department of Education, State of Tennessee.

3. An instrument to be used to measure attitudes of principals, teachers, and parents was developed, then field tested for validity and function.
4. School principals were contacted and their permission was obtained to conduct a survey of teachers, principals, and parents.

5. Surveys were conducted with participants.

6. The results of the study were analyzed through appropriate statistical analysis.

7. Findings, conclusions and recommendations were identified.

8. Results of this study were combined with those of two parallel studies; the conclusions of all three were united to project current levels and ideal levels of decision making for all stakeholders.

**Overview of the Study**

Chapter 1 contained the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the problem, assumptions, limitations, definitions, procedures and overview of the study. Chapter 2 contained a review of all available research and other literature. Chapter 3 contained a description of the instruments and procedures used to research the study. Chapter 4 contained an analysis of the data. Chapter 5 contained the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. Chapter 6 contained a summary of the findings from three dissertation
research projects investigating the participation of three different stakeholders in the process of school-level decision making. The chapter provided recommendations for future development of the school decision-making management process and considered the perceptions, differences, and influences of all three stakeholder constituencies.
CHAPTER 2
Review of Related Literature

Introduction

A review of literature and studies relating to the school decision-making process and how parents are and should be involved in that process revealed that the new management focus of school reform was School Based Decision Making (SBDM), and that parent involvement in that process was widely recognized as desirable.

First, an examination of the history of school decision making revealed how reform movements have forced the decentralization of the school decision-making process and shifted the management focus to SBDM and other forms of shared decision making. Consequently, an examination of the portrayal of shared decision making in literature and research studies and facets of earlier research that could be applied to future management processes was necessary. Finally, the role of the parent in education and how that role can be enhanced by parental participation in the school decision-making process was examined.
School Management and School Decision Making

The literature established that school management was totally interwoven with the decision-making framework; that is, how decisions were made was the essence of what made up a management system. Limitations were always placed on the decision-making process, and the concept of management focused on those limitations. Kinder stated that:

All decision makers operate within a set of limits. Sometimes the limits are broad, sometimes they are narrow. The chief purpose of setting limitations on decision-making power is to improve the caliber of the decisions made. When limitations are established, ways and means of making decisions, as well as the content of the decisions, are prescribed. (1978, p.45)

Weber defined a decision as "'all judgments that affect a course of action... [and the decision-making process not only means the decision but] ...all the acts necessary to put the decision into operation and...affect the course of action of an enterprise'" (qtd. in Hanson, 1991, p. 4). Just as significant to school management as decision making was the concept of governance. Hanson (1991) defined governance "as control over the decision-making process" (p.4). The focus of the latest round of school reform was associated
with this concept of governance, where decisions were made, and who made these decisions.

In most public schools, "the inspiration for school management as it exists today came from the industrial models that prevailed at the turn of the twentieth century. Large American companies developed around...top-down management, a single best system" (Fiske, 1992, p. 31). The managerial authority of the age was Frederick Winslow Taylor. Taylor and other classical theorists, such as French industrialist Henri Fayol and German sociologist Max Weber, lived through the industrial revolution. Consequently, "as they watched the rapidly growing technology of mass production collide with the traditional patterns of management that were designed for simpler societies...[they recognized that]...the resulting inefficiency was wasteful and appalling" (Hanson, 1991, p. 56).

Many of the classical theorists based their work and management models on scientific principles: "The classical theorists believed that an application of the bureaucratic structure and process of organizational control would promote rational, efficiency, and disciplined behavior, making possible the achievement of well defined goals" (p.7). For the most part, the scientific approach was successful in the Industries of the new industrial America and the new factory-model accomplished the mission it was given. This
managerial approach of industry was transferred to schools because "Taylor's values of hierarchical management, standardization, and ordered scheduling provided a welcome affirmation of order and predictability, values that Americans also sought in their schools" (Fiske, 1992, p. 31).

As failures in the educational system became apparent, other theories of organizational management which governed the decision-making process evolved throughout the 1900's. One of these, the social systems theory, recognized—contrary to the classical theory—that the needs of the organization and the needs of the worker were not always the same and that open lines of communication between management and worker encouraged friendly resolution of conflict (Hanson, 1991). In the 1960's, Douglas McGregor espoused the belief that every managerial act rested on one of two theories. What he called Theory X emphasized tactics to control situations and people and implemented a system of rewards and punishments. His Theory Y was based upon optimistic assumptions about the nature of humankind and provided powerful motivation rather than rewards and punishments (Sergiovanni, 1988). Later evolution resulted in the development of the open system theory, which recognized the organization as interrelated parts of a whole that produce best when "the cycles [of
production] are streamed together so that a minimum of conflict and waste is apparent" (Hanson, 1991, p. 7). Although these theories made important contributions to the organizational management of public schools, the impact was moderate in terms of total management philosophy. The bureaucratic scientific approach (McGregor's Theory X), or what some educators referred to as the "bells and cells education theory," remained very apparent in school organization.

Following Deming's success in assisting the Japanese in revitalizing the Japanese industry, reformers again suggested a management approach to improve American education that was modeled after a successful business management system (Walton, 1991). Deming's explanations of the failure of management in United States industry as the primary reason for the failure of industrial power were applied directly in many cases to the failures in public schools.

Deming's approach utilized quality circles to improve business management by helping teams to visualize the mission of the company and to "optimize" human resources. In a Foreword to Walton's Deming Management at Work, Deming explained:

Management addressed toward optimization of a system would offer improvement. A system must have and aim [vision].
Without [a vision] there is no system. A system must be managed. The bigger the system, the more difficult it is to manage for optimization. Optimization of a system should be the basis of negotiation between any two people, between divisions of a company, between customers and suppliers, between countries, between competitors. Everybody gains under optimization. (1991, p. 9)

Although Deming did not initiate the move toward decentralization of management in education, his quality circle approach and the applications proposed by many leaders, from both within and outside educational circles, gave much impetus to the idea that failures in public education in America were tied directly to a failure of the management system. Deming further believed that "80 to 90 percent of variation from expected outcomes [in business or education] is a result of problems within the system or process [management] and not the worker" (Melvin, 1991, p.16). Deming's ideas were just that: ideas, for Melvin discovered, in a massive attempt to restructure four school districts including over 6,000 students and 400 teachers, that no clear cut Deming process existed (p.17). Deming's message for business, however, centered around four beliefs (Rhodes, 1990, cited in Melvin, 1991) and fourteen points for quality improvement (Walton, 1986, 1991). The
four beliefs were psychology, demonstrated by people who were purposeful, cognitive beings who had a right to enjoy their work and be successful; systems, demonstrated by the drive of all activities of organizations toward a mission; a perceptual framework, knowledge that was gathered from experience based upon theories and beliefs and that provided everyone within the organization the same form and procedure; and causes of variance, which Deming believed to be a problem of the system and not the worker (Melvin, 1991, p.17).

Deming offered the following fourteen points for quality improvement:

1. Create constancy of purpose for improvement.
2. Adopt the new philosophy of quality.
3. Cease dependence on mass inspection.
4. End the practice of awarding business on short-term costs.
5. Constantly Improve the system.
6. Institute training to teach workers to do the job well.
7. Institute leadership.
8. Drive out fear of asking questions.
9. Break down barriers between staff areas.
10. Eliminate work force slogans, exhortations, and
targets.

11. Eliminate numerical quotas.

12. Remove barriers to pride of workmanship.

13. Institute a vigorous program of education and retraining.


Melvin reported on how the school systems in his study utilized these fourteen points to improve their school systems. By adapting Deming's points to focus on the school organizational structure, he found cautioned success in the application of quality improvement techniques to management of education. Other authors also advocated tying organizational management improvement directly to Deming's fourteen points (Leonard, 1992).

Deming's inspiring message to America's schools and businesses was to free themselves from established paradigms and to provide leadership through quality management: "the change required is transformation, change of state, metamorphosis, in industry, education and government....The transformation must be lead by top management" (Deming qtd. in Walton, 1990, p. 10).

Not only did educators vacillate over the style of management, but also over who should manage, and at what level. Just as
questions about management style reflected changes in industrial models, other questions reflected changes in the country's political climate: "American political history resounds with debates on the advantages and disadvantages of centralized versus decentralized [management]" (Pierce, 1980, p. 6). In education, Pierce noted the trend was that

between the 1920s and 1970s, the governance of public education has become more and more centralized. The consolidation of school districts, designed to increase the authority of education executives, has also increased the distance between educational managers and the public. (p. 6)

Reform movements after the 1960's focused on moving management into a decentralized posture. The reform hope was that, if the decision-making process were moved closer to the point at which the decision was to be implemented, more effective decisions would be made. In addition, reformers insisted that the decision-making process itself take on a new look. Although the concepts of participatory or shared decision making were not new, they became the center of new school organizational theories.

The movement sought for all persons who were affected by decisions to be involved in the decision-making process. Guthrie stated that "long-lasting school reform requires the active
involvement of all stakeholders in the educational process” (qtd. in Mutchler, 1989, p. 1). Additionally, changes in the organizational management framework were thought to be necessary, for “true collaboration, or shared decision-making, is the most difficult and most powerful predictive element in the design and operation of an effective...[organizational structure]” (Intriligator, 1985, p. 22).

Later, “in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was an alternative school movement establishing schools within districts that had considerable local autonomy in curriculum matters” (Valesky, Smith, & Fitzgerald, 1990, p. 1). This alternative was known by several names such as site or school based management, site or school decision making, and in some instances, simply shared or participatory decision making. For the purposes of this study, the management model was referred to as school-based decision making (SBDM) and shared or participatory decision making was a component of this organizational management system.

SBDM was quickly becoming the “centerpiece of the latest reform movement” (David, 1989, p. 45) and “something of a buzzword in education” (Valesky, Smith, & Fitzgerald, 1990, p. 1). SBDM actually predated the 1980s. New York City implemented a SBDM program in 1971, Dade County, Florida did so in 1973, and Chicago as well did so more recently. By July 1996, all schools in
Kentucky must adopt an SBDM model of management (Valesky, Smith, & Fitzgerald, 1990; Fiske, 1992). Dade County was the first to decentralize using SBDM on a large scale. This fourth largest school system in the nation fought bitter battles to “redefine the relationships between the district and the local schools, starting with finances” (Fiske, 1992, p. 37). In their examination of SBDM implementation in Florida; California; Lunenburg, Massachusetts; Cherry Creek School District, Colorado; and the Portland School District, Oregon, Lindelow and Heynderickx (1989) saw the site principal as the key player in SBDM with other site personnel significant decision makers as well. Others, including parents, were participants, but not pivotal in the process. Further, in the decentralization of a school system, the primary role of the central office administration was that of facilitator, while “the three main areas in which principals and their staffs would gain authority in a school-based management system are curriculum, personnel, and budget” (Lindelow & Heynderickx, 1989, p. 128).

Although SBDM took on a variety of appearances depending upon the types of participatory decisions that were made, the theme that ran through all models was that to some degree decisions were shared and involved the individuals responsible for implementing decisions in actually making those decisions. One goal of SBDM, to
give decision-making power to those who are closest to the issues being decided, meant that under SBDM, principals, teachers, and in most cases, parents, community representatives, and students would have a greater role in making decisions at their local school (National PTA, 1992). The shared decision-making component of SBDM referred to the ability of the organization to involve all those who were a part of the organization in the decision-making process. How the participants in the decisions were chosen and to what degree they were involved varied greatly from site to site (David, 1989, p. 50). The premise was that if shared decision making were employed, then the shareholders in the school operation and success would guide the school toward greater and greater improvements. Deming might add that such shared decision making was one activity that would maximize the human resources of the organization (Walton, 1986).

Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz concurred that "SBDM has become an increasingly important strategy for guiding school improvement. It is a form of decentralization in which decision-making authority is redistributed for the purpose of stimulating and sustaining improvements in the individual school resulting in an increase in authority of participants at the school site" (cited in Mutchler, 1989, p. 1). Authority and autonomy were indeed central issues in
the successful implementation of SBDM and other forms of shared decision making. The shift to SBDM as a decision-making process had two primary management initiatives: increased school autonomy and participatory or shared decision making, with "the very backbone of SBDM...the delegation of authority to schools from the district" (David, 1989, p. 46). Autonomy was usually seen as providing "governance," or the autonomy to make decisions (Hanson, 1991, p. 4), over important items such as staffing, budget, curriculum, goals, and setting and evaluating standards for the organization. The types of decisions that were allowed often determined the success of the implementation of the shared decision-making process. If the stakeholders believed that their impact on decision making was relegated to low-level decisions, it was very likely that the initial enthusiasm that came with being included in decision making disappeared as soon as those involved realized that the time and effort spent were not worth the results achieved. Cohen (cited in David, 1989) concluded that significant improvements could possibly be realized, however, if the decision makers had the authority to determine the decisions with which they would be involved. The involvement in the decision provided for "ownership" in the decision that was made and therefore, for responsibility in accomplishing the goals of the organization: "under SBDM,
professional responsibility replaces bureaucratic regulation; districts increase school autonomy in exchange for the staff’s assuming responsibility for results” (Cohen qtd. in David, 1989, p. 51).

Although SBDM was not a new concept, only in recent years had it been included in almost every educational reform package offered for consideration. However, caution was still widely reported as necessary in implementing SBDM. As with all management systems, advantages and limitations existed, and some areas of implementation had to improve in order for the shared decision-making process to be considered a success.

White (1989) identified several benefits of SBDM as greater flexibility and increased participation of staff in decision making; the ability to provide more appropriate services to meet the specific needs of students; increased authority; improved self-esteem, morale, and efficiency of school personnel; improved school-level communication with both staff and community; an improved ability to attract and retain teachers; and general improvement of educational services through teachers’ greater input into educational decisions. Karant (1989) cited the success in the shared governance concept, especially in teachers’ satisfaction with their new role. In her qualitative study of three nationally
recognized high schools that used a shared decision-making model, she also reported occasional administrator/teacher strife, but concluded that the role of the principal was not diminished and inferred that it may even have been enhanced. She concluded that shared governance might make schools better and that teacher empowerment and supervision were "mutually compatible" (p. 29).

White (1989) listed several limitations of SBDM as initial confusion in roles and responsibilities, frustration over the lack of clear directions as to what is expected, the inability of principals to share their decision-making power, and frustration over the large time commitments that are required. Some studies caused researchers to believe that the problems associated with SBDM were so great that educational improvement should be concentrated in other areas. In one study, the researchers indicated that "findings clearly indicate that principals' views of school leadership and teacher empowerment are situational issues," and they believed that shared vision, cooperative goal setting, and strategic planning had a greater promise of success than changing the "culture" of administrative decision making (Lucas, Brown, & Markus, 1991, p.60).

In a report entitled Study of Decision Making in High Schools in which 180 teachers from 45 high schools throughout the nation
were interviewed, the authors identified "conflicts between and within teachers" that contributed to problems associated with SBDM and the shared decision-making process (Cambone, Wyeth, & Weiss, 1992, p. 360). Conflicts included disputes over who should and should not participate, the formation of factions or splits over a particular issue, the inability to speak one's mind or confront other teachers over an issue, knowing who makes what decisions, as well as internalized struggles within individuals over the best decision to be made. White (1989) reported that "teachers have a difficult time in dealing with each other in the decision-making context" (p. 2), while Cambone, Wyeth, and Weiss explained "very little in their background or training has prepared them for this kind of democratic politics" (p. 359). Most of the conflicts were complex; for instance, while some teachers who participated in the process felt they had an unfair burden, especially in time requirements, others who did not participate felt left out or were skeptical of the process. Even more complex were the personal internalized conflicts as teachers tried so hard to see both sides of an issue that they felt personal stress. Decisions were consequently sometimes delayed to the point that such open-mindedness was a detriment to the teacher empowerment process (p. 356). Confusion about locus of final authority also plagued the shared decision-making process.
Teachers were confused about who was in charge. The need for open lines of communication as to what decisions may and may not be made was clear (p. 359).

Throughout the literature, two major limitations to the continued advancement of SBDM or any shared decision-making process were apparent: the time required to carefully consider and decide upon issues and the training in the skills necessary to arrive at consensus in the decision making process.

The time required for participation in the decision making was excessive by any standards. One of the reasons for holding on to the long-outdated bureaucratic approach to educational decision making was that in this approach, decisions were made quickly and with little disruption to the daily school routine. The time consuming process of SBDM was not only frustrating for the new participants, but also for the administrators, who felt the organization attempting SBDM made little progress. One administrator reported in frustration that "it can take us a month to make decisions that the assistant principal and I could make in one concentrated day" (Fiske, 1992, p. 43).

Although there seemed to be no simple solution to this problem of time, the time it took to make decisions seemed to decrease as the decision team worked together, built rapport, and
shared experiences in decision making (Fiske, 1992; Cambone, et al, 1992; Valesky, 1992; & Malen, 1992). Training was also a key element in gaining control of the time factor problem.

White (1989) offered six suggestions for implementation in shared decision-making plans: training, gradual transition, financial support, shared goals, willingness of administration to share authority, and support from the school community. Although all of the suggestions were important considerations in implementation, none were more important than initial training of the decision-making team. The Study of Decision Making in High Schools further stated the case for training when the authors reported that “the advantages of shared decision making do not accrue simply by developing and electing people to positions” (Cambone, et al, 1992, p. 340). Teachers felt “trust was generated through shared training exercises [that were] carried over to the shared decision making system” (p. 342).

A study (Etheridge, Horgan, Valesky, & Smith, 1992) of seven urban schools in the Memphis City School District where SBDM was implemented pointed to democratic leadership and continuous team development through training as critical components of successful shared decision-making experiences. This study caused the authors to believe that training should “assist teams in working through
issues of membership subgrouping, confrontation, and differentiation more quickly and with less animosity" (p. 4). The model they developed (Total Teamwork System) “provide[d] an overall decision-making system grounded in real issues/problems/decisions raised in real school based decision-making committees. Through training, decision-making teams learn to make decisions in an efficient manner and to implement them effectively” (p. 4).

Intriligator (1985) reported from her study of inter-organizational relationships in developing training for SBDM administrators that helping the administrators reach a “shared common purpose” was essential for establishing a “common vision” of an organization’s mission, which she defined as “the collective understandings of the participating...[stakeholders that are necessary]...to identify critical elements” (p. 23). She further found that only through collaboration would all participants realize both the “common goal” and their “common vision.” As with the relationships that Intriligator insisted must come together between organizations, so must SBDM team training insure that “there is a defined interdependency among [members]..., a perceived commonality of purpose, goals, interests or clients that allows them to collaborate in [a joint effort]” (p. 23).
Clearly, then, the literature provided evidence that training must be an essential part of the implementation of a shared decision-making process. Only through effective training can behavior patterns within a decision-making team be identified as either facilitating or hindering team development (Etheridge, 1992).

Evaluation of the effort to implement SBDM was also necessary. Russell, Cooper, and Greenblatt (1992) developed an instrument, TIPS 2, that assessed teacher involvement across eight areas or dimensions: goals/vision/mission; facilitating procedures and structures; curriculum/instruction; budgeting; staffing; staff development; operations; and standards. Within each of these dimensions, items were rated on a Likert Scale from 1 to 5. TIPS 2 developers suggested numerous uses of their instrument, including assessment of both teachers and principals, with comparison of results, and "on-going evaluation...by using the instrument to collect baseline, formative, and summative data" (p. 40). A logical extension of this limited assessment was the assessment of any stakeholder in a SBDM model, including parents.

The preceding section reviewed the evolution of school decision making, tracing its historical roots from an industrial model established at the turn of the century to a new model largely based upon a different industrial model. The section detailed both
the new-found benefits of a shared decision-making process and the frustrations that confronted those involved in making the decisions. The study of the involvement of parents in the decision-making process took a minor position in the literature. Since the latest reform movements suggested the participation of all stakeholders, an examination of how parents were actually involved in the education of their children and how that involvement could be enhanced to increase their role in decision making was essential.

Parent Involvement In Education

This section was devoted to an investigation of the current literature and research about parent roles in the education of their children, especially as these roles related to school-level decision making. In considering parent involvement in education as an evolving process, three themes emerged: the most important form of involvement, the most common types of parent involvement, and the future of parent involvement.

Many authors and experts in parenting felt the most important aspect of a parent's involvement in education was the involvement they shared with their own child in educational endeavors: "parent involvement is critical in facilitating children's development and achievement and in preventing or remedying educational and
developmental problems" (Becher, 1986, p. 1). The early school success or failure of any child in a given year rested primarily with two people: the teacher and the parent. Parents had a responsibility to build a bond and help their children build a bond with the teacher or teachers that provided educational services to them. More importantly, a parent had the responsibility to advocate the child's identity and therefore to insist upon fair treatment, challenging instruction, and proper help for the child. Insuring that a caring, mutual bond existed between the parent, student, and teachers was the first and most important form of parent involvement (Becher, 1986).

Parenting was never regarded as an unimportant or an easy activity, yet parents were not for the most part trained in parenting techniques and much that occurred, whether a success or a failure, may have occurred by accident (Campbell, 1977). On the other hand, teachers of children in public schools were educators by profession, and Fitzwater (1986) suggested that perhaps effective parenting or "children skills" should be developed through training. Fitzwater considered the relationship of parenting and education to be a natural one since a child's first teacher is the parent. A child's success in school usually had a foundation that was built through the experience of successful family relationships, and "successful
family relationships don't just happen, [but] ...result from commitment to principles embraced by the family members” (Fitzwater, 1986, p. 99).

Walberg (1984) found that one of nine factors that powerfully impacted learning was the home environment. Parent involvement was examined within the context of an “alterable curriculum of the home [that included]...informed parent-child conversations about school and everyday events; encouragement and discussion of leisure reading; monitoring and joint critical analysis of television viewing and peer activities; deferral of immediate gratifications to accomplish long-term human-capital goals; expressions of affection and interest in the child's academic and other progress as a person; and perhaps, among such unremitting efforts, smiles, laughter, caprice, and serendipity” (p. 25). Walberg concluded that it benefited educators to assist parents to “modify these alterable academic conditions in the home” (p. 25) because these conditions were more predictive of successful academic learning than any other aspect of environment.

Parents were determined to have responsibilities not only in their homes, but as advocates for their children's education. The school-trained teacher had the responsibility for providing a child an appropriate education in a caring and success-filled environment,
and the parents' responsibility was to be their child's advocate to insure that this occurred. Fitzwater (1992) said that "it is up to parents...to deal with anything short of these standards [in a school or in a child's teacher]. For the sake of a child, who matures but once, bad teaching must not be condoned." He further stated that this same zeal should be applied to helping a teacher and a school with "a cooperative spirit, harmony, mutual respect, and praise [as] the goals" (p.102).

