PHASING OUT BASIC CLASSES:
PATTERNS OF RESPONSE
TO AN ADMINISTRATIVE
MANDATE

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

Harry Neil Dugger, B.A., M.Ed.
Denton, Texas
August, 1994
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The problem of this study was to determine patterns of response of Texas schools in implementing the Texas Education Agency mandate to phase out below grade level courses. High schools were instructed to phase out these courses, using one of four options outlined by the Texas Education Agency.

The study was conducted in two parts with both a telephone survey and a mail survey. The data collected from the telephone survey was used to construct and validate the mail survey instrument. The mail survey was sent to a stratified sample of Texas high schools based on school size, district wealth, and geographical location.

Option II, which deleted all below grade level courses but allowed Algebra I to be taught over a two year period, was the most frequent choice (61.2 percent). Option I, which simply deleted all basic courses, was the second most frequent choice (35.6 percent). Option III, which allowed creative personnel arrangements, and Option IV, which allowed basic classes to be offered as local credit only, was chosen by few schools (1.6 percent each).
Most schools (61.4 percent) used staff development to assist in the implementation of the mandate. Technology was used in 65.6 percent of the schools to assist in the implementation of their option. Special education programs were being affected by the elimination of below grade level courses the most, according to 51.3 percent of the schools.

Instructional strategies reported to work best under the new mandate are cooperative learning (51.3 percent), technology (50.3 percent), content mastery (47.6 percent), higher level thinking strategies (30.2 percent), and alternative grouping strategies (21.2 percent).

The respondents (96.3 percent principals) to the survey indicated that 77.5 percent of the professional teaching staff agrees with the elimination of below grade level classes. 82.4 percent of the respondents felt the mandate was beneficial to their students.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On July 15, 1992, each school district in Texas received a memo from Dr. Lionel Meno, the Commissioner of Education in Texas. The memo notified schools that the State Board of Education approved his recommendation to remove certain below-grade-level classes from the list of courses approved for state graduation. It also stated, "The rule will be effective prior to the beginning of the 1992-1993 school year." This rule effectively eliminated the concept of grouping students by ability in Texas high schools.

Grouping students according to ability has been a standard practice in public education for almost a century, but it has come under attack in recent years. Although Robert Slavin (1987, 1990) concluded that grouping (heterogeneously or homogeneously) had little or no effect on achievement, students in lower ability groups were more prone to delinquency, absenteeism, dropout, and other social problems. These students were less likely to attend college, and ability grouping perpetuated social class divisions and racial inequities. Thus the focus shifted from effectiveness to equity.

Jeannie Oakes (1985) challenged the assumptions educators have held about ability grouping. Students do not learn better in
homogeneous groupings, she found, and in fact are negatively affected. Homogeneous classes did not foster positive self-concept, but lowered self-esteem and aspirations. Grouping placements were not always appropriate, due to biased procedures and instruments. In conclusion, Oakes contended that homogeneous grouping was not best for students educationally or socially (Oakes, 1985).

Faced with mounting research on the detriments of grouping, especially with below average learners, the Texas Education Agency decided to eliminate basic classes. On July 15, 1992, Dr. Lionel Meno, Commissioner of Education in Texas, directed all Texas schools to phase out below-grade-level courses by 1997.


In an attachment to the July 15th memo, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) outlined four options for implementing the new rule in 1992-1993. Option I eliminates all below grade level classes in language arts, math, and science, while Option II eliminates the same but allows Algebra I over a two year period. Option III allows districts to use
alternative instructional arrangements utilizing more than one adult in the classroom. Option IV allows districts to use 1992-1993 as a transition year by offering deleted courses for elective credit only. Each option listed the prerequisites for a successful transition, as well as the advantages and disadvantages. It was left up to the individual schools and districts to choose the best option to meet their needs. (See Appendix D for more details on the four options).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study is to determine patterns of response of Texas schools in implementing the Texas Education Agency rule to phase out below-grade-level courses.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which of the four options did school districts choose to implement the Texas Education Agency's rule?

2. What support was provided (staff development, technology, etc.), if any, for implementation of the TEA rule?

3. What are the effects of implementing the TEA rule on other programs and curriculums (special education, ESL, gifted and talented, etc.) in the school?

4. How does the belief system of the professional educators in the school appear to affect the implementation of the TEA rule?

5. How does school size, wealth, and geographical location affect the implementation of the TEA rule?

6. What are the administrators' impressions of the effects of this rule on students in the school?
DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Regular course**: A course where the curriculum and instruction is targeted at the grade level of the students in the class, with limited enrichment or remediation.

2. **Below-grade-level (or basic) courses**: A course in which the curriculum is either stripped of any enrichment or is taught at a level lower than the student is classified, and often with fewer grade points than would be given in a regular course.

3. **Gifted and Talented/Honors courses**: A course where instruction and curriculum that is presented in a manner that is both richer in detail and at a faster pace than a regular class. Often taught at a level higher than the student is classified and often for more grade points.

4. **Special education classes**: Classes for students who qualify under state guidelines to receive special or modified instruction according to individual education plans.

5. **Staff development**: Training to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers and other district staff to implement the inclusion of below-grade-level students into regular classes.

6. **Grouping (or tracking)**: A school organization plan that is intended to increase homogeneity of each class for a given subject.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In the summer of 1992, the newly appointed Commissioner of Education in Texas, Dr. Lionel Meno, recommended and received approval from the State Board of Education to phase out certain high school courses from the list of approved courses for high school graduation. This included below-grade-level courses in English/language arts, mathematics, and science. These changes are reflected in the Texas Administrative Code under Subchapter E: Well-Balanced Curriculum (Meno, 1992).
The Commissioner and the State Board of Education determined that the existence of below-grade-level courses was an obstacle to raising performance standards on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills. The phasing out of these courses was to begin in the fall of 1992, requiring immediate action from local high schools (Meno, 1992).

In an attachment to the July 15th memo sent to each school, the Texas Education Agency (T.E.A.) outlined four options for implementing the new rule in 1992-1993. Each school was allowed to choose the option that best met the needs of that individual campus or district (Meno, 1992).

Thus very quickly, Texas eliminated ability grouping (or tracking) for students of below-average ability. The stated purpose was to remove the obstacle for raising student performance standards. However, there was no move to eliminate honors or gifted & talented courses which also group by ability.

Regarding student achievement, the literature is mixed. Passow and Oakes contend that homogeneous grouping has little or no effect on learning, but has a significant negative effect on self-concept (Oakes, 1985 & Passow, 1990). Kulik and Kulik report positive effects with homogeneous grouping, especially with high-ability groups, and no harmful effects were found at any level (Kulik, 1985; Wallach, 1987).

The Commissioner's directive came at a time when the "second wave" of educational reform in the modern era is spreading across the country. The second wave's characteristic is for the state to make
general goals and policies, but allow for the local district to best
determine how to implement (Bacharach, 1990). The pendulum in
educational history is swinging back.

For the first forty years of the twentieth century, there was no
"system" of governance that was typical nationwide. School was a local
concern, and the systems that developed reflected the needs and wants of
the individual communities. The diversity and autonomy of local school
systems were similar to the heterogeneity of the nation. (Chubb & Moe,
1990)

But the progressive era introduced the "one best system," a system
of professionals and bureaucrats. The professionals were the teachers,
and the bureaucrats were the school board, superintendent, and district
office. The bureaucrats represented the institutions of democratic
control. The state government, given the authority for public schools by
the U.S. Constitution, took firmer reins. The United States government
also took a more active role, eventually establishing a U.S. Department
of Education in 1979. (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

Alarms at both the national and state level sounded in the 1980s.
Society had changed from an industrial-production emphasis to one of
service and technology (Duke, 1991). An educated workforce is crucial to
international economic competition or as some refer to it: "The Toyota
Problem" (Bacharach, 1990). Fundamental changes in the educational
system were not deemed necessary, but the delivery system needed
intensifying. "Let's make the little buggers work harder," was how one
legislator saw the solution. In search of educational excellence, states mandated reforms from the top. So began the "first wave" of modern educational reform in the United States. (Kirst, 1990)

The United States government, while not directly mandating policies, used the Department of Education as a "bully pulpit." Encouraging state governments to take control and centralize education, the national government pushed a "back to the basics" approach. Accountability and achievement were the key words of the first wave. (Bacharach, 1990)

Under President Reagan, the Secretaries of Education Terrel Bell and William Bennett took full advantage of this "bully pulpit." Bell's report, A Nation at Risk, is often cited as the beginning of the first wave. The report decried the failings of America's public schools, and challenged the states for reform (Boyd, 1990). The Reagan administration conducted the classic "hat trick." The administration actually did nothing, except give the responsibility to the states. Any credit, however, was the credit was taken by the federal government. (Bacharach, 1990)

By 1984, the U.S. Department of Education described the state leadership as "one of the hallmarks of this reform movement." Their report, A Nation Responds, reported states mandated more rigorous academic standards (Passow, 1990). Few areas were left untouched by state mandates, everything from funding to curriculum to teacher qualifications to discipline to instruction. However, most governmental
approaches involved regulations, not increased money for new programs. Taxes are unpopular in most statehouses (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

The first wave had some positive results. Expenditures increased in most states, with teacher salaries increasing by twenty-five percent. High school curriculums emphasized core courses, resulting in an increase in math and science enrollments. There was a slight increase in school time, with no measurable increase in dropouts. In many states, achievement went up. (Kirst, 1990)

But as the 1990’s approached, there also appeared to be problems with this top-down, centralized approach to reform. The problems in the late 1980’s required more discretion and control, more flexibility and direction, and more professional judgment (Shedd, 1991). Also, the mandates had little effect on improving the quality of teaching, and may have made it worse through limiting discretion and increasing paperwork. (Bacharach, 1990)

The mandates and reforms of the first wave contributed to the fragmentation of teachers, curriculum, and teaching. Teachers lost face, as well as power. Teachers often were treated as nothing more than classroom furniture. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy in 1986 stated that teachers are paying the price for the reforms, and they are not working. (Passow, 1990)

The "second wave of reform" began through this need to improve the quality of teaching and the realization that not all problems can best be solved from the capitol. Teacher empowerment and local control
became the key words of the second wave (Bacharach, 1990). President Bush, during the Education Summit of 1989, endorsed the idea of more local control (Duke, 1991). Comparing the educational system to a major corporation, President Clinton stated that while goals can be set from the top, more decisions need to be made at the grass roots level (Bacharach, 1990).

The role of the federal and state government in the second wave is to make general policies and set goals. This still leaves the traditional institutions of democratic control intact (Chubb & Moe, 1990). In the National Governors Association Report in 1986, Governor Alexander said they are ready to provide the leadership to get results on the hard issues, but "excellence cannot be imposed from a distance." The same association reported in 1987 that the governors wanted a larger role in setting goals and outcomes, yet stimulate local inventiveness (Passow, 1990).

The state establishes a vision and provides a framework, or quality standards. In turn, schools will be given the opportunity for greater autonomy and flexibility. The state will provide support in terms of recognition and resources. (Honig, 1990)

Given those policies and goals, the local district or school will determine how to implement for greatest success. Policy can be decided at the lowest level, and can take into account all factors unique to that district and provides more flexibility. (Bacharach, 1990)
Teachers are given more power and autonomy in the second wave, resulting in a professionalization of teaching. This is especially true in states, like Texas, that are implementing school based management, or otherwise known as site-based decision making. In this forum, decisions are made at the school building level using a council of stakeholders. The stakeholders could include building administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other members of the community. Traditional institutions of democratic control are still in place, but authority is more delegated. (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

These institutions of democratic control range from the governor to the parent, with the state school board, the commissioner of education, local school board, and superintendent, the principal, and the teacher in between. As stated earlier, the governors are prepared to provide the leadership and the vision (Passow, 1990). The state board of education, lay control at the state level, acts on the broad sweeps of educational issues. The state commissioner of education maintains the current educational process, yet also needs to chart a bolder course of educational growth and reform. The commissioner's three functions are 1) responsibility for regulating state and federal law, 2) providing a service function to schools, and 3) being a source for new legislative proposals. (Sergiovanni, 1980)

The local school board, while sidelined with the site-based decision-making, still has control of the budget (Bacharach, 1990). Although left out of the reform process and limitations on their powers,
school boards will determine the long-range success of any reform (Muth, 1990). The superintendent will provide the same role on the local level that the commissioner provides on the state level.

At the building level, the principal may be the most crucial player in the educational enterprise. Programs, old and new, succeed only with creative and enthusiastic principals (Sergiovanni, 1980). Teachers in the second wave will receive unprecedented empowerment. They will be participants in the decision making process. Parents will also benefit, as will the schools, from increased involvement in the process. (Bacharach, 1990)

Critics charge, however, that the second wave does not reduce the bureaucracy of the educational system. Site-based decision making is just another way of controlling schools within an essentially bureaucratic system. The American political organizations ensures that their values get implemented through formal constraints, or bureaucracy. They tend to want to "make" schools better with new controls. As Chubb states, "As long as higher-level authority exists, it will eventually get used." (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

The change process begins with the initiation stage, which is described previously as the forces that bring about reform ideas. The second stage is implementation, which is the attempted use of the reform. Continuation is the third stage, or protracted use of the reform beyond the first few years. The final part of the process is the outcome: does the reform result in the projected improvements. (Fullan, 1991)
However, as Larry Cuban said, "Most reforms foundered on the rocks of flawed implementation." Quiet but persistent resistance of teachers and administrators kept many reforms from being embraced. (Cuban, 1988)

Successful implementation hinges on several key themes, according to Michael Fullan. One is the dynamic process of vision-building. This is a process whereby the principal provides the leadership to build a shared vision with the school community of what should or could be. Another theme is evolutionary planning, in which a school fits the vision to the school's actual needs. (Fullan, 1991)

Leaders in successful schools allow initiative from the staff and empowered them. This theme builds on the idea that change is a social process. The key is appropriate and effective staff development. Pre-implementation training, assistance during training, and the use of a variety of trainers can lead to quality staff development. Interaction, or social energy, is a crucial element to successful change. (Fullan, 1991)

It is clear, however, that teachers are a key ingredient to change. The promoters of change must consider the teacher's perspective, and teachers must be shown how it affects their classroom. Good change invigorates teachers; bad change leads to professional frustration. "Interactive professionalism" is required among the teaching staff to foster quality reforms. (Fullan, 1991)

Commissioner Meno's directive was to eliminate below grade level courses. With the expectations being specific, the directive has shades of
the first wave. However, allowing districts/schools a choice of options does provide the flexibility and autonomy of a second wave reform.

PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

In order to collect data to answer the research questions, a combination of telephone and mail survey methodologies was used. The study proceeded in two phases, with the first being the initial telephone survey. The second was the mail survey.

Phase I - Telephone Interview Survey

The telephone interview survey was conducted with a fifteen select principals from the larger population. The purpose was to collect appropriate data to construct the survey instrument for mailing.

The population to be surveyed was high school principals from Regions X and XI, which comprise most of the high schools in the Dallas and Fort Worth areas. The namelist from which the sampling was drawn was obtained from the Texas School Directory. The sample population was stratified according to school size (5A to A), geography and wealth (PEIMS index), a subsample of the larger sample for the mail survey. A random sampling technique was used to choose a total of fifteen schools that are representative of the larger population.

All calls were made by the researcher, and tape recorded whenever possible. During the telephone survey, the respondent was asked questions based on the five research questions. The researcher took
comprehensive notes from each respondent, whether the recorder was operating or not. Calls were scheduled at a time when respondents had sufficient time to answer questions fully.

The content of the call included a brief explanation of the purpose, the amount of time required, and verbal permission to proceed. The interview lasted approximately fifteen minutes. If a respondent chose not to participate, another principal was randomly drawn from that subsample.

Data Analysis - Phone Interview Survey

The data collected from the telephone interview survey was transferred to a tally sheet. The time and date of the phone call were noted on the tally sheet, as well as information on the school (name, size, wealth, location, etc.) and the respondent (name, title, etc.). The tally sheet was also identified with a unique identification code for future reference.

The tally sheets were analyzed for patterns that may emerge. For example, if most schools respond that special education resource students were hurt by not having basic classes, a statement to that effect would be added to the mail survey to agree or disagree. Responses that are not in line with other respondents or with research were rejected from consideration.

Through careful analysis of the telephone survey data, written survey questions were formulated. These questions were put together to
create a draft copy of the mail survey. The draft copy of the mail survey was first sent to the sixteen schools for comments as to its clarity and appropriateness. From these comments, a final survey was created.

Phase II - Mail Survey

The population to be surveyed by mail was high schools in the state of Texas, with the survey specifically addressed to the principal. The namelist from which the sampling was drawn was obtained from the Texas School Directory. The sample was stratified, according to school size (5A to 1A), by the twenty designated regions (Region 10, for example), and by wealth according to the PEIMS index.

Using a random sampling technique, ten percent of the schools in each classification and region were mailed the survey. Three weeks after the first mailing, a second survey was mailed to those who did not respond from the original sample. When possible, a phone contact was made to those receiving a second mailing. If there was no response after the second mailing, subsequent samples were drawn until the ten percent level was reached.

Each school received a cover letter and a survey. The cover letter introduced the survey to the principal, explained its purpose, and gained the cooperation of the recipient. The survey was simple and direct, eliciting the information needed to answer the research questions. It was two pages long, front and back. A return envelope, with postage, was included for prompt return. No other inducements were offered.
The surveys were mailed with first class postage. Care was taken as to the timing of the mailing, in order to work around holidays or other possible distractions. The goal was to have no more than a three-week turn-around time for each mailing.

Data Analysis - Mail Survey

As the surveys were received, the documents were marked with the date, location on the postmark, and an identification code. The date is important to indicate possible differences in motivation. The location on the postmark is a double-check on the location, in case it was neglected on the survey form. The identification code was unique for each document received, in order to refer back to the source if needed.

Next, the documents was sight-edited. Each was checked for completeness and accuracy in following directions. If only individual items were not completed, the document generally was retained. However, if answered haphazardly or generally incomplete, the document was rejected. Questionable documents were filed separately for closer scrutiny at a later time.

Initial postcoding was done as the documents were sight-edited. With each possible response coded on the document, a blank (or "key") was used to transfer the information for compilation.

After the initial postcoding, the researcher again checked each document for answers where respondents "explained" or "commented." A codebook was maintained to identify and categorize answers. The
codebook was open-ended for new responses as they were encountered. Standard guidelines were used for coding responses.

The data were then processed by a computer statistics package and were edited during processing as well. This procedure helped identify records that deviate from their format and data fields that are outside of their permissible range.

Statistical analysis was used to summarize the data into demographic information, using appropriate descriptive procedures. Research questions #1, #2, and #3 used descriptive statistical methods to reveal the important and meaningful patterns and relationships. In addition, a comparison was made between the large school districts and the small school districts.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The issues surrounding this study involve two distinct areas of research. The first is the concept of grouping students in a class or course according to their academic abilities. Grouping, which was once widely practiced, has been undergoing new scrutiny in recent years. The second issue is change through governmental mandates, and how successful change happens.

GROUPING BY ABILITY

Prior to 1900, most schools followed the common school ideal of a common curriculum for all children. Educational experts like Charles Eliot promoted a single curriculum for all students. The president of Harvard, Eliot chaired the Committee of Ten that recommended a set curriculum for high schools in the United States. The Committee opposed separating college bound students and non-college bound students (Schubert, 1991). However, only ten percent of 14 - 17 year olds attended public or private schools in 1890. With similar students attending, classes were fairly homogeneous (Oakes, 1985).
The nineteenth century did have a couple of exceptions to this common school thinking. In 1867, W.T. Harris in St. Louis allowed bright elementary students to move through school at a quicker pace than regular students. In Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1891, the brightest students completed grades four through nine in only four years. Slower students would take up to eight years to complete the six grades. (Passow, 1966)

But in the years 1880 to 1918, the flow of immigrants increased school enrollment 700 percent. In 1909, fifty-eight percent of the students in thirty-seven urban school districts were born in a foreign land. As a reaction to educating this large group of immigrants, many of whom could not speak English and were seen as less intelligent, the comprehensive high school was born. It promised something for everyone, but not necessarily the same thing. Grouping, or tracking, students with similar backgrounds and intelligence was seen as the answer to provide everyone with something within the same school. (Oakes, 1985)

Social Darwinism provided the "scientific" justification for schools to treat various groups differently. G. Stanley Hall in 1904 stated that immigrant children were culturally neglected and biologically inferior. The accepted theory was that they were inherently less fit and at a lower evolution stage, thus the need to teach immigrants differently. (Oakes, 1985)
Hall also argued for a developmental approach to curriculum. Curriculum development should be correlated to the developmental level of the learner. The development of the individual was what was most important (Schubert, 1991).

In 1909, Elwood P. Cubberly noted, "Our schools will soon be forced to give up the exceedingly democratic idea that all are equal...and to begin a specialization of education efforts along many lines." (Oakes, 1985)

Lester Frank Ward believed that education plays a vital role in directing progress of mankind. John Dewey remarked, "Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. The teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life." (Oakes, 1985)

Dewey's "method of intelligence" is a democratic pursuit of resolutions. This method involves taking formal knowledge and applying it to appropriate situations. Integration is achieved through the use of dialogue, which leads to democracy. (Schubert, 1991)

"Americanization" provided the content to be offered to properly train children and prepare them for American society. Elwood P. Cubberly said, "Our task is...to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government." (Oakes, 1985)

Finally, the industrial pattern of efficiency provided the form for public high schools. The early twentieth century was taken with the
industrial methods of compartmentalizing to form a finished product. This efficient system of mass production worked well for the comprehensive high school. (Oakes, 1985) The "one best system" of professionals and bureaucrats controlled the schools. The professionals were made up of teachers, while the bureaucrats represented the school boards, superintendents, and central offices. (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

In order to provide objectivity to grouping students, tests were developed to measure intelligence. Basing these IQ tests on American models and standards, 80 percent of immigrants tested as feeble-minded. Lewis Terman, developer of IQ tests, stated, "Their dullness seems to be racial." Edward Thorndike, another testing pioneer, attributed intelligence to heredity and formulated a natural hierarchy of intelligence among the races. (Oakes, 1985)

The Santa Barbara Concentric Plan in 1900 was one of the first to group by ability. Each grade was divided into three groups, labeled A, B, and C. Although all groups mastered the same fundamentals, the A group did more extensive work than the B group. In turn, the B group did more extensive work than the C group. (Passow, 1966)

The first of several serious studies of grouping was by Guy M. Whipple in 1916. Studies by R.T. Rock, Jr. in 1929, Miller and Otto in 1930, and Ruth Ekstrom in 1959 all reached the same conclusion: there is no significant difference in achievement between homogeneous learning groups and heterogeneous groups. Miller and Otto also
concluded that ability grouping is ineffective unless accompanied by proper changes in method. (Passow, 1966)

The controversy in the early twentieth century over ability grouping was verbalized by R.O. Billett in 1932, stating, "Perhaps no plan, method, or device for reaching the individual through class instruction has evoked more words written or spoken during the past ten years than homogeneous or ability grouping." (Passow, 1966)

During the next several decades, grouping students by ability became a tradition of the comprehensive high school. Henry Harap in 1936 said ability grouping was the most common method of adjusting learning to individual differences. (Passow, 1966) In 1945, the U.S. Office of Education viewed the goal of schools as helping people to adjust to existing conditions in society and lead happy and productive lives within the limits of their abilities. James Conant in 1959 said ability grouping is a common sense means of shoring up academics after Sputnik. Curriculum differential emerged as a reasonable and efficient way to solve educational problems (Oakes, 1985). Educators, needing to serve many with limited resources, did what seemed to work. (Brandt, 1992) A study in 1960 concluded that ability grouped classes occurred in 16.9% of all elementary schools, and in 34.4% of all secondary schools. (Passow, 1966)

The United States Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v Board of Education* eventually led to a goal of educational equality. The confusion, however, was in defining equality. Some argued equal
chances, while others argued equal resources or equal educational outcomes. (Oakes, 1985)

In the late 1970's, John Goodlad described the current state of American schools in *A Study of Schooling*. All schools studied had some type of grouping. In his research, teachers saw tracking as a major means of reducing student variability so that managing and teaching the group becomes a more reasonable task. Although classes were homogeneous, the range was still substantial. (Goodlad, 1985)

Goodlad further reported that there was a clear difference in content, quality of instruction, teacher-student relationships, and student-student relationships in upper and lower track classes. Tracking appeared to resegregate students in racially desegregated schools, and the number of students from lower economic homes was disproportionate in lower tracks. (Goodlad, 1985)

Grouping students by ability for instruction had become an accepted and traditional methodology in schools, in spite of research indicating a lack of effectiveness. Teachers and administrators truly believed, due to their personal experiences, that students learn better in groups of students with similar abilities. They believed grouping was also an easier and more effective way to teach. (Oakes, 1985)

When addressing ability grouping or tracking, there are several issues involved. The first issue is student achievement. Jeannie Oakes' research refutes the notion that students learn better in groups of like students. In most studies, homogeneous grouping does not help anyone
learn better, although a few indicate higher achievement for homogeneous grouping of high-ability students (Oakes, 1985).

Passow's review of twenty-nine studies found that the effects of student achievement were effectively zero, except for a heterogeneous social studies class which had a positive effect on achievement. What affects achievement are instructional methodology, not school organization. (Passow, 1990)

Statistical data from the High School and Beyond study included public and Catholic high schools. The data found there was less inequality in systems that were more flexible, with inequality referring to the achievement gaps between tracks. Flexibility, the latitude to move in and out of tracks, and inclusiveness had a positive effect on achievement (Gamoran, 1990).

Catholic schools had lower inequality and higher productivity due to their style of tracking and the homogeneity of the student population. (Gamoran, 1990). The difference in tracking from public schools was in the curriculum and quality of instruction. A challenging learning environment was prevalent throughout the Catholic schools (Valli, 1986).

Chubb and Moe's studies on effectively organized schools discuss the impact of tracking. Typical tracking has three tracks: an academic track to prepare students for college, a general track for those not going beyond high school, and a vocational track for work/study programs. In high performing schools, 63.7 percent of the students are enrolled in
academic tracks. Low performing schools only have 28.3 percent enrolled in academic tracks. They conclude that "the best schools seem to succeed in part because they are somehow able to emphasize academic instruction." (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

School organization, in which tracking is a major influence, has a great influence on student achievement, according to Chubb and Moe's studies. Effectively organized schools may be able to increase their students' achievement by more than one full year, and aggressive tracking practices may account for more than thirty percent (or 1/3 to 1/2 a year) of that achievement. (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

Challenging all students with courses that demand their best is what is meant by the effective use of tracking. However, forcing a rigorous program of study can have a negative effect. Tracking must be a part of a "well-rounded, school-wide effort to stimulate and reinforce academic learning," according to Chubb and Moe. (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

The research team of Chen-Lin Kulik and James Kulik found positive effects of homogeneous grouping, especially for the high-ability group. In 36 of 51 achievement studies, students from grouped classes performed better than from ungrouped. Effects were largest from the gifted and talented groups, and were trivial for average or below-average students. There was no evidence of harmful effects of homogeneous grouping (Kulik, 1985; Wallach, 1987). A study at Houston Lamar High School showed that students in each group work at their own level and achieve appropriate academic growth (Moydell, 1991). The arguments
against ability grouping tend not to be true with the higher achieving students.

The second major issue in regards to ability grouping is student self-concept. Oakes finds that students are not more positive about themselves in homogeneous groups. The research shows that students do not develop positive self-attitudes in average or low classes, and in fact it fosters low self-esteem. They are seen by others (teachers and students) as dumb (Oakes, 1985). This self-defeating attitude contributes to lower aspirations, more misconduct and delinquency, less participation in class, more alienation from school, a higher dropout rate, and a lower probability of attending college (Passow, 1990).