When parents became involved in their children's education, both children and parents benefited. The children "demonstrate advanced academic achievement and cognitive development (Andrews, et al, 1982; Henderson, 1981; and Herman & Yeh, 1980). [In addition,] the parent-child relationship is improved..., parents increase the number of contacts made with the school..., [and] parents become better teachers of their children at home and use more positive forms of reinforcement" (Becher, 1986, p.1). Beyond these benefits to the children, involved parents "...develop positive attitudes about themselves, increase self-confidence, and often enroll in programs to enhance their personal development. They also are more positive about school and school personnel than uninvolved parents (Herman & Yeh, 1980), help to gather community support for educational programs, and become more active in other
community activities” (p.1).

Anne Henderson (1988), a consultant for the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE), reported that the trend of declining parent involvement could be considered a primary factor in why children were falling behind and dropping out. She listed the following points discovered through research as a basis for parent involvement:

1. The family, not the school, provided the primary educational environment for children.

2. Involving parents in their children’s formal education improved the children’s achievement.

3. Parent involvement was most effective when it was comprehensive, well-planned and long lasting.

4. Involving parents when their children were young had beneficial effects that persisted throughout the child’s academic career.

5. Involving parents with their children’s education at home was not be enough to improve schools; a school’s average level of achievement did not appear to improve unless parents were involved in the school.

6. Students’ attitudes about themselves and their environment were critical to achievement; these attitudes
were formed primarily at home, though they could also be profoundly influenced by experience at school. (p.153)

Involving parents in the education of their child provided significant opportunities for improving that child's quality of education. In addition, significant benefits for the parents and society resulted. Henderson stated “citizens in our democracy must participate in the governing of public institutions....[and]...to shut parents out of their children's experiences in school...[has proven to be]...destructive to the family” (p.153).

Parent involvement was most commonly reflected in activities such as clerical work, office assistance, tutoring, serving as a room parent, driving or otherwise assisting on field trips, or serving in a support organization such as PTA. Some authors even reported that these were the types of activities that most interested parents: “parents most enjoy participating in classroom activities, [and] parent meetings” (McKinney, 1980, cited in Becher, 1986, p. 1). Although parent involvement in these categories was quite common and was often thought of as low level involvement, many schools could not have as effectively educated students as they did without this spirit of volunteerism in parents.

The future of parent involvement, however, was seen to be in school-level and system-level decision-making (National PTA,
1992): today's parent must be ready to accept a demanding role as a decision-maker in an active and participatory manner, and the school administrator must be ready to allow the involvement to take place. PTA, long the champion of parent involvement in education, was observed to be "...working hard to dispel the old image," (Taylor qtd. in "PTAs," 1992, p. B-1), and "the image of the PTA as a chaperone group for classroom parties and supervisors for candy-selling youngsters is changing" (p. B-1). As one parent who had pressed for parental involvement in the decision making structure stated, "It is time for a change in the administrator and teacher attitude that...the only role of parents in the school [is] to sell Snowballs and come to PTA meetings" (qtd. in Fiske, 1992, p. 47).

Indeed, in the latest volley of school reform movements, one of the most popular ideas to improve schools was that parents should be involved in decision making. Opinions ranged from the idea that parents should serve in advisory capacities to the idea that they should totally determine policy or operate their own schools.

Although Goodlad (1984) saw an excellent opportunity for parent involvement to become meaningful in a greater way than in the past, he also believed that there was "a considerable degree of unrealistic romanticism about parents taking over schooling" (p. 272). He said that although polls and surveys reported that
parents wanted a greater voice in the affairs of their schools, what most really wanted was to be "kept informed in a clear fashion...[and for]...the decisions and those who make them to be visible" (p. 272). He further stated:

[parents] would prefer to leave the running of the school to the principal, and the classrooms to teachers and, if possible, to hold them accountable. Holding one's neighbors accountable leads to tensions most people prefer to avoid. (p. 272)

While Goodlad's research showed that principals, teachers, and superintendents all saw themselves at the top of the hierarchy in decision making and saw the other groups at a level below them, the parents who were surveyed would take the power from the more remote, less visible, more impersonal authorities heading the system and place it in the hands of the more visible, more personally known, close-at-hand staff of the school and parent groups close to the school. (p. 274)

In successful parent involvement programs, Becher (1986) found several principles that propelled the success, including involvement of "parents in decision making and [the explanation of] ...administrative decisions to encourage parents to
respond to decisions rationally" (p. 1). Since the initial development of the SBDM concept, parent involvement was a common theme. Because the shared decision-making component claimed to have as its goal a share of ownership by all stakeholders in the educational organization, the involvement of parents was a natural element. According to Guthrie, "Long-lasting school reform requires the active involvement of all stakeholders in the educational process" (qtd. in Mutchler, 1989, p. 1). However, it had never been clear to what extent the parent stakeholder should be involved: "in many proposals for SBDM, parents have been a primary focus of involvement but only in an 'advisory nature'" (David, 1989, p. 50).

Two of the five goals that were established for the SBDM startup and planning year for the seven schools in Memphis dealt directly with parent involvement. These goals were to establish "a school where parents can and do become involved with the school and student learning; and mechanisms whereby all constituent groups can have meaningful input on important issues" (Etheridge, Hall, Brown, & Lucas, 1990, p. 8). In Chicago, legislation provided that the parent numbers on the SBDM council double those of teachers and principals who were employed by the council itself (David, 1989; and Fiske, 1992).
Should parents be involved in an advisory nature? Should parents dictate the SBDM council activities and agenda by pure numbers? Lewis (1986) responded to the question of how parents should be used on the SBDM councils by suggesting "like any other member of the council. Similar to teachers and other members, parents bring strengths to the council in specific areas that other members do not have" (p. 21).

Parents felt that obstacles often interfered with their true ability to participate. Teacher reluctance was the foremost problem inhibiting parent involvement (Becher, 1986). It was not unusual to hear professional educators say that the classroom as well as decisions about what goes on in the classroom should be left to professionals who have been trained for the job, yet there was "far more agreement about the importance of including parents in the educational process today than there was five years ago....[However,] the general agreement on the importance of involving parents in the educational process tends to break down at the point of implementation" (Henderson, 1988, p.149). Of professional educators, those on-site--teachers and principals--tended to disvalue other than traditional modes of parental involvement, whereas those removed from the school site, including school board members and superintendents, tended to "rate parent decision
making at the school more highly" (p. 150). Involving parents in the operation of the school caused parents to be more knowledgeable of all management aspects and therefore greater contributors to not only their child's education, but also the school's well being. Mutchler (1989) concluded that "this argument suggests that school-based management directly increases the involvement of parents in improving the school" (p. 1).

Three forms of parent involvement were discussed in this section. First, the involvement that parents experienced with their own children will, researchers believed, continue to be the most important form of parent involvement. Every child was perceived to need an adult advocate for insuring fair treatment and attention to educational needs. Second, the most common and traditional form of parent involvement, volunteerism, was seen as an essential part of a school's worth and growth. Parents had always given of themselves to make schools a better place for children. The most effective schools had effective parent volunteer programs that helped the school's accomplishment of its mission in the community. Finally, however, the future of parent involvement was clear: parents must assume the role of shared decision-maker. Although that role was not clearly defined and will not be easily
established, the necessity of parent involvement in the process of shared decision making was recognized by all who studied SBDM.

**What Is Known And What Must Be Discovered**

Public school organizational management experienced evolution from the early 1900's to the present. Although much of the change was significant in terms of results, the scientific or bureaucratic model of management still dominated as the model of public school administration. Principals had always been involved with decision making to varying degrees, and teachers had been able to make headway into decision-making circles. Parents were involved as well, but to a much less effective degree. Throughout the literature, the belief that public education can improve with input from all its stakeholders was evident. Although most of the experience in shared decision-making models involved teachers, parents were discovered to be poised and ready for participation. Parent involvement in education occurred in three forms in American education's history: involvement with the educations of their own children, volunteerism at school, and involvement in decision making. Little evidence indicated that any form of parent involvement will disappear to be replaced by another form. All levels of involvement were important, but new reform movements
suggested that parents must ready themselves for management level involvement. In the implementation of increased parent involvement in SBDM, valuable information may be gleaned from the experiences that hindered the processes for teachers' participation as well as those experiences where success was evident.

Since little information was available pertaining to actual parent participation in the decision-making process, or more importantly, the degree to which parents believe they should be involved in the decision-making process, research was needed to determine both. In establishing a true decision-making framework, the assessment of parent attitudes regarding the actual and the ideal levels of teacher, parent, and principal involvement in decision-making was essential. From such an assessment of parents' attitudes about their own, teachers', and principals' participation in decision making, decisional equilibrium for parents may be determined, and it was precisely this determination that was the subject of this study.
CHAPTER 3
Research Methodology and Instruments

Introduction
The research procedures utilized in this study included the selection of the sample, the development and refinement of the questionnaire, testing of instrument reliability and validity, the pilot study, gathering the data, and the plan for analyzing the data.

Selection of the Sample
The population for this study was the parents of elementary age children who attended public elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee Department of Education during the 1993-94 school year. For the purposes of this study, an elementary school was defined as any single school listed in the sampling frame as having a composition of any series of grades beginning below grade five. Schools were considered that included grades five through twelve if the beginning grade was lower than grade five. The approximate size of the parent population was determined by adding the enrollments of all elementary schools in the population area. This procedure assumed that all students had
at least one parent/guardian or head of household who could be selected for the survey. The population size was based upon the assumption that a reasonable estimate of population could be made even though some students had two parents, some had one parent in the home, and some homes had more than one child who could have been a student in the sampled schools. It was assumed that these factors balanced in order to determine that the population size of 41,281 parents or heads of households was reasonable. Findings and conclusions generated from this study were generalized to this population. It was also assumed that the findings and conclusions, with some limitations, could be generalized to the larger population of parents of elementary students throughout the State of Tennessee.

The sampling frame used in selecting the sample was the 1993-94 Directory of Public Schools, Approved Nonpublic, Special State Schools and the State Department of Education, State of Tennessee. The sampling frame provided a school number, address, telephone number, number of students at the time of the preliminary report, and principal's name along with other pertinent information for all schools. One hundred twenty-four schools were identified within the designated developmental area as meeting the definition of elementary school.
Because this study was designed to include two parallel studies that considered similar problems involving principals and teachers, it was determined, in collaboration with the researchers of those studies, that this study would involve all elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee Department of Education.

Because of the nature of the study and the necessity that the surveyed parents had at least some knowledge of the school and its operation, the principal of each school was asked to identify at least 25-35 parents in each school who were active in the school in some capacity and were somewhat knowledgeable about the school's operation. From those chosen by the principal, a random sample was selected to complete the survey.

Using the formula below where \( n \) = sample size; \( p \) = the extent (in percent) to which the researcher believed that the attitude existed in the target population that will favor additional involvement into decision making; \( q \) = the extent (in percent) to which the researcher believed that the attitude existed in the target population that will not favor additional involvement into decision making; \( Q \) = equals the band of confidence (in percent) the researcher had in \( p \); and \( \frac{Q}{p} \) = \( Q \) divided by the \( t \) value for the level of confidence selected for the study, a sample size (\( n \)) of 323 parents...
was determined to be an adequate sample size under the following conditions. The level of significance was .05, and the expected support for increased involvement in the target population was estimated to be 70% with a margin of error of ±5% (Garrett, 1962, p. 239).

\[
\frac{pq}{(\hat{p}q)^2} = \frac{(0.7)(0.3)}{(0.05/1.96)^2} = 322.73 = 323
\]

This sample size was adjusted to account for ineligibles and non-response using the following formula, where \(n'\) = the adjusted sample size; \(n\) = the calculated sample size; \(e\) = the proportion of eligibles expected to be on the sampling list; and \(r\) = the proportion of respondents expected (Henry, 1991, pp. 124-125).

\[
n' = \frac{n}{(e)(r)(1)(0.3)} = \frac{323}{1076}
\]

Because of the nature of the sampling frame, an accuracy of 100% could be obtained in selecting eligible respondents. However, since those who were to be surveyed were parents with little motivation to complete the survey and since the contact of these parents depended primarily on the principal's willingness to
cooperate, an estimate of 30% return was expected, even with an attempt to conduct in-person administration of the questionnaire.

After adjusting the original sample for the expected 100% eligibility factor and the 30% estimated return factor, a initial sample size of 1076 was determined in order to provide for the previously determined adequate sample size.

In order to prevent bias as a result of school size, it was determined that a 3% sample of the estimated 41,218 parents in the population provided the best sampling approach. Thus the 3% parent sample was adequate to obtain the needed sample size and to assure equal representational opportunity for each school taking into account the school size.

**Development and Refinement of the Questionnaire**

After a review of related literature and previous research studies, consultation with the committee chairman, and examination of research conducted within the parallel studies, a questionnaire was administered to each participant. The instrument was administered in person if at all possible, but was, however, provided in another manner to parents whose schedules were impossible to accommodate. The completed questionnaires were, at the discretion of the individual completing the survey, either mailed directly back
to the researcher or returned to the school office to be collected. Since the study was designed primarily as a survey, the questionnaire lends itself to statistical analysis. The researcher believed that respondent comments often supported and enriched the statistical analysis of the data; therefore, the survey also contained a portion with an open-ended format. Because the instrument was administered to parents who had little motivation to participate, it was designed to be as easy to complete as possible.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section requested demographic information about the school, the school system, and the individual completing the form. Specifically, these questions sought information about the sex, education, number of children in school, race, income, and level of participation or involvement in the school. The demographic information was used to analyze the sample for the following purposes: (a) to allow the researcher to accurately describe the sample chosen for the study and (b) to determine a balance in the sample corresponding to the characteristics identified by the demographic descriptors.

The second section contained a Likert-type scale that was developed to measure the respondent’s perception of the actual degree of involvement of principals, teachers, and parents in
school-level decision making. The survey focused on the level of decision-making involvement in the following three major areas consistently identified in the literature as areas most common to the shared decision-making process: budget, personnel and staffing, and curriculum and instruction. The third part of the survey provided a space for the respondents to add any comment if desired to clarify their position regarding shared decision making in elementary schools. These comments were utilized to enrich the descriptions of findings of the study.

The items considered appropriate for the questionnaire were reviewed by a group of teachers, a group of administrators including both central office and school levels, and a group of involved parents comprising a system-wide PTA council. The purpose of the review was to solicit comments regarding the relevance of each item to the construct intended to be measured; the clarity, conciseness, and readability of the items; and ways of expressing the construct that were not included in the instrument.

A letter was developed stating the purpose of the study, requesting cooperation of the principals of the selected schools, and outlining the procedures that would be followed. The questionnaire was submitted to the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) along with the application and supporting
documentation. Approval of the IRB was obtained prior to the initiation of the data-gathering phase of the study.

**Instrument Reliability and Validity**

The validity and reliability of the instrument was established through a combination of the pilot study and multiple computer analysis reliability checks on the data obtained through administration of the questionnaire to the sample.

**Pilot Study**

After revising and finalizing the survey, a pilot study was conducted in the Bristol Tennessee School System in order to field test the questionnaire. Principals, K-12 teachers, and parents from each of the eight schools in the school system completed the questionnaire, which was designed to accommodate simultaneously surveying a variety of groups. The survey attempted to measure the extent of the participation of these specific groups in decision making at the school level. Using a random sampling technique, teachers were selected from all six elementary schools, the junior high, and the high school. All principals in the Bristol Tennessee School System were surveyed. The parents surveyed were members of the executive boards of the Parent-Teacher Associations as well as parents randomly selected from all schools. All participants
indicated which grade levels they represented or in which they had children in order to give the researchers an indication of the grade levels that were represented by respondents.

A cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey was provided along with directions for completing the questionnaire. Included in the questionnaire itself were items regarding school budget, personnel selection, curriculum determination, selection of instructional materials, purchase of capital outlay, formation of system wide policies, establishment of the school calendar, development of system wide policies, school goals and objectives, grading and reporting procedures, personnel evaluation, and pupil services.

The format for responding to each item consisted of teacher, parent, and principal categories with two Likert scales for each category. The first Likert scale asked the participant to respond to how representatives of each category were actually involved in decision making. The second Likert scale requested the participant to indicate how representatives of each category should be involved in decision making. The scale ranged from 1 to 4, with 1 representing no involvement, 2 representing minor involvement, 3 representing major involvement, and 4 representing total involvement. An additional space beside each item provided an
opportunity for participants to indicate specific examples of how they believed the category representatives should be involved in the described decision and to address any areas not included in the survey.

A careful review of the information gained through the survey revealed the following in regard to the instrument:

1. The instrument utilized a complex format which caused confusion of those surveyed.

2. The information obtained from the survey did not lend itself to sophisticated methods of statistical analysis that would provide in-depth information for the researcher.

3. The format of the survey was cumbersome, and it was apparent from feedback that it had no face validity to those who participated in the pilot study.

4. The categories were wordy and ambiguous, causing those surveyed to be unsure of what was being asked and therefore how they should respond.

5. Category headings caused respondents to question their knowledge in regard to major areas, which in turn seemed to cause them not to respond.

6. Using the title "Shared Decision Making Survey" placed the researchers at a disadvantage by providing the respondents
information about the survey that may have biased their responses.

7. The open-ended format allowed for those surveyed to clarify positions and to provide graphic descriptions of their feelings in regard to how decisions are made and who should make them. Parents often spoke frankly through their comments, indicating their feelings regarding the governance of schools.

8. The major constructs identified by the researcher as areas to be measured in regard to shared decision-making were clearly supported as appropriate through feedback from those surveyed.

9. A statistical analysis of the reliability of the instrument was not conducted due to the ambiguous nature of the instrument.

In general, although feedback from respondents in the pilot study about the complexity and lack of clarity of the instrument caused the researchers to abandon the format of the original instrument in favor of a more simple one, the information gained from an analysis of the responses to the questions was valuable in determining the final survey items to be used. The format of the instrument was completely revised, however, with the development of a more general, statement-oriented format that would allow parents to respond in a timely and specific manner without having to determine which group they were addressing with their response. The instrument was then re-administered to a portion of the
original pilot study group for comments relative to its revised format. The revisions were seen as favorable by all groups, especially parents.

**Reliability Analysis**

The initial test utilized to analyze the returned surveys was a test of instrument reliability. The questionnaire was subjected to a test of internal consistency using the statistical analysis test that produced the reliability coefficient Cronbach's Alpha. Question groups that formed the basis for eighteen separate constructs were subjected to the internal consistency testing in order to improve the reliability measure of each construct.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of how parents were actually involved in budget decisions at the time of the survey (H2) utilized survey items 8, 17, 25, 38, 52, and 55 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8221. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of their ideal level of involvement in budget decisions at the present time (H2) utilized survey items 8, 17, 25, 38, 52, and...
55 as measured on the ideal or "should be involved" scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8134. Dropping question 8 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum potential of .8296. Further analysis revealed that dropping additional questions would have lowered the coefficient; therefore, all remaining questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of how parents were actually involved in personnel decisions at the time of the survey (H5) utilized survey items 3, 5, 10, 14, 27, 32, and 36 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8425. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of their ideal level of involvement in personnel decisions (H5) utilized survey items 3, 5, 10, 14, 27, 32, and 36 as measured on the ideal or "should be involved" scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8349. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of how parents are involved in curricula decisions at
the time of the survey (H₈) utilized survey items 20, 21, 23, 30, 42, 46, and 49 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8104. Dropping question 23 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum potential of .8540. Further analysis revealed that dropping additional questions would have lowered the coefficient; therefore, all remaining questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of their ideal level of involvement in curricula decisions (H₉) utilized survey items 20, 21, 23, 30, 42, 46, and 49 as measured on the ideal or "should be involved" scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8652. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of how principals are involved in budget decisions at the time of the survey (H₃) utilized survey items 9, 16, 33, 39, 44, and 48 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8445. Dropping question 39 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a slightly higher maximum potential of .8449. Further analysis revealed that dropping additional questions would have lowered the coefficient;
therefore, all remaining questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents’ perceptions of the principal’s ideal level of involvement in budget decisions (H₃) utilized survey items 9, 16, 33, 39, 44, and 48 as measured on the ideal or “should be involved” scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8331. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents’ perceptions of how principals were actually involved in personnel selection and evaluation decisions at the time of the survey (H₆) utilized survey items 1, 18, 22, 26, 41, 50, and 60 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8268. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents’ perceptions of the principal’s ideal level of involvement in personnel selection and evaluation decisions (H₆) utilized survey items items 1, 18, 22, 26, 41, 50, and 60 as measured on the ideal or “should be involved” scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8166. Dropping question 50 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a slightly higher maximum potential of .8344.
Further analysis revealed that dropping additional questions would have lowered the coefficient; therefore, all remaining questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of how principals were actually involved in curricula decisions at the time of the survey (Hg) utilized survey items 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 53, and 56 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8198. Dropping question 56 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a maximum potential of .8251. Further analysis revealed that dropping additional questions would have lowered the coefficient; therefore, all remaining questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of the principal's ideal level of involvement in curricula decisions (Hg) utilized survey items 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 53, and 56 as measured on the ideal or "should be involved" scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8450. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of how teachers were involved in budget decisions at the time of the survey (H1) utilized survey items 4, 28, 51, 54, 58,
and 59 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8053. Dropping question 28 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a slightly higher maximum potential of .8057. Further analysis revealed that dropping additional questions would have lowered the coefficient; therefore, all remaining questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perceptions of teachers' ideal level of involvement in budget decisions ($H_1$) utilized survey items 4, 28, 51, 54, 58, and 59 as measured on the ideal or "should be involved" scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7114. Dropping question 4 resulted in an increase in the coefficient to a slightly higher maximum potential of .7153. Further analysis revealed that dropping additional questions would have lowered the coefficient; therefore, all remaining questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents' perception of how teachers were involved in personnel selection and evaluation decisions at the time of the survey ($H_4$) utilized survey items 12, 15, 24, 29, 34, 37, and 57 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .8449. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.
The assessment of the construct relating to parents’
perceptions of teachers’ ideal level of involvement in personnel
selection and evaluation decisions (H₄) utilized survey items items
12, 15, 24, 29, 34, 37, and 57 as measured on the ideal or “should be
involved” scale. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of
.8429. Dropping questions would have resulted in a decrease in the
coefficient; therefore, all questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents’
perceptions of how teachers were involved in curricula decisions at
the time of the survey (H₇) utilized survey items 2, 7, 11, 19, 40,
45, and 47 as measured on the current involvement scale. Analysis
revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7794. Dropping questions
would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all
questions were retained.