Ability grouping perpetuates social class divisions and racial inequalities. Low-level classes are disproportionately stocked with students from a lower-income or minority home (Passow, 1990) & (Braddock, 1990). Background variables seem to affect the instructional process, and ability grouping puts these students at a further disadvantage (Rowan and Miracle, 1983). School performance and social inequality are related, and ability grouping contributes to the separation of students racially, ethnically, and socially (Gamoran, 1992) & (Weis, 1991).

Kulik and Kulik reported in fifteen studies, however, that self-concept was higher in grouped classes. Six studies indicated higher self-concept in ungrouped classes, while two indicated equal self-esteem from the two groups (Kulik, 1985). A study from Northern Ireland showed that
streaming (tracking) did not appear to foster feelings of alienation (Pritchard, 1987).

Determining the placement of students into appropriate ability groups is the third issue. Only 38 percent of American high school students are tracked in academic programs, but 71 percent will go to college and 80 percent will need some form of post-secondary education for their careers. Due to tracking, 30 percent of high school graduates will not be prepared for college level work (McCabe, 1989). The fast track in mathematics, critical for college programs, includes only 16 to 17 percent of U.S. students (Useem, 1990). Between 1972 and 1980, enrollment in academic programs declined from 46 percent to 38 percent. The gatekeeper’s (the decision-maker in placement) role is crucial, especially in terms of access of information (Kilgore, 1991). Placements are too often based on non-academic criteria such as low-family income, race, gender, and special needs. (NEA, 1990) Sixty percent of lower track students drop out. (Meyers, 1991)

Three general criteria are used in most placement decisions. The first is standardized test results, usually given much credibility. However, the method of constructing tests to place students in a bell curve may have inherent problems. Fairness has also been questioned in the standardized tests due to research that indicates the tests are culturally biased (Oakes, 1985). Not only are tests shown to be culturally biased, but gender biased as well (Hallinan, 1990).
The second common criteria for placement is counselor or teacher recommendation. This appears to be a very subjective decision. Counselors have 300 to 500 students assigned and teachers often have up to 150 students in class. With those numbers, it is difficult to make an objective judgment, and often counselors rely on standardized test scores (Oakes, 1985).

Student or parent choice is the third common criteria for placement. Their judgment, however, is often too personal and they make choices for the wrong reasons. They, too, rely on teachers and counselors to make recommendations (Oakes, 1985).

The fourth issue is classroom instruction and management. Oakes maintains that homogeneous classes may be easier to teach and manage, but they are not best for students academically and socially (Oakes, 1985). The desire for efficiency in managing classes led to increased use of tracking (Weis, 1991).

Teachers supporting homogeneous classes maintain they have years of experience to back up this belief. They strongly believe that students will learn best if pace and environment are tailored to their needs. With homogeneously grouped classes, top students receive accelerated instruction, and middle and lower students are allowed to learn at a more appropriate pace. Class size also plays an important role, considering that most regular classes have 25-30 students (Greenbaum, 1990).
Student attitudes toward the subject matter in seven of eight studies indicated they were more positive if grouped homogeneously. In eleven other studies, eight reported that student attitudes toward school were more positive if grouped homogeneously. If students are grouped with others of similar ability, students developed more positive attitudes about themselves and school (Kulik, 1982).

A study on delinquency found no link with non-college bound tracking. School socialization experiences prior to high school appear to be a larger factor. In fact, 87 percent of the students in the study were satisfied with their curriculum at the end of their junior year (Wiatrowski, 1982).

However, students in lower ability groups are more ambivalent about school, occupying a marginal place academically and socially. This ambivalence is magnified during the normal adolescence years of high school (Page, 1989).

Many teachers dislike teaching low-level classes, due to the perceived quality of students and a concern of their status being lowered. This attitude may lead to less quality instruction and/or less experienced teachers teaching most of these classes. The pace is often lowered, which again reduces the quality of instruction (Slavin, 1990). Teachers prefer to isolate these students whenever possible, and they often share the students' demoralization (Finley, 1984).

Staff development designed to raise teacher expectations and to abolish tracking needs to take into account the complexity of teacher
attitudes toward tracking. Institutional and cultural biases cannot be overcome in a simplistic inservice approach. Corrective policies and staff development needs to build on the positive viewpoints and not tear down current beliefs. (Page, 1989).

In studies of homogeneous versus heterogeneous classes, it appears that there are significant differences in time on task, quality of instruction, student-teacher relationships, and student involvement. Engagement in academic classes for higher level classes averages about 80%, but in lower level classes the average is only 70%. The lower classes may get a variety of materials, but the higher level classes get a greater variety of activities. Teachers treat students in higher classes more positively, while lower level students get more negative attention. Low students are less concerned with completing tasks, more apathetic, and spend more time trying to interfere with the teacher's plans. (Oakes, 1985). Interestingly, regardless of the range in the population's abilities, ability groups tend to be the same size (Hallinan & Sorensen, 1983).

In regards to heterogeneous classes, many think these classes must be geared to the low-average. On the contrary, studies show that heterogeneous classes are geared to the highest level, with the presence of the bright students bringing up the level for everyone. Seventy percent of heterogeneous English and math classes were exposed to the highest level of current content. Eighty-eight percent of the students in heterogeneous classes report a positive student-teacher relationship, and
fifty-six percent have a more positive relationship with other students. (Oakes, 1985)

Heterogeneous classes had a curriculum of high-status knowledge, and all were exposed to higher concepts and skills. Instruction methodologies varied, and teachers were more responsive to change in students' motivations, interests, and aspirations. Teachers used cooperative learning, grouping within the class, and rewards based on fixed standards. (Oakes, 1985) The curriculum in heterogeneous classes needs to be richer, more problem oriented, and more engaging than even the higher-level classes. (O'Neil, 1992)

In a case study of one high school, W.G. Finley found remarkable differences in attitudes between the groups. A sample of remarks by teachers teaching low-level classes:

"Teaching these classes is the most frustrating experience."

"Day after day of failure spills over to the instructor. It's deflating"

"The classes are skills oriented. I do very little talking. I give them a specific assignment to do, which is due at the end of the period."

"We all get some plums and some lemons."

"I don't like playing policeman." (Finley, 1984)

Teachers of advanced students commented:

"My greatest satisfaction in these classes is the enthusiasm about learning. This makes teaching fun."
"You can deal with literature in depth, which is why teachers go into teaching English in the first place."

(Finley, 1984)

Many studies have been made in foreign countries, where tracking is more prevalent than in the United States. In Great Britain (where it is called streaming), teachers are convinced of its effectiveness. (Kerkoff, 1986) In Belgium, all children take the same basic curriculum, then specialize in secondary school. West Germany tracks only in the higher grades, as does Sweden. (Yates, 1966)

Harry Passow, however, cautions against making any definitive conclusions on grouping based on the current body of research. The studies vary in scope and purpose, as well as in the number of students, groups, and class size. Often the selection basis is inadequate, and it is difficult to truly match experimental and control groups. Studies differ in treatment, curriculum, teaching methods, instrumentation and evaluation. Most studies fail to assess the effects of grouping on teachers and administrators. (Passow, 1966)

Rebecca Barr and Robert Dreeben agree that the body of research is confused. There is a lack of caution in keeping personal views and beliefs distinct from analysis. Most schools have no formal comprehensive formation of grouping. A systematic analyses is needed rather than looking at just one area (usually student achievement). (Barr & Dreeben, 1983)

In order to change, schools need to believe that all students can learn, that change is a process rather than an event, high expectations
for all, a partnership of leaders and teachers, parent involvement, and long-range planning. The principal of Wellesley Middle School summed it up, saying: "If tracking would help us accomplish our goals at this school, then we would use it. But we believe in producing active learners, critical thinkers, and risk takers. Tracking our students by ability quite simply doesn't allow us to achieve our goals." (Wheelock, 1992)

The research on ability grouping is not conclusive. It appears that in terms of achievement, there is no effect except for gifted and talented students. Research in student self-concept in regards to ability grouping is mixed; however, the majority of research does tend to indicate that grouping lowers self-concept. Placement of students into lower ability level classes may be based on faulty criteria. Teaching grouped classes is easier for the teachers, but the quality of learning may suffer.

There is a legal aspect to tracking, especially where the means of classification is racially biased. The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution requires that no state shall, "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." This is known as the Equal Protection Clause. (Yudof, 1992)

The Equal Protection Clause has two tests (the rational test and the compelling state purpose test) in deciding whether there is a violation. In applying the rational test, the burden is on the plaintiff to show that the discrimination is arbitrary or unreasonable. The compelling state purpose test places the burden on the defendant (or the state) to prove it is not infringing on a fundamental right or creating a
suspect classification. Fundamental rights are those that are specifically guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. A suspect classification is a group that is treated differently, such as race. (Kemerer, 1979)

Most legal cases regarding ability grouping are in the context of racial discrimination. Hobson v. Hansen, 269 F. Supp. 401 (D.D.C. 1967) was one of the first cases to study the issues of classification in regards to ability grouping. Although this case focuses primarily on race and class discrimination, it also suggests there may be other nonracial aspects of classification. (Yudof, 1992)

The superintendent of the District of Columbia school system, Dr. Hansen, defended the district's tracking policy as a method to provide for differing levels of instruction according to each student's ability. Traditional schools, according to Dr. Hansen, do not challenge the gifted student, and at the same time the slow learners either drop out or graduate with a useless education. With tracking, the gifted student is stimulated by placing him or her with other students of similar ability, and the slow learner is placed in appropriate special education classes for a useful "basic" education. In between the gifted and the slow learner are two middle tracks. (Yudof, 1992)

In 1967, the court struck down the Washington, D.C. schools' tracking system as a violation of the Equal Protection Clause. Basing its decision on inappropriate aptitude tests, reduced curriculum, rigidity of movement between tracks, and stigmatism, the court found the system was in practice discriminatory. The court even went so far as to say,
"Even in concept the track system is undemocratic and discriminatory" and "the track system simply must be abolished." Smuck v. Hobson, 408 F.2d 175 [D.C. Cir. 1969], in appeal, allowed tracking if discriminatory problems were removed. (Yudof, 1992)

The facts in Hobson v. Hansen indicate that tracking can be a means to segregate races, if the population in the lower level classes is disproportionate in regards to race. It also notes the stigma that is attached to students in the lower classes, and the possibility that these students may be denied equal educational opportunity. (Yudof, 1992)

In the Fifth Circuit, three tracking cases are decided in the context of school desegregation. The Fifth Circuit is one of eleven federal courts in the United States, and rulings from the Fifth Circuit only apply to the states within the circuit (Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi). Moses v. Washington Parrish School Board, 330 F.Supp. 1340 (E.D.La. 1971), aff'd, 456 F.2d 1285 (5th Cir. 1972), ruled that tracking violated black students' constitutional rights due to a disproportionate number in low classes. McNeal v. Tate County School District, 508 F.2d 1017 (5th Cir. 1975), said that desegregated schools cannot use tracking that results in segregated classes until the unitary system has been in place long enough to overcome prior segregation. U.S. v. Gadsden County School District, 572 F.2d 1049 (5th Cir. 1978), ruled tracking unconstitutional due to racial segregation and limited mobility. (Oakes, 1985)

Larry P. v. Riles, 793 F.2d 969 (9th Cir. 1984), prohibited use of IQ tests for black students in California as discriminatory. Lemon v Bossier
Parish School Board. 444 F.2d 1400 (5th Cir. 1971), decided that the use of achievement tests for tracking could be segregationist (Yudof, 1992). These cases not only focused on segregation aspects, but on the educational processes as well. (Oakes, 1985)

These cases illustrate that there are many considerations in implementing any grouping or tracking system in the public schools. The research is ambiguous in regards to achievement. Socially, ability grouping appears to have a negative effect on students. And legally, it could be unconstitutional if improperly designed and implemented.

THE CHANGE PROCESS

Attachment II of the July 15, 1992 memo from Texas Education Commissioner Lionel "Skip" Meno states that the State Board of Education has determined that below-grade-level courses are an obstacle to raising performance standards. The Texas Administrative Code has been amended in Chapter 75, Curriculum, Subchapter E, Well-Balanced Curriculum, to reflect this mandate from the Commissioner. (Meno, 1992) Thus in Texas the practical issue is not whether ability grouping for slower students is appropriate, but how Texas schools are implementing the new mandate for change by the state government.

Mandates for change tend to come about at times of national crises. World War I led to the National Education Association to approve and publish the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education in 1918 which called for a universal study of secondary education. The
Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 enacted legislation for increased vocational 
education in agriculture, home economics, etc. During the Great 
Depression, the George Dean Act of 1934 started distributive education. 
World War II brought forward the Eight Year Study on progressive 
education, as well as the increased emergence of accreditation agencies. 
(Krug, 1966)

After each world war, education tended to become more 
centralized. During World War I, William Bagley wanted a return to the 
essential knowledge passed on by the human race. At the end of World 
War II, Arthur Bestor, Albert Lynd, and Hyman Rickover denounced the 
progressives, stating that the lenience caused a lack of political or 
economic readiness. (Schubert, 1991)

During the 1970s and through the 1980s, the economic conditions 
in the United States led to another back to basics movement. Allan 
Bloom, E.D. Hirsch, and Diane Ravitch all called for a curriculum that 
is best for all regardless of race, class, or creed. This centralized 
approach led many to believe a national curriculum was in the near 
future. (Schubert, 1991)

This latest call for reform has come in two distinct waves. The 
first wave was a top down approach to curriculum reform, where the 
national government set the tone, the state government mandated, and 
the local carried out as best as possible. The second wave gave more 
flexibility to the local schools in how best to implement changes based 
on local conditions. (Bacharach, 1990)
The mandate from the Commissioner and the State Board of Education to eliminate below grade level courses is typical of the so-called "second wave" of educational reform. The state makes general goals and policies, but leaves the nuts and bolts of how to implement to the local district (Bacharach, 1990).

The "first wave" mandated reforms from the top as a reaction to national alarms in the late 1970's and early 1980's (Kirst, 1990). "The Toyota Problem" was seen as the need to have an educated workforce, which is considered crucial to international economic competition. Accountability, achievement, and "back to the basics" were the key words to this first wave. (Bacharach, 1990).