The assessment of the construct relating to parents’
perceptions of teachers’ ideal level of involvement in curricula
decisions (H₇) utilized survey items 2, 7, 11, 19, 40, 45, and 47 as
measured on the ideal or “should be involved” scale. Analysis
revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .7949. Dropping questions
would have resulted in a decrease in the coefficient; therefore, all
questions were retained.
Gathering the Data

The principal of the each school was contacted by telephone to solicit support for the study. The questionnaire was printed and taken to each school by one of three researchers involved in the three parallel studies. The need to sample all representative parent populations of the school was made clear to the principal, and the principal's attention to that effort when choosing the parent sample was solicited. The importance of the principal's support was foremost; therefore, any direction that the principal suggested in gathering survey information was followed. If the principal made no alternative suggestions, the questionnaire was administered to the principal, respondents were selected from the teacher and parent population as per the specified sample selection procedure, and the questionnaire was administered in person or left with the principal for the selected respondent.

Plan for Analyzing the Data

The null form for each hypotheses was tested for the purpose of statistical treatment in every case. This form stated that there will be no significant difference between population means, and any difference found is unimportant and incidental. The hypotheses were stated in research form, which states expectations in positive
Hypotheses were measured through a series of phrases from the questionnaire. The parents' perception of the level of actual parent participation and their estimate of the ideal level of participation in decision making was measured as follows:

1. \( H_2 \): in budget decisions--questionnaire items 8, 17, 25, 38, 52, and 55.

2. \( H_5 \): in personnel selection and evaluation--questionnaire items 3, 5, 10, 14, 27, 32, and 36.

3. \( H_8 \): in curricula decisions--questionnaire items: 20, 21, 23, 30, 42, 46, and 49.

The parents' perception of the level of actual principal participation and their estimate of the ideal level of principal participation in decision making was measured as follows:

1. \( H_3 \): in budget decisions--questionnaire items 9, 16, 33, 39, 44, and 48.

2. \( H_6 \): in personnel selection and evaluation--questionnaire items 1, 18, 22, 26, 41, 50, and 60.

3. \( H_9 \): in curricula decisions--questionnaire items: 6, 13, 31, 35, 43, 53, and 56.

The parents' perception of the level of actual teacher participation and their estimate of the ideal level of teacher
participation in decision making was measured as follows:

1. \( H_1 \): in budget decisions--questionnaire items 4, 28, 51, 54, 58, and 59.

2. \( H_4 \): in personnel selection and evaluation--questionnaire items 12, 15, 24, 29, 34, 37, and 57.

3. \( H_7 \): in curricula decisions--questionnaire items: 2, 7, 11, 19, 40, 45, and 47.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Rank Test was used to test the hypotheses. The minimum acceptable level of significance was preset at 0.05. The rationale for selecting this test was that the data gained from the survey instrument was at ordinal level, the same individuals were assessed using two scales, and the two assessments were dependent. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer generated statistical analysis program was used to analyze the data. The analysis and interpretation of the results are reported in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4
Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

In order to analyze the differences between the perceptions of parents in regard to actual and ideal levels of parent, teacher, and principal involvement in decisions that were made in elementary schools in East Tennessee, a questionnaire was administered in all 125 elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee State Department of Education. The questionnaire was provided to 1325 parents representing 3% of the population of each of the 125 schools.

The analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the those individuals who responded to the questionnaire included statistical assessment of the reliability of the questionnaire, the definition of the sample in relation to the demographic information provided by those completing surveys, and figures providing visual descriptions. Also included was the analysis of the tests conducted on each of the hypotheses stated in Chapter 1. Tables with statistical analysis were presented with each hypothesis. The hypotheses were stated in research form in Chapter 1 but were
tested in the null form to determine if significant differences between the perceptions of actual and ideal levels of involvement in the decisions described were present. The SPSS+ computer program was used to analyze all data. All data were entered into the computer individually by keyboard rather than by a scan method. Finally, the data analysis presented in the chapter was summarized.

Information about the Sample

The opportunity to be included in the sample population of this study were provided to approximately 3% of the parents at each of the 125 elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee State Department of Education. A total of 1325 questionnaires were distributed. Of those, 503 were returned, representing 38% of the total distributed. This number represented a larger sample size than was calculated as necessary for applying findings to the targeted population. The 3% sampling procedure was determined in order to meet the set requirements for an adequate sample size, provide sufficient opportunities for response, and prevent skewing of the results toward small or large school sizes. The largest school in the sample, with a student body of 899, was Gray Elementary School in Washington County; the smallest school was East Cherokee Elementary in Sullivan County with a student
population of 39. The average size of the elementary schools in the target population area was 355 students. Twenty-eight parents or 5.6% of those responding to the survey were from schools with a student population less than 150. Three hundred thirteen parents or 62.2% of those responding to the survey were from schools with a student population between 150 and 350. One hundred thirty-one parents or 26% of those responding to the survey were from schools with a student population between 350 and 650. Thirteen parents or 2.6% of those responding to the survey were from schools with a student population greater than 650. It was impossible to determine the size of the school of 18 parents, or 3.6% respondents. The size of the elementary schools represented by those parents who responded to the survey is depicted in Figure 1.

Parents responding to the survey were asked to complete nine questions about themselves. The nine questions asked the respondent's gender, number of children in the school, family status, race, educational level, family income, age, and the manner in which he/she had provided service to the school. The last demographic question asked whether parent training had been provided by the school and if so, requested information regarding the training. In addition, the parents were provided an opportunity to supply additional comments that would address areas not included in the
survey or any area of parent participation in school decision making upon which the respondent wanted to elaborate. The summary of the additional comments that the respondents provided was presented in this section in both a descriptive and graphic format.

**Gender of the Respondent**

Of those responding to the survey, 429 or 85.3% indicated their gender to be female while 67 or 13.3% indicated that they were male. Seven respondents did not indicate a gender. The percentages of male and female respondents are illustrated in Figure 2.
Number of Children in School

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of their children that were attending the school where they were asked to complete the survey. Two hundred thirty-three (46.3%) respondents indicated having only one child in the school where they were asked to complete the survey, while 155 (30.8%) reported two children in the school; 53 (10.5%) reported three children in the school; six (1.2%) reported four children in the school; five (1%) reported five children in the school; and six (1.2%) reported six children in the school. Forty-five (8.9%) respondents did not indicate the number of their children who were in attendance in the school where they
received the survey. Figure 3 illustrates the percentages of children in school reported by the respondents.

![Number of Children In the School](image)

**Figure 3.** Number of children in the school

**Family Status**

Respondents were asked to indicate a family status in one of the following categories: guardian, foster parent, two-parent home, single parent, or other family organization. Of the 492 parents responding to this question, nine (1.8%) indicated a family status in which they were appointed guardian of a child or children; 13 (2.6%) indicated foster parent status; 374 (74.2%) indicated their family status as a two parent home; and 92 respondents (18.3%) indicated a single parent home status. Six respondents (1%) indicated other for
family status, such as temporary custody or living with a relative other than a parent. Eleven failed to respond to the family status question of the demographic page. A prevalent number of responses to the survey came from two-parent homes, but whether the percentages of respondents based on family status was atypical of the population of a given school was not determined in the study. The percentages of family status categories reported by the respondents are illustrated in Figure 4.

![Family Status Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.** Family status

**Race of Respondents**

Respondents reported their race in one of the following categories: Hispanic, American Indian, Black, Caucasian, or Other.
Of the 484 parents who responded to this question, 11 (2.2%) indicated their race as Hispanic; 13 (2.6%) indicated their race as American Indian; 24 (4.8%) indicated their race as Black; 430 (85.5%) indicated their race as Caucasian; and six (1.2%) indicated their race as something other than was offered as choices. Twenty-eight (3.8%) parents did not respond to the demographic question regarding their race. The respondents were predominantly Caucasian, but whether the percentages of respondents based on race was uncharacteristic of the population of a given school was not determined in the study. The percentages of race in categories reported by the respondents are illustrated in Figure 5.

![Race](image)

**Figure 5.** Race of the respondent
**Educational Level of Respondents**

Respondents were asked to indicate an educational level in one of the following categories: less than high school, high school graduate or GED, some college, college degree, advanced college degree, or other. Of the 488 parents responding to this question, 34 (6.8%) indicated an educational level of less than high school; 155 (30.8%) reported having a high school diploma or GED certificate; 117 (23.3%) indicated having some college credit in addition to graduating from high school; 118 (23.5%) reported graduating from college; and 57 (11.3%) reporting having obtained an advanced college degree. Seven (1.4%) respondents indicated another type of educational level, such as vocational training or pilot training, that did not fall into one of the demographic categories listed. Fifteen (3%) respondents failed to list an educational level. The educational levels by category as reported by the respondents are illustrated in Figure 6.

**Family Income**

Respondents were asked to indicate an educational level in one of the following categories: less than $10,000; $10,000-$19,999; $20,000-$29,999; $30,000-$39,999; $40,000-$49,999; and greater than $50,000. Of the 475 parents responding to this question, 53
Figure 6. Educational level of respondents
(10.5%) indicated a family income of less than $10,000; 77 (15.3%) indicated a family income of $10,000-$19,999; 77 (15.3%) indicated a family income of $20,000-$29,999; 85 (16.9%) indicated a family income of $30,000-$39,999; 51 (10.1%) indicated a family income of $40,000-$49,999; and one hundred 32 (26.2%) indicated a family income of greater than $50,000. Twenty-eight (5.6%) parents who completed the survey did not respond to this demographic question. The percentages of family income by category as reported by the respondents are illustrated in Figure 7.
Figure 7. Family income

Age

Respondents reported their age in one of the following categories: less than 20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69. Seven respondents (1.4%) reported their age to be in the less than 20 years category; 56 (11.1%) reported their age to be in the 20-29 years category; 245 (48.7%) reported their age to be in the 30-39 years category; 142 (28.2%) reported their age to be in the 40-49 years category; eight (1.6%) reported their age to be in the 50-59 years category; and 22 (4.4%) reported their age to be in the 60-69 years category. Twenty-three (4.6%) failed to list an age for the demographic question. The percentages are illustrated in Figure 8.
**Figure 8.** Age of the respondent

**Service To School**

Respondents were asked to report the manner in which they had provided service to the school where their children were in attendance by indicating if they were a regular volunteer, a room parent, a member of the school decision-making team, a member of the school parent-teacher organization, an officer of the parent-teacher organization, or if they provided service to the school in another manner. Thirty-five (7%) parents responding to the question indicated that they were regular volunteers only; 26 (5.2%) indicated that they were room parents only; 15 (3%) indicated that they were a member of the decision-making team for the
school; 71 (14.1%) indicated that they were members of the parent-teacher organization; and five (1%) indicated that they were an officer of the parent-teacher organization. Of those parents who responded to the survey, 282 (56.1%) indicated that they provided service to their child's school in more than one of the categories presented. Sixty-nine (13.7%) responding parents either indicated that they provided no volunteer services to the school of any kind or failed to address this demographic question.

**Training Provided By The School**

The final demographic question asked parents to indicate if the school provided training for parents. The three choices for training were: parent volunteer training, school decision-making training, and any other training for parents that was provided. One hundred forty-six (29%) respondents indicated that their schools provided some form of volunteer training for parents. Only 22 (4.4%) respondents indicated that their schools provided decision-making training for parents involved in decision-making teams. Thirty-two (6.4%) indicated that some other type of training, such as Red Cross training, cardiopulmonary resuscitation training, or parenting training, was provided at their school. The vast majority of respondents, 303 (60.2%), reported that they had no knowledge of
training of any type that was provided to parents by their schools. The percentages of training by category as reported by the respondents are illustrated in Figure 9.