The United States government used the Department of Education as a "bully pulpit," encouraging states to take control and centralize education (Bacharach, 1990). Secretary of Education Terrel Bell issued a report, titled A Nation at Risk, that is often cited as the beginning of the first wave. This report discussed the failures of the public schools in America, and challenged the states for reform. (Boyd, 1990)

In 1984, another U.S. Department of Education report, A Nation Responds, reported early successes from this first wave of state mandates for quality education. Everything from curriculum to funding to discipline to instruction was debated and regulated. State leadership was hailed as one of the "hallmarks of the reform movement." (Passow, 1990)
The Center for Policy Research and Education (CPRE) was established to study state reform initiatives. The CPRE found that reforms with increased academic requirements had little resistance. (Firestone, 1989)

But as the 1990's approached, problems began to appear with this top-down approach to reform. These problems needed more discretion and control, more flexibility and direction, and more professional judgment. (Shedd, 1991) Some evidence concluded that while some areas may have improved during the first wave, the quality of teaching did not due to limits on discretion and increasing paperwork (Bacharach, 1990).

The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy in 1986 stated that the reforms were not working, and teachers are paying the price. Teachers lost power, often treated as little more than classroom furniture. The reforms of the first wave fragmented teachers, curriculum, and teaching. (Passow, 1990)

The "second wave of reform" arose from this realization that not all problems can be solved from the statehouse. Teacher empowerment and local control became the buzzwords of the second wave. (Bacharach, 1990) The new role of the state and federal governments is to set goals and make policies, leaving the local institutions in control of implementation. (Chubb & Moe, 1990) The National Governors Association reported in 1987 that the governors wanted a larger role in setting goals and outcomes, and at the same time stimulate local
The Education Commission of the States (ECS) was a compact among the states to assist the governor, legislature, and state education agencies to develop policies to improve the quality of education. (Anderson, 1987)

Another desired outcome of this second wave is the professionalization of teaching. Site-based decision making is an example, where decisions are made at the school level using a group of stakeholders. The stakeholders include building administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other members of the community. While traditional institutions still have authority, it is more delegated. (Passow, 1990)

At the local school level, principals may play the most crucial role. Programs rarely succeed without creative and enthusiastic principals (Sergiovanni, 1980). Teachers, as participants in the decision making process, will be empowered as never before. Parents will also increase their authority as stronger participants. (Bacharach, 1990)

Critics charge, however, that the second wave does little to reduce the bureaucracy in education, with site-based decision making just another way to control schools within an essentially bureaucratic system. They feel that as long as there is a higher-level authority, it will get used. (Chubb & Moe, 1990)

In order for change to be effective, however, it must be carefully planned and implemented. Historically, there are four phases of planned educational change, according to Michael Fullan. They are adoption

Adoption came about during the post-Sputnik years, where the more innovations the better was the rule of thumb. There were large scale curriculum innovations, usually characterized by being inquiry oriented and student centered. The implementation failures period was from 1970 to 1977 when the innovations from the first phase were unsuccessfully implemented. (Fullan, 1991)

The phase of implementation success was innovations such as school improvement, effective schools, staff development, and leadership. These innovations were based on solid research. The fourth phase of intensification vs. restructuring from 1983 to 1990 was a tug of war between the first wave of reform and the second. Intensification was the first wave, which was marked by an increased definition of curriculum, mandated texts, standardized tests, and aligned curriculum. The second wave, or restructuring, was noted for such innovations such as school-based management, enhanced roles for teachers, and integration of innovations. (Fullan, 1991)

Fullan also outlines the three phases of the change process. The first is the initiation of the change, sometimes referred to as mobilization or adoption. The second phase is the implementation stage, or the initial use of the change. The third phase is continuation, or institutionalization, of change over a period of time. (Fullan, 1991)
Factors affecting initiation include the existence and quality of the innovation, access, advocacy from central administration, teacher advocacy, community pressure, support/apathy, and funds. (Fullan, 1991) The following factors, if present, were favorable to adoption: bureaucratic safety in which no behavioral changes were required, a response to external pressure which eased pressure on implementors, and approval of peer elites or what is popular. (Pincus, 1974)

The second phase, implementation, has three factors. The first is the characteristics of the change: is it needed, are the goals clear, is it complex, is it practical, and is it a quality change. Local characteristics is the second factor; in other words the change supported by the district, the community, the principal, and the teachers. The third factor is external, the government or other agencies and their support. (Fullan, 1991)

The ECS also outlined key factors, a combination of state and local, for successful implementation. These factors include state pressure for accountability, support from political leaders, respect the balance between state and local control in policy and program design, discretionary money available to schools and districts, advocacy of leadership within the education department, and a positive working relationship with districts. (Anderson, 1987)

The key themes to implementation according to Fullan are vision building, evolutionary planning, initiative taking, empowerment, staff development, restructuring, and monitoring. (Fullan, 1991)
THE TEXAS MANDATE

The Texas commissioner of education, in his directive to eliminate below grade level courses, allows for some flexibility for implementation at the building level by providing options. While the directive is specific as far as issue and results, the local decision making is a second wave type of reform.

A chart attached to the July 15th memo from Commissioner Meno indicates the phaseout schedule in Texas. After the 1991-1992 school year, the following courses cannot be offered for state graduation credit: Correlated Language Arts I, Fundamentals of Mathematics, Consumer Mathematics, and Introductory Physical Science. Correlated Language Arts II-IV and Applied Biology cannot be offered after the 1992-1993 school year. Pre-Algebra is to be phased out no later than after the 1995-1996 school year. (Meno, 1992)

Attachment III of the July 15th memo attempts to answer questions regarding phasing out below grade-level courses. It suggests in preparing for the 1993-1994 school year, districts need to:

- provide accelerated rather than remedial instruction at all levels
- increase the rigor of elementary and middle school courses
- design and implement instructional strategies to enhance student learning at all levels
- design and implement an assessment/monitoring system that will clearly monitor what is being taught and learned at all levels
- alter daily schedules to provide additional time needed in English language arts, mathematics, and science
- design and implement Saturday and/or summer school programs to assist students in closing the existing learning gap
It also states that districts need to provide staff development, as it "is the key to providing sound instruction for all students, particularly those who are part of this transition." It suggests training might include team teaching, reading and writing as a process, teacher expectations, reading and writing across the content areas, accelerated learning strategies, cooperative learning, matching instructional strategies and learning styles, alternative grouping practices that eliminate labeling, and integration/teaching of higher level thinking across the curriculum. (Meno, 1992)

For students not ready for the change to regular English, Attachment III indicates that districts should consider modifying the instructional program to meet the needs of those students, including the allocation and use of resources such as materials, instructional time, and technology. One suggestion was to implement English I/Reading Improvement as a two period block course, although Reading Improvement would count only as a state elective credit. The use of technology should also be encouraged. (Meno, 1992)

The mandate does not affect enrollment in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, as two ESL credits may be counted as two English credits. However, districts need to consider and plan for the transition of these students into regular English classes. This plan should provide for the needs of these students and ensure their success. (Meno, 1992)
Students who took Fundamentals of Mathematics (FOM) or Consumer Mathematics during the 1992-1993 school year cannot apply these credits toward the state math requirements of three credits, but may apply them toward their state elective requirements. Pre-Algebra will still be available to students functioning below grade level until after the 1995-1996 school year. Districts may continue to submit waivers to offer Algebra I as a two year course. (Meno, 1992)

In order to prepare students for success in the real world, Introductory Physical Science and Applied Biology are in the phase out schedule. These students should be placed in Physical Science, modifying materials used, time, teaming, cooperative learning, learning styles, teacher expectations, and technology. Staff development should be used to assist teachers. (Meno, 1992)

State Compensatory Education (SCE) money could be used to assist schools in making the transition. This money is available to assist students in at-risk situations and could be used for staff development, materials and equipment, tutoring, extended day, Saturday instruction, summer school, reduced class size, etc. (Meno, 1992)

In regards to special education students, ARD (Admission, Review, and Dismissal) committees may need to be convened to consider appropriate placement without FOM and CLA classes as alternatives. Without FOM or CLA, ARD committees will need to explore the use of strategies such as content mastery while enrolled in regular math and English classes. In other cases, it may be appropriate to place these
students in a special education math or English class, as long as the committee can justify the least restrictive environment requirement. (Meno, 1992)

Attachment III also discusses each option for implementing the phase out of below grade level classes. Option I states:

Districts may choose not to offer any of the following deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year:
- Correlated Language Arts I
- Fundamental of Mathematics
- Consumer Mathematics
- Introductory Physical Science

Prerequisites for a successful transition include teachers exhibiting a readiness to use a variety of instructional strategies to address different learning rates and styles, staff development, additional instructional resources, and student readiness. Advantages include students being immediately involved in more rigorous courses and earning state graduation credits. The chief disadvantage is that students and teachers must be ready for a more rigorous approach and that prerequisites are in place. (Meno, 1992)

Option II states:

Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year and may apply for waivers to teach Algebra I over a two-year period. Students enrolled in a two-year Algebra I course must remain enrolled in the course for two years and may earn two credits, thus satisfying two of the three required mathematics credits.

Prerequisites include a waiver to the Texas Education Agency, which needs to include a guarantee that: the two-year course is as rigorous as the one-year course, appropriate curriculum adjustments are
made, all essential elements will be taught, the instructional staff was involved in the decision and implementation, and the local board approved the waiver. Other prerequisite conditions are teacher readiness, staff development, clearly defined expectations, available resources, and student readiness. (Meno, 1992)

Advantages to Option II include immediate opportunity for students to engage in more rigorous study and provisions are made for students with different learning rates to receive additional instructional time. Disadvantages are dependent on district and student readiness levels, current status of courses and teacher/student schedules, and possible impact on personnel required. (Meno, 1992)

Option III states:

Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year. Districts may choose to offer English language arts, math, and science courses that satisfy required credits for graduation by using alternative instructional arrangements which utilize more than one adult in the classroom.

Examples of this approach might include team teaching to reduce pupil-teacher ratio, use of resource teachers to assist regular teachers, or use of instructional assistants. Prerequisites include staff development, willingness of staff to use team concept, and student readiness. Advantages and disadvantages are the same as for Options I and II. (Meno, 1992)

Option IV states:

If the proposed schedule for phasing out the courses will cause an undue hardship on students due to lack
of district readiness, a district may choose to use the 1992-1993 school year as a transition year by offering the deleted below grade level courses for elective credit only.

Prerequisites to this approach include notification of parents that these courses will not satisfy state graduation credits, staff development, development of instructional strategies and curriculum for 1993-1994 courses, and instructional strategies in the 1992-1993 courses that accelerate student learning in preparation for more rigorous classes. Advantages are having one year to prepare for this transition, and no change in teacher or student schedules. Disadvantages include: the delay in student participation in more rigorous courses, instruction is likely to be neither challenging nor effective preparation of 1993-1994 courses, and students will still have to take a full load of English, math, and science courses the next year. (Meno, 1992)

An important proviso in each option was staff development. According to the July 15th memo, teachers must be "given the tools to address the needs of students in at-risk situations adequately." It further states that such staff development will help all students achieve success. If given the necessary skills, teachers can provide quality instruction to all students in a heterogeneous classroom. The needs of the teachers should not be forgotten in this staff development process, and evaluation strategies must be carefully prepared to assess the desired outcomes. Whatever staff development is implemented, it must be ongoing. (Meno, 1992)
SUMMARY

Discussion of ability grouping has been going on for a century or more. Grouping students according to their academic abilities was originally seen as an efficient and effective method to educate the masses. For some, this is still the preferred method for a variety of reasons. However, more research is indicating that grouping does more harm than good. Although for achievement there seems to be a negligible gain in heterogeneous classes, the stakes are higher when discussing student self-concept.

Change is a risky venture, especially if the proper considerations are not carefully thought out. Many factors contribute to the success of any change, including the initiation and the implementation. The initiation must be relevant in terms of practicality and needs, have an element of readiness, and have resources available. Implementation needs to be visionary, carefully planned, and monitored. Staff development, if effectively done, seems to be the key.

In Texas, the commissioner of education mandated the elimination of below grade level courses on the basis that these courses hindered strong academic achievement as reflected on the TAAS. Implementation of the new policy was left up to the individual schools, according to the four options provided. Within each option, however, there was flexibility to implement according to each school's needs.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND DATA COLLECTION

The collection of the data was a two part process. The first part was a telephone survey to assist in building a mail survey instrument and to assess the instrument. The second part was the mail survey which was a sample of all school districts in Texas according to size, wealth, and geographic location. The use of the two-part process ensured an appropriate instrument to survey a representative sample of the proper population.

CREATING THE MAIL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

A draft of the mail survey instrument was created first based on the review of the literature. The original memo sent by Commissioner Meno (see Appendix A) was the first document studied for the purpose of constructing an appropriate instrument. It included the options each school could choose from to carry out the mandate, which was critical to the study. The literature in this area (see Chapter II) was reviewed to find possible reasons why a school would choose a particular option, how it might implement the option, and what opinions might be held at the campus level. With all this information, a draft instrument was
created. This initial draft was simply a set of questions deemed appropriate, and which appeared in the telephone survey data collection form (See Table 3.2).

To assess the draft instrument, and to modify as appropriate, a telephone survey was conducted. For the purpose of assessing the instrument, only a small sample was drawn. However, this sample would be representative of the larger sample. Regions Ten and Eleven, due to their proximity to the researcher, were chosen as areas from which to draw the sample. Using the Texas School Directory 1992-1993, published by the Texas Education Agency, all high schools in those two regions were placed in a computerized data base. This data base also included the schools' size and location. The wealth index was taken from another T.E.A. document, Snapshot '92: 1991-1992 School District Profiles. Both documents were the most recently compiled by T.E.A. at the time of the study.

A chart was designed (see Table 3.1) to accommodate three high schools from each size category, 1-A through 5-A. The three high schools in each size category were listed according to the district's wealth: high, medium, or low. This allowed for fifteen schools to be selected across the same categories as the larger mail sample would use. Half of the schools in this telephone survey samples were taken from Region Ten, and the other half from Region Eleven.
TABLE 3.1: DISTRIBUTION OF TELEPHONE SURVEY SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>HIGH WEALTH</th>
<th>MEDIUM WEALTH</th>
<th>LOW WEALTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #1 REGION X</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #2 REGION XI</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #3 REGION X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #4 REGION XI</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #5 REGION X</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #6 REGION XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #7 REGION X</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #8 REGION XI</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #9 REGION X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #10 REGION XI</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #11 REGION X</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #12 REGION XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #13 REGION X</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #14 REGION XI</td>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL #15 REGION X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the sample frame, an alphabetical listing of the high schools in the data base, a random sample is drawn to meet the pre-determined conditions in each slot in the chart. Once the sample was drawn, the principals' names, addresses and phone numbers were located in the Texas School Directory.

Prior to making the phone calls, a telephone survey data collection form (see Table 3.2) was created based on the draft survey instrument. This data collection form allowed for notetaking during the actual phone conversation. One form was created for each of the fifteen schools.

During the actual phone survey, the researcher would identify himself and the purpose of the survey. It was indicated that the questioning should not take longer than five minutes of the principal's
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>How did your school respond to the Commissioner's order to phase-out below-grade-level courses?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Options: I  II  III  IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>What, if anything, did your school do to support this response?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff Development - Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5 - Did your response affect the teachers in your building?
Yes - Explain: ______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

No - Explain: ____________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Q6 - Did your response affect the parents of your students?
Yes - Explain: ____________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

No - Explain: ____________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Q7 - Do you agree with the Commissioner to phase-out below-grade-level courses?
Agree strongly Agree somewhat Indifferent
Disagree somewhat Disagree strongly

Comment: ______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Q8 - Do you think your response will be successful?
Yes - Explain: ____________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

No - Explain: ____________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

valuable time. Upon securing permission to proceed, each principal was asked the same set of questions just as they appear on the data collection form. Their answers were noted on the data collection form. After all questions on the form were asked, each respondent was given the opportunity to comment further on either the topic or the questions as asked. As expected, some principals gave lengthy answers and
opinions, while others answered as briefly as necessary. All were cooperative.

For example, the following is a transcript of the telephone survey with a principal from a AA high school in a high wealth school district located in Region 10:

Researcher: "Hello, my name is Neil Dugger and I am conducting a survey to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral dissertation at the University of North Texas. Could I take five minutes of your time to ask you a few questions on how your school dealt with the issue to phase out below grade-level classes?"

Principal: "Yes, go ahead."

Researcher: "How did your school respond to the Commissioner's order to phase out below grade-level courses? Did you use option one, two, three, or four?"

Principal: "Option two was our best choice."

Researcher: "What, if anything, did your school do to support this response? Staff development? Technology? Other?"

Principal: "We conducted staff development during inservice prior to the start of school."
Researcher: "Did your response have any effects on your special education programs?"

Principal: "No. Eliminating basic classes is better for our students and provides for better opportunities."

Researcher: "Did your response have any effects on your ESL program?"

Principal: "No. We have a good ESL teacher."

Researcher: "How did your response affect the teachers in your building? Did they agree strongly, agree somewhat, indifferent, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?"

Principal: "Indifferent."

Researcher: "How did your response affect the parents of your students, using the same responses?"

Principal: "Indifferent."

Researcher: "Do you agree with the Commissioner to phase out below grade level courses, using the same responses?"

Principal: "I agree somewhat. If the teacher adjusts the pace of the curriculum for the slower students and teaches at that students' level, it will be successful."
Researcher: "Do you think your response will be successful?"

Principal: "It already is in our school."

Researcher: "Thank you for your time."

The data gathered from the phone surveys was analyzed as to its content, as well as the appropriateness of the questions. The responses from each telephone survey were tallied. For example, question three inquired as to the effect of their response on special education programs. While most of the telephone respondents indicated that there were no effects on special education, some did indicate that it did have an effect. One principal was concerned with resource students in regular algebra classes. This variety in response indicated validity in the question, and should be included in the mail survey.

Question two inquired as to how each school supported this response. Again the answers were varied. While some used extensive staff development and incorporated technology such as computers for assistance, others indicated that very little support was given to teachers. Question seven asked for a personal opinion on the Commissioner's mandate, and the responses ran the spectrum. Many believed that the mandate would be beneficial to students, but others felt it would make learning more difficult for those students previously enrolled in basic classes.

The variety in responses, as well as the quality of the responses, indicated that the questions used in the telephone survey were valid for
use in the mail survey. The questions were converted from an open-ended oral response question to a written question with multiple choice responses, using the criteria and guidelines explained later in this chapter. One question ("How did your response affect the parents of your students?") was deleted due to lack of knowledge by the respondents in the telephone survey.

THE MAIL SURVEY

The documentation and the review of literature also provided information that led to the design and content of questions considered for the mail survey. Certainly, the four options outlined in the Commissioner's memo were to be included on the survey, as was basic information on the respondents' school. The review of literature (see Chapter II), including sources on grouping and government mandates, also provided necessary material. For example, Michael Fullan and others stated that staff development was a key to the implementation of new programs (Fullan, 1991), and in fact the memo from Commissioner Meno flatly stated that staff development must be provided to successfully implement the mandate (Meno, 1992). Jeannie Oakes in her research indicated that instructional strategies such as cooperative learning and higher order thinking skills were instrumental in heterogeneous classes (Oakes, 1985). These are two areas in which the literature suggested potential questions for the mail survey.
Questions are the most essential component of a survey, and their composition must be done carefully and properly. Effective questions have focus, brevity, and simplicity. The question must be focused on a single issue, asking as precisely as possible what the researcher needs to know. Brief questions are less subject to error by both the researcher and the respondent, and are more likely to have greater focus and clarity. Clarity demands that all who read the question interpret it in the same way. (Alreck, 1985)

It is also important in question composition to use effective vocabulary and proper grammar. The vocabulary must be easily understood by all respondents. In this study, all respondents are school principals and have a shared vocabulary on these issues. The two most effective types of questions are grammatically structured as simple or complex. (Alreck, 1985) Most questions in the final version of the mail survey (See Appendix B) in this study are simple; for example:

"8. Did your school participate in some type of staff development to implement your plan? (Check One) _____Yes _____No"

Instrumentation bias and error were carefully avoided in constructing the mail survey questions. Criteria by which to judge the issues was stated clearly, usually by incorporating "you" or "your school" into the questions. All questions were applicable to all respondents (except where questions branched), and examples listed were inclusive. Respondents were not asked to recall from memory the options listed by the Commissioner, as a separate sheet was included listing the options.
Other biases, such as overspecificity, overemphasis, and ambiguity were guarded against. Response bias, which is the mentality or predisposition of the respondent, was controlled by the wording or sequencing of the questions. For example, the opinion questions are sequenced last to reduce emotional responses with earlier questions. (Alreck, 1985)

The survey questions are of two types, structured and unstructured. The structured items list the alternative answers the respondent may choose from. These items clearly tell the respondent what is being asked and how they are to answer. Structured items also allow for greater comparability of data, accuracy, and a greater chance for cooperation by the respondent. These items were also post-coded for statistical analysis by computer. (Alreck, 1985)

Unstructured items were also included in this survey. Question 5 is a good example: "Briefly explain your school's reasons for selecting the option checked in question 4:" This type of item gives the respondent the opportunity to further explain in detail why certain decisions were made or what a certain population's opinion was. Many other structured items were followed with the opportunity to "explain" the answer. These data provided richness and variety to the study.

The structured questions or items used a variety of scaling techniques. Multiple choice items were widely used due to their simplicity and versatility. Some were multiple response items where one or more of the listed responses could be chosen. For example, question #13: "If yes, which programs? (check as many as apply, and explain). The
possible responses listed were "Special education," "Gifted/Talented," "English as a Second Language," or "Other." Other items were single response items, such as question #14: "Has your school increased the use of technology to implement the plan? (check one)" The possible responses were only "yes" or "no." Horizontal scales were used on items in which an opinion is expressed, with the scale ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree." In all items, the scales were kept as simple as possible, while allowing for the most informative possible response. Also, instructions were given on every item on how to respond in order to provide accuracy and consistency in the answers. (Alreck, 1985)

Once all the appropriate questions were constructed and selected, based on the variety of sources, the mail survey (or questionnaire) was constructed. Heavily dependent on the voluntary cooperation of the respondents, the questionnaire was constructed in such a manner as to be simple, efficient, and effective. At the beginning, the respondents are given the option of listing their name, school and address; or they may choose to remain anonymous. The first item, however, asks the simple question "In what educational service region is your school located?" and lists the twenty regions from which to choose. This beginning provides an easy start to the questionnaire, and research indicates that once a respondent has begun they usually always finish (Alreck, 1985).

The questions were grouped in the order of the events as they happened chronologically. The first three questions ask about the school and the respondent. Questions four through seven inquire as to the
decisions the school made in response to the Commissioner's mandate. The next four questions, eight to eleven, discuss the staff development, if any, used by the school to prepare the staff for the changes. Questions twelve and thirteen want to know how the school's other programs were affected. Fourteen and fifteen inquire as to what support was given using technology, money, etc. Question sixteen asks what instructional strategies appear to work best, and seventeen and eighteen want to know what the staffs' and respondent's opinions are.

Branching was used with questions eight through eleven which deal with staff development. If the respondent answers question eight with a "yes," then he/she is directed to answer nine, ten, and eleven. If "no," then those questions are skipped by the respondent. Branching also occurs with twelve and thirteen. The use of branching was limited, and the instructions were clear and simple.

Since the mail survey must stand on its own and is the only contact between the researcher and the respondent, the cosmetic aspects are very important (Alreck, 1985). All paper used is 20 pound stock or heavier, and is white with black ink. The questionnaire was laser printed on an 11 by 14 inch sheet of paper, front and back. While 8.5 by 11 inch is preferable, a one piece questionnaire is more preferable in order to receive a higher rate of return (Alreck, 1985).

The mailing piece consisted of five components: the mailing envelope, the cover letter, the questionnaire, the attachment, and the return envelope. The mailing envelope used was a standard #20
envelope, with the address printed directly on the envelope using a computer data base and ink-jet printer. It also included the principal's name for better personalization. The return address was applied using a stamp. First class postage was affixed, which should allow for the greatest response rate (Alreck, 1985).

The cover letter (see Appendix C) explains the project and attempts to gain cooperation with the respondent. The first paragraph briefly explains the subject of the survey, the reason for the study, and an introduction of the researcher. The second paragraph explains that their school was randomly chosen, and that the results of the study will indicate the impact of this mandate in Texas. It further explains that the completed surveys are confidential, and as an inducement to return the survey the respondent may request a copy of the results. The third and last paragraph indicates that the survey should take little time to complete, to return in the postage-paid return envelope, and a "thanks" for their cooperation of a quick return. It is one page, using white 8.5 by 11 inch paper of 20 pound stock. The inside address and salutation was "personalized" by computer programming to add a more personal touch. Each letter was individually signed by the researcher. This all adds to the response rate.

The attachment (See Appendix D) is an explanation of the options outlined by the Texas Commissioner of Education in eliminating below grade-level courses. It was included in order for the respondent to quickly recall the options, and which one was selected without relying on
memory or digging through files. This should have increased the return rate and lessened the time the respondent needed to complete the questionnaire. This attachment was produced in the same manner and style as the cover letter and questionnaire.

The mailing piece was ordered as follows: first the cover letter, followed by the questionnaire, and last the attachment. A return envelope was also included, pre-stamped with the researchers address and affixed with a first class postage stamp. All were placed in the original envelope for mailing.

The mailing piece was first mailed to these same fifteen schools sampled by phone for any additional comments and critiques. The procedures of this mailing were carried out exactly as the mail survey would be carried out. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires, the surveys were studied for misunderstandings or confusion by the respondents as to the directions based upon the answers given. Any comments were noted. Based upon no apparent confusion in responding to any item and a lack of comments, few changes were made in the mailing piece prior to the first general mailing.

For the mail survey, a data base was created listing all high schools in Texas by region, wealth, and size. The source for the information on size and region came from the Texas School Directory by T.E.A., and the information on wealth came from T.E.A.'s Snapshot ’92: 1991-1992 School District Profiles. Additional information on school
size categories was derived from the University Interscholastic League’s Constitution and Rules.

All school districts in Texas are grouped into twenty geographical regions. For example, most Dallas area schools are in Region 10. The Texas School Directory lists all school districts by county. Under each county, the districts in that county are listed along with the region number. In the data base, the number of that school’s region was listed. Since the regions are grouped geographically, this allows the sample frame to be stratified geographically.

Also in the Texas School Directory, the population of each is given. With the UIL guidelines on classifying the size of the school, each school was assigned in the data base a number from one to five. 1-A high schools have a ninth grade through twelfth grade population of 144 or less. For 2-A schools, the population is between 145 and 284; and for 3-A it ranges from 285 to 714. In 4-A, the schools have a population of 715 to 1509, while 5-A has at least 1,510 students. This further stratifies the sample frame into five size categories.

To classify wealth, the Snapshot ‘92 book was used. This book contains a wide variety of information, including many different types of financial information. The category that was used for the purpose of this project was “taxable value per pupil,” which would give a consistent indication across the state what the wealth of the district is by assessing the property wealth in the district divided by the number of students. The average "taxable value per pupil" in Texas was listed as $181,257.
For purposes of dividing wealth into three categories, districts with less than $150,000 were classified as low wealth districts, $150,000 to $250,000 districts were classified as medium wealth, and those over $250,000 were listed as high wealth districts. The first four digits from the figure were entered into the data base.

From this sample frame of all high schools in Texas, ten percent from each region were randomly sampled, stratified by wealth and size. In order to do this, first the data were sorted by region number, therefore making each region its own sample frame. Next the region's sample frame was sorted by wealth, dividing the region into three groups of high, medium, or low wealth. Then the schools were sorted by size in five additional sub-groups, and finally sorted by alphabet to put the sample frame into a random order. The final sample frame for each region then contained a maximum of fifteen stratified sample groups (see Region 3 Sample Frame in Table 3.3). For example, seven high schools were listed in Region 3 as low wealth, 2-A schools. However, not all regions contained schools that fit into all fifteen subgroups, such as AAAAA high schools in high wealth districts in Region 3 (See Table 3.3).