![Pie chart showing training provided by schools]

**Figure 9.** Training provided by schools

**Open-Ended Parent Comment Section**

Parents were provided an opportunity to comment on the study, clarify responses to any item, add additional information, or make any other comment. A large number of respondents, 214 (42.5%) of the 503 total respondents, took the extra time to write comments. Many of the parents wrote extensive comments and even added additional pages to the section in order to make clear their feelings and attitudes about parent involvement in the local school. The
comment section was an especially interesting and informative part of the questionnaire. Many of these parent comments would also benefit future refinement of the survey instrument.

Parents utilized the open-ended section in the following ways:

1. To comment on an individual question in regard to attempting to discover the researcher's true meaning or intent.

2. To comment on the appropriateness of a question in regard to attempting to answer.

3. To suggest that parents' perceptions of the central office role in decision making should be included in the survey.

4. To provide specific examples of curricular issues in which parents should either be autonomous or actively involved.

5. To provide specific examples of ways in which parents should be actively involved in teacher and principal evaluations.

6. To provide specific examples of personnel selection, including custodial workers and instructional aids, in which parents should be actively involved.

7. To suggest that parents should be actively involved in the disbursements of funds raised by parent groups and that parents' perceptions of needs should be taken into account in the disbursements of other funds raised at the school level.

8. To suggest that parents should be actively involved in
policy decisions regarding grading, discipline, class placement, and zoning.

9. To suggest that parents should be consulted in budget development at the school level.

10. To suggest that parents are not professional educators and that decision making should be left to the professionals.

11. To connect parents' active involvement in school activities and decision making to the success of their children in school.

12. To express appreciation and approval of the schools their children attended; the schools that drew these types of comments were most frequently described as warm, nurturing, and child-oriented.

13. To express disapproval of the schools their children attended; the schools that drew these types of comments were most frequently described as unresponsive to parents' and children's needs.

14. To suggest that parents and children be given the opportunity to complete a report card on their schools and school systems at the end of each academic year.
Hypotheses Analysis

The hypotheses were stated in research form in Chapter 1; however, all hypotheses were tested in the null form. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Tests were used to analyze each hypothesis. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test.

Hypothesis 1

H₁: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

(H₁: \( \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0 \))

H₀: No significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

(H₀: \( \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0 \))

Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of teacher involvement in budgetary processes of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size (n) of the respondent group was 457. The mean rank for the positive ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the
actual level was 233.18. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 117.81. The $z$ statistic of -10.4974 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis ($H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$) was rejected. The $n$, the means, $z$, and level of significance are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
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<th>$p$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>457</td>
<td>233.18</td>
<td>117.81</td>
<td>-10.4974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2

$H_2$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

($H_2: \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$)

$H_0$: No significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

($H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$)
Parent reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of their involvement in budgetary processes of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size (n) of the respondent group was 460. The mean rank for the positive ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 230.47. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 179.41. The z-statistic of -4.5864 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis (H₀: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$) was rejected. The n, the means, z, and level of significance are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>460</td>
<td>Positive: 230.47, Negative: 179.41</td>
<td>-4.5864</td>
<td>&lt;0.0005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Hypothesis 3**

$H_3$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement that principals should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools. $(H_3: \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0)$

$H_0$: No significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement that principals should have in the budgetary process in elementary schools. $(H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0)$

Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the principal's actual and ideal levels of involvement in budgetary processes of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size $(n)$ of the respondent group was 464. The mean rank for the positive ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 235.85. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 95.39. The $z$ statistic of -17.5420 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis $(H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0)$ was rejected. The $n$, the means, $z$, and level of significance are presented in Table 3.
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
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<th>Negative</th>
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<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>235.35</td>
<td>95.39</td>
<td>-17.5420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 4**

$H_4$: A significant difference exists between parents’ perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement that teachers should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools. ($H_4$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$)

$H_0$: No significant difference exists between parents’ perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools. ($H_0$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$)

Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of teachers’ actual and ideal levels of involvement in personnel decisions of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size ($n$) of the respondent group was 444. The mean rank for the positive ranks...
or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 200.31. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 59.79. The $z$ statistic of -16.8146 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis ($H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$) was rejected. The $n$, the means, $z$, and level of significance are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
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<tr>
<td>444</td>
<td>Positive: 200.31, Negative: 59.79</td>
<td>-16.8146</td>
<td>&lt;0.0005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 5**

$H_5$: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools.

($H_5: \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$)

$H_0$: No significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they
Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of actual and ideal levels of their involvement in personnel decisions of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size (n) of the respondent group was 464. The mean rank for the positive ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 213.42. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 78.42. The z statistic of -17.6133 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis (H0: $S = \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$) was rejected. The n, the means, z, and level of significance are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>464</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>213.42</td>
<td>-17.6133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>78.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 6

$H_6$: A significant difference exists between parents’ perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement principals should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools. ($H_6$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$)

$H_0$: No significant difference exists between parents’ perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement principals should have regarding personnel decisions in elementary schools. ($H_0$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$)

Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of actual and ideal levels of the principal’s involvement in personnel decisions of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size (n) of the respondent group was 464. The mean rank for the positive ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 219.98. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 195.91. The $z$ statistic of -5.5594 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis ($H_0$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$) was rejected. The $n$, the means, $z$, and level of significance are presented in Table 6.
Table 6

n, Mean Ranks, z, and Level of Significance Between Parents' Perceptions of Principals' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>443</td>
<td>Positive: 219.98</td>
<td>Negative: 195.91</td>
<td>-5.5594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 7

$H_7$: A significant difference exists between parents’ perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

($H_1$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$)

$H_0$: No significant difference exists between parents’ perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement teachers should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

($H_7$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$)

Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of actual and ideal levels of teachers’ involvement in curricular decisions of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size (n) of the respondent group was 459. The mean rank for the positive ranks
or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 206.52. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 127.51. The \( z \) statistic of -14.6642 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis (\( H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0 \)) was rejected. The \( n \), the means, \( z \), and level of significance are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
<th>( z )</th>
<th>( \rho )</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>459</td>
<td>206.52</td>
<td>127.51</td>
<td>-14.6642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 8

\( H_8: \) A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

\( (H_8: \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0) \)

\( H_0: \) No significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement they
should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools.

\( H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0 \)

Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of actual and ideal levels of their involvement in curricular decisions of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size \( n \) of the respondent group was 471. The mean rank for the positive ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 236.63. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 84.00. The \( z \) statistic of -18.6220 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypothesis \( H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0 \) was rejected. The \( n \), the means, \( z \), and level of significance are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( n )</th>
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<th>( z )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>471</td>
<td>236.63</td>
<td>84.00</td>
<td>-18.6220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 9

H₉: A significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement principals should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools. 
(H₉: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$)

H₀: No significant difference exists between parents' perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement principals should have in curricular decisions in elementary schools. 
(H₀: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$)

Parents reported a significant difference between their perceptions of actual and ideal levels of principals' involvement in curricular decisions of elementary schools. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance using a two-tailed test. The size (n) of the respondent group was 464. The mean rank for the positive ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were greater than the actual level was 203.62. The mean rank for the negative ranks or where the ideal levels of involvement were less than the actual levels was 128.24. The $z$ statistic of -11.8554 was significant at the .05 level of significance; thus the null hypotheses (H₀: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$) was rejected. The $n$, the means, $z$, and level of significance are presented in Table 9.
Table 9

N. Mean Ranks, $z$, and Level of Significance Between Parents’ Perceptions of Principals’ Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
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<th>Negative</th>
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<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>464</td>
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<td>203.62</td>
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**Summary of the Data Analysis**

Statistical assessment of the reliability of the questionnaire found it reliable. The demographic information provided by those completing surveys provided a definition of the sample as regards gender, race, age, income, family status, number of children in the school, school size, and education level. The null form for each hypothesis was tested and was rejected in every case. A significant difference was found to exist between parents’ perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of the involvement of teachers, principals, and parents in decision making in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel.
CHAPTER 5
Summary, Findings, Conclusions, Implications, And Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter summarizes, analyzes, and interprets the data obtained from the findings of this research study and discusses the conclusions and implications. In addition, this chapter identifies possible topics for further study.

Summary of Procedures

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the extent to which parents perceived themselves to be involved in the school level decision-making process and compare that perceived level of involvement to the extent of involvement that the parents felt was necessary to make effective school-based decisions.

A sixty-item questionnaire intended to measure eighteen separate constructs gathered data necessary for drawing conclusions in regard to the actual and ideal levels of involvement parents perceived for themselves, teachers, and principals in decision making in the areas of budget, personnel selection and evaluation, and curriculum. A total of 1325 questionnaires were
delivered to the 125 elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee Department of Education. A total of 503 questionnaires or approximately 38% were returned, providing an adequate sample base for analyzing and interpreting the data. Data were collected over a period of six weeks. The data were statistically analyzed with the SPSS computer statistical data analysis program. The statistical test used to analyze the data was the Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranks Test.

**Findings**

The nine null hypotheses were tested for significance at the .05 level. All nine hypotheses were rejected. Parents in the public schools of East Tennessee reported a significant difference well beyond the .05 level between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of involvement in all types of decisions made in East Tennessee Elementary Schools as measured in this study. Parents advocated an increase in their level of involvement in decision making as well as an increase in the levels of involvement of both teachers and principals.

Findings are summarized under each major category studied: budget, personnel, and curriculum.
Budget

Parents clearly believed that teachers, parents, and principals should have more involvement in any budget decisions made in the elementary schools. Parents believed that for all three groups, the difference in the perceived actual and ideal levels of involvement in decision making in budget decisions was significant at well beyond the .05 level.

Personnel

Parents clearly believed that teachers, parents, and principals should have more involvement in any personnel decisions made in the elementary schools. Parents believed that for all three groups the difference in the perceived actual and ideal levels of involvement in decision making in personnel decisions was significant at well beyond the .05 level.

Curriculum

Parents clearly believed that teachers, parents, and principals should have more involvement in any curricular decisions made in the elementary schools. Parents believed that for all three groups the difference in the perceived actual and ideal levels of involvement in decision making in curricular decisions was significant at well beyond the .05 level.
Table 10 provides a combined description of the analysis supporting findings.

Table 10

Areas, Positions, Mean Ranks, Difference Between Ranks, z, and n of Parents' Perceptions of Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Decisions in Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<td>195.91</td>
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<td>75.38</td>
<td>-11.8554</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ideal level of involvement was greater than the actual level
* Ideal level of involvement was less than the actual level

The open-ended comment section of the survey clarified and strengthened the findings reached through statistical analysis of the data that was gathered. Parents obviously felt the need for more openness on the part of elementary school teachers and principals in allowing parent participation in decision making. Their
views also clearly supported Goodlad's research (1984) that primary decision-making authority at the school level in the hands of parents, teachers, and the principal rather than at a centralized system level was preferred by parents. One parent's comments reflected the opinions of others as she stated, "I would like to see a PTO that consisted of the board, the principal, and teachers that jointly made decisions regarding fundraisers, purchases, curriculum, and how textbooks are used. School boards are just too far removed and the organization is too formal to really address parent concerns and provide real input. It [involvement and decision making] must be done at the local school level." Another stated, "only those individuals at the school know what is best [for the children]; ...central office administrators rarely work in the schools or talk with parents about their feelings and the [needs of the] child."

Parents also commented that parents in particular needed more authority over a variety of decisions made in local schools: "Parents I believe should have more participation in policy decision, such as grading, disciplinary actions, and the placing of children in grades. Parents should also have more say in the zoning policies of the system." Another commented, "I feel parents should be more involved in the evaluation process of school personnel....I also
believe parents should be able to help decide on custodial personnel since these individuals are around our children throughout the day. This should also apply for instructional assistants."