Using a table of random numbers, ten percent of the schools in each of the fifteen subgroups were selected for a representative sample in each region. For some regions this was as many as seventeen, while in others as few as five. The total number of schools selected exceeded ten percent of the total number of schools in each region in order to attain a more representative sample.
### TABLE 3.3: REGION THREE SAMPLE FRAME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>County District #</th>
<th>Region #</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austwell-Tivoli</td>
<td>196-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>939.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugio</td>
<td>196-903</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>538.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goliad</td>
<td>088-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>319.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palacios</td>
<td>158-905</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,689.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>029-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>381.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>County District #</th>
<th>Region #</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>241-906</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>202.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boling</td>
<td>241-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>205.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>120-905</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>220.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidchaven</td>
<td>158-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>225.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Vleck</td>
<td>156-906</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>209.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weimar</td>
<td>045-905</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>200.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>045-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>177.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallettville</td>
<td>143-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>235.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>045-903</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>191.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay City</td>
<td>158-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>154.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Campo</td>
<td>241-903</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Stroman</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>164.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>164.7</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
<th>County District #</th>
<th>Region #</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Falls City</td>
<td>128-904</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>145.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moulton</td>
<td>143-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120.0</td>
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<td>Runge</td>
<td>128-903</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>East Bernard</td>
<td>241-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>149.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ganado</td>
<td>120-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>139.0</td>
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<td>Karnes City</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Kenedy</td>
<td>128-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>088.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiner</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>141.9</td>
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<td>Woodsboro</td>
<td>196-902</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>147.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorktown</td>
<td>062-904</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>110.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>235-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>087.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuero</td>
<td>062-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>060.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edna</td>
<td>120-901</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>131.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoakum</td>
<td>062-903</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>106.3</td>
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<td>Wharton</td>
<td>241-904</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>148.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Prior to mailing, all surveys were precoded for basic information as to the school's region, wealth, and size. For example, "6M4" would indicate this survey was mailed to a school in Region 6, of medium wealth, and classified as 4-A in size. "12L1" would be a high school from Region 12, in a low wealth district, and classified as 1-A in size. This precoding is...
crucial in determining the basic information if returned without the optional information of name and address.

The first mailing was during the first week in October 1993. A total of 225 surveys were mailed, representative of all twenty regions in regards to size and wealth (See Table 3.4). After three weeks, a postcard was mailed to each school who had yet to respond as a reminder. By the first week of November, 152 were returned, a response rate of 67.5 percent.

While this return netted the required ten percent of all districts within each region (See Table 3.4), a second mailing of 64 was sent after the first week in November, 1993. The schools targeted in the second mailing were in those sub-groups who had yet to respond in the first mailing in order to obtain a more representative sample. The contents of the second mailing were exactly the same as the first. By December 1993, 33 from the second mailing had returned, a response rate of 51.6 percent. With the return of both the first and second mailings, atmailings, at least ten percent of the districts in each of the twenty regions were represented in the sample (See Table 3.4). The range was a low of 11.0 percent in Region 4 to a high of 42.8 percent in Region 18. In addition, at least ten percent of the schools by wealth and size were represented (See Table 3.5). For example, 14.7 percent of all low wealth, 1-A high schools in the state were represented in the returned surveys.
TABLE 3.4: SAMPLE FRAME - PERCENT OF RETURNS BY REGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>TOTAL HIGH SCHOOLS IN REGION</th>
<th>FIRST MAILING # MAILED</th>
<th># RETURN</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SECOND MAILING # MAILED</th>
<th># RETURN</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1004</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As each survey was returned, the document was sight-edited. If the cover letter or attachment was returned, it was discarded. The questionnaires were checked for several things, including whether the respondent completed the survey, whether they provided the optional
TABLE 3.5: DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS IN THE SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>HIGH WEALTH # returned/# total (%)</th>
<th>MEDIUM WEALTH # returned/ # total (%)</th>
<th>LOW WEALTH # returned/# total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>12/39 (30.8%)</td>
<td>13/41 (26.9%)</td>
<td>13/75 (14.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>8/31 (25.8%)</td>
<td>15/52 (28.8%)</td>
<td>18/141 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>13/34 (41.2%)</td>
<td>13/51 (27.5%)</td>
<td>19/128 (14.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAAA</td>
<td>9/31 (29.0%)</td>
<td>12/66 (18.2%)</td>
<td>16/97 (16.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAAAA</td>
<td>4/30 (13.3%)</td>
<td>11/83 (12.0%)</td>
<td>12/106 (11.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

information, whether they added additional comments, and whether the pre-code was intact. The date of the return was noted in the upper left-hand corner. In fact, no surveys had to be discarded due to incompleteness or inappropriate responses.

In preparation of data processing, the questionnaires were put in a file identified by the region to which it was sent. Master lists were kept and maintained on returned and non-returned responses. The envelopes in which the surveys were returned have also been stored.

In preparation for data entry, each questionnaire must be postcoded into a format understood by the researcher and the data entry personnel. The "Data Entry Form" (See Table 3.6) was created to serve as a key, assigning each variable to a column(s) and a code. For example, the response to question #1 was assigned to columns 5 and 6, with the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column(s)</th>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>School Code Number</td>
<td>Enter three-digit School Code Number (ex.: 101)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4        | School District Wealth        | Enter one digit.  
1 = High Wealth  
2 = Medium Wealth  
3 = Low Wealth |
| 5-6      | School Location               | Enter one or two digit region number (1-20)                          |
| 7        | School Size                   | Enter 5 - AAAAA  
4 - AAAA  
3 - AAA  
2 - AA  
1 - A    |
| 8        | Respondent’s Position         | Enter 1 - Principal  
2 - Vice Principal  
3 - Other          |
| 9        | Four T.E.A. Options           | Enter 1 - Option I  
2 - Option II  
3 - Option III  
4 - Option IV |
<p>| 10       | C.L.A. I                      | Enter 0 if not checked; 1 if checked                                |
| 11       | Fund. of Math                 | &quot;                                                                  |
| 12       | Consumer Math                 | &quot;                                                                  |
| 13       | Intro to Physical Science     | &quot;                                                                  |
| 14       | Pre-Algebra                   | &quot;                                                                  |
| 15       | C.L.A. II-IV                  | Enter 0 if not checked; 1 if checked                                |
| 16       | Applied Biology               | &quot;                                                                  |
| 17       | Delete C.L.A. I-IV            | Enter 1 for yes; 2 for no                                         |
| 18       | Delete App. Biology           | &quot;                                                                  |
| 19       | Delete Pre-Algebra            | &quot;                                                                  |
| 20       | Staff Development             | &quot;                                                                  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column(s)</th>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hours of Staff Development</td>
<td>Enter 1, 2, 3, or 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Prior to School Start</td>
<td>Enter 0 if not checked; 1 if checked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>During School Hours</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>After School Hours</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Other Time</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Team Teaching</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Reading &amp; Writing Across</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Writing Projects</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Accelerated Learning</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Matching styles</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Alternative grouping</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Higher-Level Thinking</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Other Training</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Affect Special Programs</td>
<td>Enter 1 for yes; 2 for no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Enter 0 if not checked; 1 if checked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Gifted/Talented</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>E.S.L.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Other Special Program</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Increased Technology</td>
<td>Enter 1 for yes; 2 for no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Team Teaching</td>
<td>Enter 0 if not checked; 1 if checked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column(s)</td>
<td>Variable Name</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Alternative Grouping</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Content Mastery</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Higher Level Thinking</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Other Strategies</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 53 | Staff's Opinion | Enter 1 - Strongly agree  |
|    |                 | 2 - Somewhat agree         |
|    |                 | 3 - Agree                  |
|    |                 | 4 - Somewhat Disagree       |
|    |                 | 5 - Strongly Disagree       |

| 54 | Respondent's Opinion | Enter 1 - Strongly agree  |
|    |                      | 2 - Somewhat agree         |
|    |                      | 3 - Agree                  |
|    |                      | 4 - Somewhat Disagree       |
|    |                      | 5 - Strongly Disagree       |

code being the one or two digit number that identifies the region.

Columns 1 through 3 were added in order to assign each questionnaire a three-digit identification number. Also added was column 4, which indicated by a one digit number (1=High Wealth; 2=Medium Wealth; 3=Low Wealth) the wealth of the district in which the school is located. The respondent was not asked to indicate the district wealth due to the variety of methods used across the state to determine wealth status.

Using red ink, the columns and the code were written on each questionnaire in the appropriate location for easy understanding by the data entry personnel. The data entry personnel entered all the variables into the mainframe computer on the University of North Texas campus, as well as on a 3.5" computer disk.
The data were analyzed using a SPSS computer statistical program. The computer was asked to report the results based on categories related to the research questions outlined in Chapter One. For example, question number one asked which of the four options was chosen by the school. The program, using the raw data, was directed to produce the number of schools choosing each option. It was further programmed to report the results after schools were broken into subcategories of size, wealth, and location. Percentages were given in all cases. The results are reported in Chapter Four.

SUMMARY

To ensure an appropriate instrument for conducting the survey, the collection of the data was a two part process. The first part involved a telephone survey, directed at a sample of fifteen high schools in Regions X and XI. This sample was stratified according to size and wealth. The questions asked in the telephone survey were based on the content of the commissioner's memo, as well as the review of literature. The results were used to create a mail survey instrument.

The second part of the process to collect data was a mail survey. The instrument was created based on the results of the telephone survey, the commissioner's memo, and the review of literature. A sample of Texas high schools was drawn from a stratified sample frame according to school size, wealth, and location. In all cases, a minimum of ten percent of the schools in each subsample was mailed and returned the survey.
The data from the mail surveys were analyzed by computer. The results were reported in categories related to the research questions. In most cases, the results were given in terms of total cases and percentages.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The problem of this study, as stated in Chapter One, is to determine the patterns of response of Texas schools in implementing the Texas Education Agency rule to phase out below grade-level courses. As discussed in Chapter III, the data collection was a two stage process. Initially fifteen schools were randomly selected in a phone survey, which led to 189 high schools throughout the state of Texas being surveyed by mail. The results are stated according to the research questions as they appear in Chapter One, with one exception. Question number five will be addressed as a subtopic to each of the other topics.

FOUR TEA OPTIONS

In attachment III of the July 15, 1992 memo from Commissioner of Education Lionel Meno, four options were given for school districts to choose when implementing the mandate to phase out below grade level classes. The four options are summarized as follows:

OPTION I: Districts may choose not to offer any of the following deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year:
- Correlated Language Arts I
- Fundamentals of Math
- Consumer Mathematics
OPTION I: Introductory to Physical Science

OPTION II: Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year and may apply for waivers to teach Algebra I over a two-year period.

OPTION III: Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year. Districts may choose to offer English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that satisfy required credits for graduation by using alternative instructional arrangements which utilize more than one adult in the classroom.

OPTION IV: If the proposed schedule for phasing out the courses will cause an undue hardship on students due to lack of district readiness, a district may choose to use the 1992-1993 school year as a transition year by offering the deleted below-grade-level courses for elective credit only.

The first research question asked "Which of the four options did school districts choose to implement the Texas Education Agency's rule?" The study investigated ways Texas schools responded in regards to the options, and whether the size, wealth, and location of the schools made any difference in the responses.

Of the 188 high schools responding, as indicated in Table 4.1, 67 (or 35.6 percent) chose Option I (See Table 4.1). Option II was selected by 115 schools (61.2 percent). Three schools (1.6 percent) chose Option III, and three other schools (1.6 percent) chose Option IV. The one school that did not respond stated that the question was not applicable as they were already in compliance prior to the mandate.
The data in Table 4.1 indicates that the majority of schools (61.2 percent) chose Option II, which eliminates the basic courses but allows Algebra I to be taught over a two year period. Combined with comments found later in this chapter, it appears most schools decided that Algebra was the one course in which many students needed the extra time and help. Option III and Option IV may not have been popular with schools due to lack of funding, difficulty in transition, personnel problems, and a perception that the students' best interests were not being served. Related comments from the respondents are found later in this chapter.

Table 4.2 looks at school size and possible options. In class 1-A, with school enrollments of 144 students or less, seventeen schools (43.6 percent) chose Option I. Twenty schools (51.3 percent) chose Option II, while one school (2.6 percent) chose Option III and Option IV.

In class 2-A (enrollment of 145-284), 17 (43.6%) high schools chose Option I, while 20 (51.3%) chose Option II. For Options III and IV, one (2.6%) school selected each option. In class 3-A (enrollment of 285-714),
14 (30.4%) chose Option I, and 32 (69.6%) chose Option II. No 3-A schools chose Options III or IV.

Fifteen (40.5%) chose Option I in class 4-A (enrollment of 715-1509), and 21 (56.8%) chose Option II. No Class 4-A school chose Option III, however one (2.7%) chose Option IV. In class 5-A (enrollment of 1510 and up), 4 (14.8%) schools chose Option I. Twenty-two (81.5%) chose Option II, and one (3.7%) chose Option III. No school chose Option IV.

TABLE 4.2: Four TEA Options by School Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Size</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 4.2 indicates that school size had little effect on which option the school selected. However, there is some indication that the larger the school, the more likely the school would choose Option II over Option I. This may be due to the greater flexibility many large
schools experience. The large schools often have more resources, personnel and materials, than smaller schools and are usually located in urban/suburban areas with more opportunities.

In regards to school location (Table 4.3), the twenty regions were subdivided into nine geographical areas for statistical purposes: South Texas, South Central Texas, Southeast Texas, Central Texas, East Texas, North Central Texas, West Texas, Texas Panhandle, and Far West Texas. In South Texas (Regions 1 and 2), the schools responded as follows: 6 (37.5%) chose Option I; 8 (50.0%) chose Option II; 1 (6.3%) chose Option III; and 1 (6.3%) chose Option IV. In South Central Texas (Regions 3 and 20), the response was: 8 (42.1%) chose Option I; 10 (52.6%) chose Option II; 1 (5.3%) chose Option III; and no school chose Option IV. In South East Texas (Regions 4 and 5), the schools responded as follows: 8 (47.1%) chose Option I; 9 (52.9%) chose Option II; and no school chose Options III or IV.

In Central Texas (Regions 6,12 and 13) schools the response was: 8 (26.7%) chose Option I; 20 (66.7%) chose Option II; and one (3.3%) school each chose Option III and IV. In East Texas (Regions 7 and 8), schools responded as follows: 8 (38.1%) chose Option I; 13 (61.9%) chose Option II; and no school chose Option III and IV. In North Central Texas (Regions 9,10, and 11) the response was: 11 (33.3%) chose Option I; 21 (73.3%) chose Option II; no school chose Option III; and one (3.0%) chose Option IV. West Texas (Regions 14 and 15) schools responded as follows: 4 (26.7%) chose Option I; 11 (73.3%) chose Option II; and no
### TABLE 4.3: Four TEA Options by Geographical Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Option I</th>
<th>Option II</th>
<th>Option III</th>
<th>Option IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Panhandle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools in Far West Texas chose Option III or IV. In the Texas Panhandle (Regions 16 and 17), the response was: 7 (36.8%) chose Option I; 12 (63.2%) chose Option II; and no school chose Option III or IV. Schools in Far West Texas
(Regions 18 and 19) responded as follows: 7 (43.8%) chose Option I; 9 (56.3%) chose Option II; and no school chose Option III or IV.

The data in Table 4.3 indicate that school location had little effect on which option a district chose, the majority in all areas choosing Option II. West Texas had the highest percentage choosing Option II, whereas South Texas had the lowest percentage.

How schools located in districts of different wealth chose their option also was analyzed, as shown in Table 4.4. Schools, as discussed in Chapter Three, were grouped into three categories of school district wealth: high, medium, or low wealth. Nineteen (39.6%) of the schools from high wealth districts chose Option I, while twenty-nine (60.4%) chose Option II. No high wealth schools chose Options III or IV. Twenty-three (35.4%) schools from medium wealth districts chose Option I, and forty one (63.1%) chose Option II. One school chose Option III, while no school chose Option IV. In low wealth districts, twenty-five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
[33.3%] schools chose Option I, and forty-five (60.0%) chose Option II. Two (2.7%) schools chose Option III, and three (4.0%) chose Option IV.

Table 4.4 indicates that school wealth had almost no effect on which option a district chose. A relatively higher percentage of schools in low wealth districts chose Options III and IV. Based on respondents comments and related literature, this was possibly due to their special needs population and the inability to fund the change adequately (Oakes, 1985).

Based on the option their school chose, respondents were asked to explain their choice. Below are representative summary statements from the respondents' comments:

Option I
- Students need to pass the end of the year course in Algebra I
- Tougher curriculum to meet TAAS requirements
- Best option for our kids
- To get students in upper level courses as soon as possible to prepare better for college
- Best way to stay within the law and raise expectations
- Does not count toward graduation
- Will offer tutorials during the school day
- Easiest option to adopt
- Lower classes helped to perpetuate lower expectations
- Bite the bullet now to benefit students over long haul
- Students will perform better if placed with higher level students
- In a small school, tracking leads to behavior problems and also class size too small
- Funding
- Recommended by the curriculum improvement team
- Get our students on the state track ASAP
- Lack of training and planning for any other option
- All students treated as college prep
- Convenience
- Challenge students
- Delaying issues does not solve problem
Option II
- Allow slower students an extended time to succeed in Algebra and build a good knowledge base
- Current low math scores
- Preparing for inclusion anyway
- Was put into place last year
- Use in conjunction with Content Mastery
- May keep students from needing Algebra II
- Helps Hispanic students get quality education
- Most logical option
- Best choice for our low socio-economic kids
- Lowered expectations caused negative results
- Grouping students had caused behavior problems
- Prepare students for TAAS
- Directed by central administration
- The principal's vision
- Some students cannot learn as fast as others
- Only way to have 3 years of math for lower level
- Site based decision making committee decision
- Lot of flexibility to accelerate or slow down as needed
- No need to delay what was inevitable
- Students can handle English and science, but need extra help in math
- Grouping not effective for students in low group
- Mastery learning without time constraints

Option III
- Stay one year ahead of TEA
- Students need to be ready for Exit TAAS & college
- Best fit our needs at this time (personnel, staff opinions, etc.)
- High special education population requires inclusion

Option IV
- Students need these courses "in spite of Skippy"
- Other options would cause undue hardship on students below grade level
- Flexibility for some students during transition

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

The second research question asked "What support was provided (staff development, technology, etc.) if any, for implementation of the TEA rule?" Staff development is often seen as one of the keys to successful implementation of any change, according to the review of
literature (Fullan, 1991). Technology is another type of support that could assist in the implementation of a change, such as buying new or more computers with appropriate software. This question asked if the respondents used staff development, technology, or some other type of support, in implementing the TEA mandate to eliminate below grade level courses.

According to the survey results as indicated in Table 4.5, 116 (61.4 percent) schools did use staff development in implementing the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. Seventy-three (38.6 percent) indicated that they did not conduct any type of staff development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 4.5 indicates that a majority of schools used staff development to implement the option chosen. Staff development is accepted by many in education as the key to effective change (Fullan, 1991). Those schools that did not use staff development may not have seen a need for additional staff training, or may not have had the appropriate resources.

Was school size a factor in the use of staff development? 1-A schools (Table 4.6) responded with 19 of 39 (48.7 percent) using staff development to assist in implementing the mandate to eliminate below
grade level courses. In class 2-A, 21 of 39 (53.8%) schools responded yes, while 29 of 46 (63%) in class 3-A used staff development. Of 37 4-A schools, 25 (67.6%) used staff development; and 22 of 27 (81.5%) in 5-A.

**TABLE 4.6: Use of Staff Development and School Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 indicates that school size appeared to be a factor in the reported use of staff development. The larger the school, the more likely to use staff development. This may be due to availability of staff to lead the training and the number of staff needing training, or possibly due to greater opportunities for effective programs within a larger community.

The majority of schools in all regions utilized staff development. For example, 9 of 16 (56.3%) did in South Texas, whereas 10 of 19 (52.6%) in South Central Texas used staff development. In South East Texas 12 of 17 (70.6%) conducted staff development, and in Central Texas 22 of 30 (73.3%) did. In East Texas it was 13 of 21 (62%), 22 of 24 (64.7%) in North Central Texas, 7 of 15 (46.7%) in West Texas, 11 of 19 (57.8%) in the Texas Panhandle, and in Far West Texas 9 of 16 (56.3%) used staff development.
With the exception of the West Texas region, as indicated in Table 4.7, the majority of schools in all regions utilized staff development. West Texas and other regions with lower percentages (Far West Texas, South Texas, South Central Texas, and the Texas Panhandle) are largely in relatively isolated regions of the state. The regions with the highest percentages (Central and South East Texas) are in areas with large and dense populations. This indicates that the regions with the lower percentages may not be able to utilize their regional service centers for
training as much due to the lack of proximity, or that there is less need due to homogeneity in the area.

In regards to school wealth and the use of staff development as shown in Table 4.8, 26 of 38 (68.4%) schools in high wealth districts used staff development to assist in the implementation of the mandate. For medium wealth schools, 44 of 55 (80%) did, while 46 of 75 (61.3%) low wealth schools used staff development.

**TABLE 4.8: Use of Staff Development and School Wealth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.8, schools from medium wealth districts were far more likely to use staff development than schools from either low or high wealth districts.

For those schools which used staff development, they were asked how many hours of staff development were dedicated to the elimination of below grade level classes. As Table 4.9 indicates, the choices were: 1-3 hours; 4-10 hours; 11-15 hours; and 16+ hours. Forty-six (38.7 percent) schools responded that one to three hours were dedicated. Forty-six (38.7 percent) other schools indicated four to ten hours. Eleven (9.2 percent) schools indicated eleven to fifteen hours, and sixteen (13.4 percent) conducted more than sixteen hours of staff development.
TABLE 4.9: Hours of Staff Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the figures in Table 4.9, almost eighty percent of the schools that conducted staff development did so in ten hours or less of training. This may be due to the lack of available time for staff development, or the lack of appropriate staff development programs available.

Those schools which conducted staff development were asked to respond as to when the staff development was conducted (See Table 4.10). The choices (they could choose as many as apply) given were: Prior to start of school; During school hours; After school hours; or other. Seventy four (39.2 percent) schools responded that the staff development was conducted prior to the start of school, while forty-nine (25.9 percent) schools conducted staff development during school hours. Forty-seven (24.9 percent) schools indicated staff development was conducted during after school hours, and fifteen (7.9 percent) schools used some other time for staff development. This "Other Time" may be during summer vacation days, other vacation days, Saturdays, in the early morning hours, or some other time at the discretion of the district.
TABLE 4.10: Timeframe for Staff Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to Start of School</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During School Hours</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School Hours</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Time</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in Table 4.10, there was no one timeframe used by the majority of schools. Although more schools chose to conduct their staff development during the inservice days prior to the start of school, a large number conducted staff development either during the school day (time release) or after school hours.

When schools conducted staff development, Table 4.3 indicates the type of training that was provided. The choices (the respondents could choose as many as apply) and results were: Team teaching (12, 6.3 percent); Reading and writing across the curriculum (56, 29.6 percent); Teacher expectations of student achievement (69, 36.5 percent); Writing projects (43, 22.8 percent); Accelerated learning (12, 6.3 percent); Cooperative learning (69, 36.5 percent); Matching teaching strategies with learning style (66, 34.9 percent); Alternative grouping practices (23, 12.2 percent); Integration (21, 11.1 percent); Higher-level thinking (52, 27.5 percent); Technology (56, 29.6 percent); Other (10, 5.3 percent).
TABLE 4.11: Type of Staff Development Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Teaching</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading &amp; Writing Across Curriculum</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Projects</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated Learning</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Styles</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Grouping</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Level Thinking</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Training</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular types of staff development training, as indicated in Table 4.11, to assist in eliminating below grade level courses are Teacher Expectations, Cooperative Learning, and Matching Learning Styles with Teaching Styles. The least popular are Integration, Team Teaching, and Accelerated Learning. However, no type of training is preferred by a majority of the schools.

When factoring for school size (see Table 4.12) in regards to hours of staff development, 1-A schools responded as follows: 6 (31.6 percent)
had one to three hours; 8 (42.1 percent) had four to ten hours; 3 (15.8 percent) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 2 (10.5 percent) had more than sixteen hours. 2-A schools responded: 7 (33.3 percent) had one to three hours; 8 (38.1 percent) had four to ten hours; 2 (9.5 percent) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 4 (19.0 percent) had more than sixteen hours.

Schools in class 3-A responded as follows: 9 (32.1%) had one to three hours of staff development; 11 (39.3%) had four to ten hours; 4 (14.3%) had eleven to fifteen hours, and the same number had more than sixteen hours. In class 4-A: 13 (52%) had one to three hours; 9 (36%) had four to ten hours; 2 (8%) had eleven to fifteen hours; and one school (4%) had more than sixteen hours. Class 5-A: 11 (50%) had one to three hours; 7 (31.8%) had four to ten hours; no schools reported having eleven to fifteen hours; and 4 (18.2%) had more than sixteen hours.

**TABLE 4.12: Hours of Staff Development by School Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School size has little effect on the number of hours of staff development, as indicated by Table 4.12. Districts of all sizes have ten
hours or less of staff development, with only a few exceptions. However, 1-A through 3-A schools tend to have more hours than 4-A and 5-A.

With regards to geographical location and number of hours of staff development (See Table 4.13), South Texas schools responded as follows: 5 (55.6 percent) had one to three hours; 1 (11.1 percent) had four to ten hours; 1 (11.1 percent) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 2 (22.2 percent) had more than sixteen hours. South Central Texas schools responded: 6 (66.7 percent) had one to three hours; 2 (22.2 percent) had four to ten hours; 0 (0 percent) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 1 (11.1 percent) had more than sixteen hours.

Schools in South East Texas responded as follows: 5 (41.7%) had one to three hours of staff development; 4 (33.3%) had four to ten hours; 1 (8.3%) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 2 (16.6%) had more than sixteen hours. In Central Texas, the schools responded: 8 (36.4%) had one to three hours; 9 (40.9%) had four to ten hours; 2 (9.1%) had eleven to fifteen hours; and three schools (13.6%) had more than sixteen hours. East Texas schools responded: 6 (46.2%) had one to three hours; 6 (46.2%) had four to ten hours; 1 (7.7%) school reported having eleven to fifteen hours; and no school had more than sixteen hours.

North Central Texas schools responded as follows: 7 (31.8%) had one to three hours of staff development; 11 (50.0%) had four to ten hours; 2 (9.1%) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 2 (9.1%) had more than sixteen hours. In West Texas, the schools responded: 1 (14.3%) had one to three hours; 3 (42.9%) had four to ten hours; 1 (14.3%) had eleven to
fifteen hours; and two schools (28.6%) had more than sixteen hours. The Texas Panhandle schools responded: 3 (27.3%) had one to three hours; 4 (36.4%) had four to ten hours; 2 (18.2%) schools reported

TABLE 4.13: Hours of Staff Development by Geographical Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1-3 hours</th>
<th>4-10 hours</th>
<th>11-15 hours</th>
<th>16+ hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>5 (55.6%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Texas</td>
<td>6 (66.7%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Texas</td>
<td>5 (47.1%)</td>
<td>4 (33.3%)</td>
<td>1 (8.3%)</td>
<td>2 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td>8 (36.4%)</td>
<td>9 (40.9%)</td>
<td>2 (9.1%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td>6 (46.2%)</td>
<td>6 (46.2%)</td>
<td>1 (7.7%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Texas</td>
<td>7 (31.8%)</td>
<td>11 (50.0%)</td>
<td>2 (9.1%)</td>
<td>2 (9.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td>1 (14.3%)</td>
<td>3 (42.9%)</td>
<td>1 (14.3%)</td>
<td>2 (28.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Panhandle</td>
<td>3 (27.3%)</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West Texas</td>
<td>5 (55.6%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
having eleven to fifteen hours; and 2 (18.2%) schools had more than sixteen hours. The schools in Far West Texas responded: 5 (55.6%) had one to three hours of staff development; 2 (22.2%) had four to ten hours; (11.1%) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 1 (11.1%) had more than sixteen hours.