Also addressed by comments of several parents was the time consuming nature of shared decision making; one stated "as much as I agree with the idea that parents should be involved with local school personnel to make policies that work for the particular school, I just don't know if I would serve on a council because of the time it would take. I already spend several hours a week on school activities; adding more would be hard." Throughout all the comments made by parents, even those half dozen who stated they did not believe parents should be involved at all in policy decisions regarding curriculum, personnel, and budget, a strong commitment to and desire for parents' involvement in activities of the schools was evident. Predominantly, however, parents indicated in their comments a willingness and desire to be meaningfully involved in policy decisions as well as simpler school activities.

**Conclusions**

The following conclusions concerning the parents' perceptions of involvement in decision making in elementary schools were based on the findings of this research:
1. Parents are not involved in important decisions in regard to budget, personnel, and curriculum to the extent they feel is necessary.

2. Parents want an increased level of involvement in decisions involving budget, personnel, and curriculum.

3. Parents believe that teachers are not involved to a high degree in many decisions regarding budget, personnel, and curriculum.

4. Parents believe that teachers should be actively involved in all decisions regarding budget, personnel, and curriculum.

5. Parents believe that principals, although more involved than parents and teachers, are not adequately involved in many decisions regarding budget, personnel, and curriculum.

6. Parents believe that principals should be actively involved in all decisions regarding budget, personnel, and curriculum.

**Implications**

These implications followed from the study:

The data analysis revealed a vast discrepancy in many schools between what the school personnel believes is offered as parent opportunities for involvement and what parents perceive is available to them. Inadequate communication between parents and
the school is, then, one obstacle to the effective involvement of parents in decision making.

Parents want to be involved in their children's schools, and they are a vital element in successful schools and successful children. The school bears the responsibility for ensuring that its parents are given the opportunity to be involved.

The school and school system bear the responsibility for the training of all stakeholders necessary for effective parent involvement in education. Even parents recognized in their comments that without a method for involvement, ineffective results can occur: "Parental involvement can be a double-edged sword. Parents can be helpful in offering good thoughts and suggestions, but when there are so many different ideas coming from all directions, not too much can be accomplished."

While the school's responsibility is to allow and encourage parent involvement, the parent's responsibility is to respond with a willingness to be involved. The comments of many parents referred to this duality, as in this succinct response: "The problem is getting parents to participate!"
Recommendations

Underlying the following recommendations is the belief that the schools and school systems, because of their professional status as opposed to parents' lay status, must provide the impetus for initiating and implementing the changes perceived as necessary by all stakeholders.

It is recommended that all school systems not already doing so establish a procedure to assess the readiness of the school's stakeholders to participate in shared decision making as an alternative management style that can achieve school improvement. All stakeholders, including parents, should be included in the assessment phase.

Upon completion of the readiness assessment, a comprehensive implementation plan should be developed. This plan must include a realistic timeline and a method for selecting governing representatives. The plan must provide for a gradual and thorough movement from a centralized to a school-level shared decision-making management structure.

It is recommended that all schools that initiate school-level shared decision making also establish training for all involved, teachers, administrators, and parents. Only through training will this management style be successfully implemented. In addition,
effective training will potentially lessen the time council members must spend in decision-making sessions. In the comment section of the survey, one parent addressed this issue of training: "I think that parent's participation in any part of their child's education is extremely important. On the other hand, there is so much in the fine lines that parents do not realize is in the process. Parents need to be educated as well if they are going to be voicing opinions and getting involved more with their children before trying to tell someone, with the experience and training, how to do something. We as parents have to realize it is more than an opinion; it is extreme dedication."

It is recommended that the schools strive for improved communication between parents and the school. One parent suggested in the open-ended portion of the survey that "It would be a good idea [for the school] to send out surveys from time to time and get parents' input on different ideas. This sort of ties in with PTA but there needs to be more parent involvement." Another parent suggested, "More information needs to be distributed to parents about what is happening in our schools. Parents need to be aware of what is going on. For example: what services are and are not available to a special child, such as special programs; more communication in general between school and parent; frequent
parent/teacher communication; and school and teachers giving parents an opportunity to get involved in all areas."

It is recommended that all schools develop written policies that clearly define the types of involvement actually available to parents and that these written policies be included in school handbooks and posted prominently in announcement areas most likely seen by parents. In this regard, one parent recommended in the comment section of the survey that a school bulletin board be devoted to announcements and news for parents.

It is recommended that all schools provide a welcoming atmosphere that is conducive to parent involvement; public relations training for all school personnel that interacts with the public, including secretaries, teachers, principal, custodial staff, lunch workers, and instructional aids, should be provided.

It is recommended that during the process of establishing a plan for moving from a centralized to a shared decision-making structure, all schools provide for a regular and systematic parenting education program. This program should address all levels of parenting and child development. The program should include educating parents for effective decision making with and for their children and the development of a parenting skills curriculum for parents with children in school in kindergarten through grade 12.
It is recommended that the school system develop a policy position that is supportive of shared decision making and that redefines the central office administrative and supervisory roles as well as defines the range of school-level decision-making authority.

It is recommended that further study be made of parents' perceptions of the actual and the ideal role of the central office in the management of schools. Many parents commented about the central office; one even noted the need to address parents' perceptions of the central office: "One factor not considered in this survey is the role of Central Office. It is hard for parents to distinguish what policies are made at Central Office and what comes from the principal at each school."

Summary

Parents surveyed not only wanted increased involvement and decision making for themselves in their children's schools, but they also wanted increased decision making for the teachers and principals at the school level. It is the responsibility of the schools and school systems to increase the opportunities for shared decision making.
CHAPTER 6
Observations, Findings, and Conclusions of Parallel Studies

Introduction

Three parallel studies were conducted simultaneously as part of a comprehensive research project undertaken to identify perceptions of decision making within the entire school community. Parents' perceptions of involvement in school decision making were examined in this study, teacher's perceptions of involvement in school decision making were examined in another, and principals' perceptions of involvement in school decision making were examined in the third. The findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations compiled from all three studies are presented in this chapter.

In order to insure a statistically correct compilation of the data, portions of the three parallel studies were completed using similar procedures. Nine hypotheses were tested in each of the studies. Although each study measured a different target population's perceptions, hypotheses were worded similarly and were analyzed with the same statistical test. The questionnaires used in the three studies were tested for validity through the same
pilot study. All questionnaires used the same format and subscales with only minor differences in terminology deemed more appropriate for each group of respondents.

Population samples for each study were drawn from the elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee State Department of Education. This allowed each of the researchers to generalize findings to educational communities in the same geographical region.

**General Observations**

Information about the process of gathering the data, the respondents to the surveys, and the school settings that provided the basis for the survey responses provides a foundation for the findings, conclusions, and implications of these studies.

Personal visits to the principals of the 125 schools of these studies were made for the purpose of planning the distribution of the questionnaires to the sample subjects of the target populations. The team's primary objective in personally contacting school principals and other targeted populations was to gain their cooperation in getting as complete a response as possible from the sample. Since each of the team members had several years' experience as elementary school principals, each was aware that
the principals would have a great impact on the success of reaching the individuals who were selected for the sample.

The approximately 42 school visits of each team member to deliver surveys, however, eventually offered more than the opportunity to solicit cooperation. They offered adventure and professional stimulation as well, and among the findings were observations made during the distribution of the questionnaires. Traveling to schools well before daylight in order to arrive before the busy principal started his/her day and stopping at small stores for directions became the norm for the research team. Navigating both remote country roads and busy city streets provided challenges in locating the target schools. The task of gaining cooperation for the project was compounded by the large number of school-related research studies being conducted in the schools at the time, and the researchers were apprehensive as they prepared to meet the key individuals who could impact the strength of the return of the surveys. After sharing the stories of the road, the team members realized their fears had been unwarranted. Even principals overwhelmed with other requests to participate in research as well as their routine duties were willing to help in any way possible with the conduct of the research. In almost every school, the principal met the team member with a smile and an open
mind. Many took time from supervising lunchrooms, doing paperwork, visiting classrooms, and even, in some cases, the responsibilities of teaching to meet with the team members to examine the survey packets and clarify details. In all cases the willingness of the principal and the office staff to greet the strangers with a smile was appreciated. It was clear why many of the parents took the time in their surveys to write words of praise about their school, its teachers, and especially the principal.

The visits were not without a humorous side also. One team member reported, for example, an incident in which a tiny, blond-headed kindergarten boy came to his rescue as he looked through the school halls for the office. The boy, noticing his confusion, grabbed his finger and led him to the office announcing to all those inside in what seemed like an excessively loud voice (at least for the embarrassed researcher), “I found this man wandering around in the hall; I think he’s lost, and he looks like somebody needs to help him.”

Although the schools had common characteristics, some had a great many advantages that others did not. But through the visits, whether the school was a seventy year old building still heated by coal or a modern structure with all the modern conveniences available, the researchers discovered that every school was a proud center of active learning for its community, using whatever
resources were available to it to build a strong educational program for children.

Although the research team members knew that the remaining task involved long hours of analysis of the data in order to detail the actual and ideal levels of decision-making involvement of the parents, teachers, and principals of these schools, they agreed that the visits to deliver questionnaires and solicit help provided a positive inception to the project. Perhaps just as importantly, the visits also provided each researcher with a refreshed realization of the individuality of the school populations to be studied.

**Comprehensive Hypotheses Analysis**

**Hypothesis 1**

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of teachers' involvement with regard to the budgetary process. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in the budgetary process. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals’
perceptions revealed a \( z \) statistic of -6.044. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a \( z \) statistic of -14.5066. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a \( z \) statistic of -10.4974. All three \( z \) statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt teachers should be more involved in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The \( n \), mean ranks, \( z \), and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 11. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 11

\[ n, \text{ Mean Ranks, } z, \text{ and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools} \]

<table>
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<td>( p )</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>233.18</td>
<td>117.81</td>
<td>-10.4974</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 2

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of parents’ involvement with regard to the budgetary process. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group’s perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in the budgetary process. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals’ perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of -7.9453. The study of teachers’ perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of -9.6215. The study of parents’ perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of -4.5864. All three $z$ statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt parents should be more involved in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The $n$, mean ranks, $z$, and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 12. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated “should occur” higher than “presently occur.” Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated “presently occur” higher than “should occur.”
Table 12

n, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools

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<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>Parents</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>230.47</td>
<td>179.41</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 3

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of principals' involvement with regard to the budgetary process. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of principals in the budgetary process. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -8.4482. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -14.3987. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -17.5420. All three
statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt principals should be more involved in the budgetary process in elementary schools.

The $z$-mean ranks, $z$, and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 13. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 13

<table>
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<td>Principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>178.32</td>
<td>92.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
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<td>235.35</td>
<td>95.39</td>
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Hypothesis 4

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of teachers' involvement with regard to personnel decisions. Each
null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of $-8.2385$. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of $-15.7508$. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of $-16.8146$. All three $z$ statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt teachers should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The $n$, mean ranks, $z$, and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 14. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."
Table 14

n, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Teachers' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Personnel Decisions in Elementary Schools

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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</table>

Hypothesis 5

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between the actual and ideal levels of parents' involvement with regard to personnel decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -8.0939. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -12.7871. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -17.6133. All three
z-statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt parents should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The $n$, mean ranks, $z$, and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 15. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 15

<table>
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<td>Parents</td>
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<td>213.42</td>
<td>78.42</td>
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</table>

Hypothesis 6

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of principals' involvement with regard to personnel decisions. Each
null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of principals in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -5.5137. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -6.3990. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -5.5594. All three z statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt principals should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The mean ranks, z, and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 16. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."
Table 16

n, Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Principals' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Budgetary Decisions in Elementary Schools

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<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>Parents</td>
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Hypothesis 7

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of teachers' involvement with regard to curricular decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of teachers in curricular decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -6.2796. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -15.3785. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -14.6642. All three
The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt teachers should be more involved in the curricular decisions in elementary schools.

The \( n \), mean ranks, \( z \), and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 17. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 17

<table>
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<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>-15.3785</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Parents</td>
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<td>206.52</td>
<td>127.51</td>
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</table>

Hypothesis 8

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of parents' involvement with regard to curricular decisions. Each
null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of parents in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of -6.2796. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of -15.3785. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a $z$ statistic of -14.6642. All three $z$ statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt parents should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The $n$, mean ranks, $z$, and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 18. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."
Table 18

Mean Ranks, z, and Levels of Significance Between Principals', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Parents' Actual and Ideal Levels of Involvement in Curricular Decisions in Elementary Schools

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<td>47.00</td>
<td>00.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
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<td>-18.6220</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 9

Parents, teachers, and principals reported a significant difference between their perceptions of the actual and ideal levels of principals' involvement with regard to curricular decisions. Each null hypothesis stated that no significant difference existed between the sample group's perceptions of the actual and ideal amounts of involvement of principals in personnel decisions. Principals, teachers, and parents rejected this null hypothesis.

The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs-Signed Ranked Test was used to analyze the data for this hypothesis. The study of principals' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -8.2385. The study of teachers' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -15.9896. The study of parents' perceptions revealed a z statistic of -11.8554. All three
The $z$ statistics were significant at well beyond the .05 level. The studies strongly indicated that principals, teachers, and parents felt principals should be more involved in the personnel decisions in elementary schools.

The $n$, mean ranks, $z$, and level of significance for each sample group are shown in Table 19. Positive mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "should occur" higher than "presently occur." Negative mean ranks indicate individual responses which rated "presently occur" higher than "should occur."

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
<th>$z$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>45.50</td>
<td>00.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>178.89</td>
<td>47.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>203.62</td>
<td>128.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Results were consistent in each area examined in these parallel studies. Principals, teachers, and parents of elementary school students wanted to be more actively involved in the
decision-making process. Each group also wanted more involvement from members of the other groups. These results strongly indicated that principals, parents, and teachers preferred more stakeholder involvement in decisions which affect the local school, and that shared decision making was perceived by principals, teachers, and parents as their viable opportunity for meaningful involvement in decisions made at the local school setting.

Conclusions

Although all groups want additional involvement in decision making, training and preparation must be provided for all stakeholders prior to the implementation of any shared decision-making project. To increase the probability of success, the roles and responsibilities of all participants must also be defined. The principal must emerge as the key individual in the implementation of these projects, with success or failure often dependent on the principal's leadership. Support in the administrative levels above the principalship is also critical. Formalization of shared-decision policies should be developed and approved by the boards of education prior to implementation. Once shared decision-making projects are successfully in place, stakeholders report an increased level of accountability at the local
school setting. Such accountability is a positive impetus to improvement of schools in their mission of educating the nation's youth.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based upon the findings and conclusions of the three parallel studies. Essential to and underlying all recommendations is planning; attempts to establish shared decision-making models must be well-planned in order to accommodate the development of realistic guidelines that provide not only for thoroughness in initiation of plans, but also for thoroughness in the evaluation and revision of plans. Only such planning can assure optimum opportunities for success.

Federal and state regulations should be modified to include opportunities for local school self-governance.

The Tennessee State Department of Education should establish pilot sites across the state to initiate and validate shared decision-making models. Intensive support of these sites with all available resources should be provided. Evaluation models should be developed in order to carefully assess the success of the implementation at the sites.

The autonomy and authority to make decisions regarding
budget, curriculum, and personnel should reside with teachers, principals, and parents in the local school community. Guidelines for the extent of this decision-making authority should be defined in each school district where shared decision-making models are to be implemented.

The process, including guidelines, frameworks, realistic timelines, and training programs for the implementation of the shared decision making, should be established in the local school system.

The Tennessee Department of Education should initiate training sessions for principals, teachers, and parents interested in implementing shared decision-making projects.

The State Board of Education, the Tennessee State Department of Education, local school boards, superintendents, and central office staff should be committed to the projects and supportive of the local school efforts. If necessary, job roles and responsibilities should be realigned at every level within the state to modify the decision-making process so that it accommodates shared decision making.

The elementary schools in the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee State Department of Education should have the opportunity to implement shared decision-making projects.
Local school boards of the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee State Department of Education should establish policies that allow schools to operate self-governing shared decision-making models within broad parameters of operation.

Local school systems of the First Tennessee Region of the Tennessee State Department of Education should be restructured in order to redefine roles and responsibilities for central office and local school personnel in light of a changing decision-making structure.
Reference List


Dear Parent:

You have been identified by your school's principal as a parent who is involved in many aspects of your school and your child's education and who therefore has a general knowledge of the school's operation. Please take a few moments to complete the attached survey. After completing the demographic sheet, please respond frankly to the 60 survey statements indicating the level of involvement that you believe presently exists in regard to each statement made and the level of involvement that you feel should exist in regard to the same statement. When finished, seal the completed survey inside the addressed, stamped envelope, then return the sealed envelope to your school's principal or mail it directly back to me. Your responses to all items on the survey will remain totally confidential.

Directions:

Read each statement carefully and respond to each scale independently. Using the scale, indicate the level of present involvement you believe to exist and the level of involvement you believe is necessary (or should exist) to make good decisions for children in regard to each statement:

1. No Involvement
2. Little Involvement
3. Some Involvement
4. Much Involvement
5. Total Involvement (Makes Decision)

You will notice that there is not an "I don't know" item on the scale. Remember that this is a survey of your understandings and beliefs in regard to how decisions are made. As you respond to each statement, use your personal knowledge or personal beliefs as to the present levels of involvement and the levels of involvement that you feel should be present as it relates to the described decision.

Please know that your time and effort in completing this survey is very much appreciated and that the results will be a valuable source in helping educators to determine parent perceptions of decision-making involvement in elementary schools as well as what levels of involvement should be present in future decision-making.

Sincerely,

John R. Clark, Jr.
Elementary Schools Involvement Study

About the person completing this survey.

1. Male ______ Female______

2. Number of children in this elementary school_____

3. Family Status:
   Guardian______ Foster Parent______ Two Parent Home______ Single Parent____
   Other(Specify)_____________________

4. Race:
   Hispanic______ American Indian______ Black______
   Caucasian______ Other(Specify)__________

5. Educational Level
   Less than High School____ High School Graduate/GED____ Some College_________
   College Degree____ Advanced College Degree____ Other(Specify)

6. Family Income
   Less than 10,000____ 10,000-19,999____ 20,000-29,999_____
   30,000-39,999____ 40,000-49,999____ 50,000+ __________

7. Age
   Less than 20____ 20-29______ 30-39______ 40-49____
   50-59______ 60-69_____

8. Ways you have served your school:
   Regular Volunteer____ Room Parent______ Member of School Decision Making Team____
   Parent Organization (PTA, PTO, other) Member____
   Parent Organization (PTA, PTO, other) Officer____
   Other (Please Specify)________

9. Has your school or another school your child has attended provided:
   Parent Volunteer Training______ Other Training (Please Specify)________
   Training for Parents Who Are Involved In Decision Making____
**Elementary School Involvement Survey**

Please rate the level of involvement that you believe actually occurs at the present time and also the level you believe should occur using the scale:

1. No Involvement
2. Little Involvement
3. Some Involvement
4. Much Involvement
5. Total Involvement (Makes Decision)

Circle the number that represents the level of involvement that the:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presently Occurs</th>
<th>Should Occur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Principal has in the selection of teachers.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teachers have in determining grading policies.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Parents have in the selection of custodians.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers have in the purchase of classroom equipment.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Parents have in evaluating teacher aides.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Principal has in determining what skills are taught in the classroom.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teachers have in setting promotion and retention policies.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Parents have in determining how funds are raised.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Principal has in determining what is purchased for classroom instruction in the school.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Parents have in the evaluation of the principal's performance.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teachers have in how students are assigned to their classroom.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers have in the selection of new teachers.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Principal has in determining how teachers teach in their classrooms.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Parents have in the evaluation of teachers' performance.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Teachers have in the evaluation of custodians.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Principal has in determining how money from fundraisers will be spent.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Parents have in determining what is purchased for classrooms.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Principal has in evaluating teacher aides.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Teachers have in determining the skills taught in their classrooms.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Parents have in setting homework policies and guidelines.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elementary School Involvement Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Presently Occurs</th>
<th>Should Occur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Parents have in determining grading policies.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Principal has in the selection of teacher aides.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Parents have in determining how students are assigned to classrooms.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Teachers have in evaluating teacher aides.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Parents have in selecting the materials purchased for classrooms.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Principal has in the evaluation of teachers.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Parents have in the selection of teacher aides.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Teachers have in determining how funds are raised.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Teachers have in the evaluation of principal performance.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Parents have in determining the teaching techniques used in the classroom.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Principal has in setting homework policies and guidelines.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Parents have in the selection of teachers.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Principal has in the purchase of instructional equipment.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Teachers have in the evaluation of other teachers.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Principal has in the setting of promotion and retention policies.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Parents have in the evaluation of custodians.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Teachers have in the selection of teacher aides.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Parents have in determining how money from fundraisers is spent.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Principal has in determining how funds are raised.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Teachers have in setting homework policies.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Principal has in the selection of custodians.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Parents have in the selection of textbooks.</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elementary School Involvement Survey

Please rate the level of involvement that you believe actually occurs at the present time and also the level you believe should occur using the scale:

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4 - Much Involvement
5 - Total Involvement (Makes Decision)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presently Occurs</th>
<th>Should Occur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal has in determining grading policies</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal has in the selection of student furniture</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have in determining how they teach in their classrooms</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents have in setting promotion and retention policies</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have in the selection of textbooks</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal has in the purchase of classroom teaching equipment</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents have in determining what skills are taught in the classroom</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal has in evaluating his/her own performance</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have in determining how money from fundraisers will be spent</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents have in the purchase of instructional equipment that is used in the classroom</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal has in the selection of textbooks</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have in the purchase of teaching materials</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents have in the selection of student furniture</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal has in determining how students are assigned to classrooms</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have in the selection of custodial personnel</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have in determining what is purchased for instruction</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have in the purchase of classroom furniture</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal has in the evaluation of custodial personnel</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please use this space to address any areas not covered by the questionnaire or to express your feelings in regard to parent participation in decision making at the local school. Thank you for your participation in this survey!!!
VITA

John R. Clark, Jr.

Personal Data:  
Date of Birth:  July 5, 1948
Place of Birth:  Elizabethton, Tennessee
Marital Status:  Married

Education:  
Elizabethton Public Schools
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
biological science, B.S., 1970
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
teaching, M.A.T., 1974
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
administration and supervision, ED.S., 1978
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
administration and supervision, ED.D., 1994

Professional Experience:  
Teacher, Fairmount Elementary School; Bristol, Tennessee,  
1973
Teacher, Holston View Elementary School; Bristol,  
Tennessee, 1973-1976
Teacher, Anderson Elementary School; Bristol, Tennessee,  
1976-1977
Principal, Rosemont Elementary School; Bristol, Tennessee,  
1977-1980
Principal, Fairmount Elementary School; Bristol,  
Tennessee, 1980-Present