As indicated by Table 4.13, the hours of staff development are little affected by geographical location. The majority of schools in all regions had ten or fewer hours of staff development. However, there are indications that schools in less populated areas tend to have more hours of staff development than those in more urban areas. Schools in South Texas, West Texas, and the Texas Panhandle had high percentages of sixteen-plus hours of staff development. Conversely, schools in Central Texas, South East Texas, North Central Texas had less than twenty percent with more than sixteen hours.

Schools located in districts of high wealth responded as follows: 11 (42.3%) had one to three hours of staff development; 10 (38.5%) had four to ten hours; 2 (7.7%) had eleven to fifteen hours, and 3 (11.5%) had more than sixteen hours. In medium wealth districts, the schools responded: 16 (36.4%) had one to three hours; 17 (38.6%) had four to ten hours; 5 (11.4%) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 6 (13.6%) schools had more than sixteen hours. Schools in low wealth districts responded: 19 (42.2%) had one to three hours; 16 (35.6%) had four to ten hours; 4 (8.9%) had eleven to fifteen hours; and 6 (13.3%) had sixteen hours plus.
Table 4.14 indicates that wealth has little impact on the number of hours schools used for staff development. Eighty percent or more of the schools in districts of every wealth level had ten or less hours of staff development.

Technology is seen as another type of support when implementing the mandate, as shown in Table 4.15. One hundred and twenty-four (65.6 percent) schools reported that technology use was increased, while 60 (31.7 percent) schools indicated that there was no increased use of technology. Five (2.6 percent) schools did not answer the question.

Table 4.15: Increase in the Use of Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.15 indicates that schools are taking advantage of the technology available to assist teachers with more academically diverse students. Computers, especially, are helpful in individualizing instruction and for tutorials.

When factoring school size and the use of technology, as indicated in Table 4.16, 29 of 39 (74.3 percent) 1-A schools used technology in implementing the TEA mandate. The same number, 29 or 39, indicated use of technology in class 2-A. In Class 3-A, it was 23 of 36 (50 percent) that used technology, and 53 of 47 (62.1 percent) in 4-A. For Class 5-A, 20 of 27 (74.1 percent) used technology.

**TABLE 4.16: Use of Technology and School Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 4.16, school size has little bearing on the use of technology in implementing the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses.

School location and the use of technology (See Table 4.17) was addressed. In South Texas, 12 of 16 (75 percent) schools used technology to assist implementation of the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. In South Central Texas, it was 12 of 19 (63.2 percent) that used technology and 10 of 17 (58.9 percent) in South East Texas. Central
Texas schools were 20 of 30 (66.6 percent), while in East Texas it was 13 of 21 (61.9 percent) that used technology. In North Central Texas, 23 of 34 (67.7 percent) schools used technology, and in West Texas 9 of 15 (60 percent) schools did. Schools in the Texas Panhandle responded with 11 of 19 (57.9 percent) that did, while in Far West Texas it was 12 of 16 (75 percent) schools that used technology to assist in implementation of the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses.

**TABLE 4.17: Use of Technology and School Location**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Texas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Texas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Texas</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Panhandle</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West Texas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.17 indicates that school location plays little role in the use of technology in meeting the demands of the mandate. The majority of the schools in each region recognize the validity of using technology to assist in eliminating below grade level courses.

When school wealth (See Table 4.18) is considered with the use of technology, 30 of 48 (62.5 percent) schools in high wealth districts used technology to help implement the TEA mandate. In medium wealth districts it was 44 of 55 (80 percent), and in low wealth districts schools responded with 50 of 75 (66.6 percent) schools using technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 4.18, the majority of schools in each wealth category used technology to assist in the elimination of below grade level courses. Although wealth appears to have little effect, a higher percentage of medium wealth districts used technology.

Other resources, including additional money and staff, may have been necessary at some schools (See Table 4.19). The respondents to the survey indicated that eighty-six (45.5 percent) schools needed additional resources to implement the TEA mandate. Ninety-five (50.3 percent) however, did not. Eight (2.6 percent) schools did not respond.
The data in Table 4.19 indicated that about half of the schools needed additional resources, and half did not. Options I and II did not require new personnel or materials, thus it was not necessary to spend extra dollars.

Questioned about the need for additional resources (See Table 4.20) according to school size, 1-A schools responded yes in 15 of 39 (38.5 percent) cases. In class 2-A 20 of 39 (51.3 percent) schools needed additional resources, while in 3-A it was 24 of 46 (52.2 percent). In class 4-A 16 of 37 (43.2 percent) responded that additional resources were needed, and in class 5-A 11 of 27 (40.7 percent) required additional resources to implement the mandate.

TABLE 4.19: Need for Additional Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.20: Need for Additional Resources and School Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.20 indicates that most 2-A and 3-A schools cited a need for additional resources while 1-A, 4-A, and 5-A schools responded with less than fifty percent needing additional resources.

With school location factored with the need for additional resources in Table 4.21, the following locations responded positively: South Texas 9 of 16 (56.3 percent), South Central Texas 9 of 19 (47.4 percent), South East Texas 8 of 17 (47.1 percent), Central Texas 15 of 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Texas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Texas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Panhandle</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West Texas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(50 percent), East Texas 9 of 21 (42.9 percent), North Central Texas 11 of 34 (32.4 percent), West Texas 9 of 15 (60 percent), the Texas Panhandle 8 of 19 (42.1 percent), and Far West Texas 7 of 16 (43.8 percent).

South Texas and West Texas, as shown in Table 4.21, indicated a need for additional resources, while Central Texas split 50/50. This could be due to the remoteness of these regions.

Considering the need for additional resources and school wealth in Table 4.22, 18 of 48 (37.5 percent) schools from high wealth districts required additional resources. From medium wealth districts, 30 of 55 (54.5 percent) schools needed additional resources, while 38 of 30 (50.7 percent) from low wealth districts did.

**TABLE 4.22: Need for Additional Resources and School Wealth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.22 clearly indicates that the lower wealth districts needed more assistance than high or medium wealth districts. The wealthier districts may have had the resources in place, or possibly could rearrange budget priorities more easily.
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The third research question asks, "What are the effects of implementing the TEA rule on other programs and curriculums (special education, ESL, gifted and talented, etc.) in the school?" In other words, the study wanted to know if students in special programs were being affected due to the elimination of below grade level courses. Table 4.23 shows ninety-seven (51.3 percent) schools responded that special programs were being affected, while eighty-seven (46.0 percent) schools said there was no effect. Five (2.6 percent) schools did not respond to this item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.23: Effects on Special Programs, Yes or No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.23 indicates that the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses had an effect on special programs, at least to some degree. These effects, based on the comments, could be negative when discussing the needs of special education students. However, the effects might simply be the result of change itself.

In regards to school size being a factor with special programs being affected by the elimination of below grade level courses (See Table 4.24), 22 of 39 (56.4 percent) 1-A schools responded that the special programs
were affected. In class 2-A 23 of 39 (59 percent) schools responded yes, while in class 3-A 16 of 46 (34.8 percent) felt that special programs were affected. In class 4-A 21 of 37 (56.8 percent) schools responded yes, and in class 5-A 15 of 37 (55.6 percent) responded that special programs were being affected.

**TABLE 4.24: Special Programs and School Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools of all sizes, with the exception of 3-A schools, responded that special programs were affected (See Table 4.24).

In regards to special programs and school location as shown in Table 4.25, the following numbers reflect those who responded in the affirmative: 10 of 16 (62.5 percent) in South Texas, 10 of 19 (52.6 percent) in South Central Texas, 10 of 17 (58.9 percent) in South East Texas, 21 of 30 (70 percent) in Central Texas, 7 of 21 (33.3 percent) in East Texas, 15 of 34 (44.1 percent) in North Central Texas, 8 of 15 (53.3 percent) in West Texas, 11 of 19 (57.8 percent) in the Texas Panhandle, and 5 of 16 (31.3 percent) in Far West Texas.

As indicated in Table 4.25, school location had an effect on whether special programs were affected in all regions except East Texas, North Central Texas, and Far West Texas. This may be due to a strong
support system already in place, such as Content Mastery, in these regions.

TABLE 4.25: Special Programs and School Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Texas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Texas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Texas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Panhandle</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West Texas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering school district wealth and special programs in Table 4.26, 27 of 48 (56.3 percent) schools from high wealth districts indicated that special programs were affected by the TEA mandate. In medium wealth districts, 33 of 55 (60 percent) responded in the affirmative, as did 37 of 75 (49.3 percent) from low wealth districts.
Table 4.26 indicates that special programs are probably not affected by district wealth, according to the perception of the respondents. With a range of only ten percent, all three levels of wealth reported about the same response.

If a school indicated that it did effect special programs, as shown in Table 4.27, the respondent were to indicate which programs. Ninety-two (48.7 percent) schools from the total sample responded that special education classes were affected, and only 17 (9.0 percent) noted gifted and talented classes as being effected. Twenty-nine (15.3 percent) responded that ESL was being effected, while four (2.1 percent) indicated "others."

**Table 4.26: Special Programs and School Wealth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.27: Special Programs being Affected**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted/Talented</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.27 indicates that special education programs were most affected by the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. Special education students had long been sheltered in basic classes, especially when being transitioned out of special education. With the elimination of basic classes, these special education students either were put into regular classes or placed back into special education classes. ESL programs were affected much less as theirs was a language barrier rather than a learning disability. Gifted and talented programs were rarely affected, since they on the opposite end of the spectrum.

The respondents were asked to explain their response on how special programs were affected by the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. The following is a summary of their comments:

- Students in these programs suffer the most
- Lower level classes help the transition from special education
- ESL students need low classes due to language deficiency
- Without low level classes, there are more special education referrals
- It is difficult for these students to master all objectives
- Now employing content mastery program
- Special education students are included in higher level classes
- We are working hard to start where the students are and take them where they need to go through modification
- We totally mainstream our resource student
- More students are placed in special education classes since there are no longer smaller, slower paced compensatory classes
- At-risk students struggling in higher level classes
- Math is the most difficult for inclusion
- Gifted/talented students are utilized in peer teaching and tutoring
- Modifications are made on a higher level and more frequently for special education students
- Self-paced materials purchased for additional help
- IEP's had to be adjusted
- Class size impacted
Students had to make the change "cold turkey"
- Incorporated GT teaching techniques into regular classes
- Science now being taught in special education classes

BELIEF SYSTEM OF THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

Research question number four asks, "How does the belief system of the professional educators in the school appear to affect the implementation of the TEA rule?" The opinion of the professional educators on a school staff can have an important effect on the success of any new mandate or program, and this study wanted to find out how the professional educators on the respondents staff felt about the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses.

One hundred and forty-five (77.5 percent) respondents, usually principals, indicated that their staff agrees with the mandate's goal of eliminating below grade level courses as shown in Table 4.28. Thirty-two (22.2 percent) responded that their staff disagreed with the elimination of said courses, with two (1.1 percent) not responding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.28: Staff Opinion on Eliminating Below Grade Level Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.28 indicates that principals believe their staff agrees with the mandate to eliminate basic classes by a three to one margin. This opinion, however, is based upon the principals' perceptions and feedback
from the staff. The staff was not surveyed for this study. These responses should be viewed then as the principals' opinions, and not what their staff may really believe.

Staff opinion is also broken down by school size in Table 4.29. Class 1-A schools included thirty (75.0 percent) respondents that agree with the mandate to eliminate below grade level classes. Thirty-one (81.6 percent) respondents from Class 2-A agreed, with thirty-six (80.0 percent) agreeing in Class 3-A. In 4-A twenty-six (70.3 percent) agree, while twenty-two (81.5 percent) respondents agree in Class 5-A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.29 indicates there is little difference between schools of different sizes and the staffs' opinions on the mandate to eliminate below grade level classes.

In regards to staff opinion and school location (See Table 4.30), the following indicates agreement with the TEA mandate by school staff in these regions: 14 of 16 (87.5 percent) in South Texas, 15 of 19 (78.9 percent) in South Central Texas, 9 of 17 (52.9 percent) in South East Texas, 23 of 31 (74.2 percent) in Central Texas, 15 of 21 (71.4 percent) in East Texas, 27 of 32 (71.4 percent) in North Central Texas, 14 of 15 (93.3
percent) in West Texas, 13 of 19 (68.4 percent) in the Texas Panhandle, and in Far West Texas, 13 of 15 (86.7 percent) schools responded in the affirmative.

**TABLE 4.30: Staff Opinion and School Location**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Texas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Texas</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Panhandle</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West Texas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.30 indicates that school location is not a major factor in whether a staff agrees with the mandate.

Considering staff opinion and school wealth in Table 4.31, 35 of 48 (72.9 percent) schools in high wealth districts responded that their staff
agrees with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. In medium wealth districts, 50 of 64 (78.1 percent) schools responded positively on behalf of their staff, while in the low wealth districts 60 of 75 (80.0 percent) schools stated their staff's opinion was positive toward the mandate.

**TABLE 4.31: Staff Opinion and School Wealth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dis-Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.31 indicates that there is little effect on staffs' opinions on the mandate due to school wealth.

Implementation of the TEA mandate to eliminate below grade level classes involves instructional strategies that is a part of the staff's belief system. The respondents were to select the instructional strategies that appear to work best in their school. The choices provided were: team teaching, cooperative learning, alternative grouping practices, integration, content mastery, higher-level thinking, technology, other.

As shown in Table 4.32, twenty-one (11.1 percent) respondents indicated team teaching as one of their best instructional strategies after eliminating below grade level courses. Ninety-seven (51.3 percent) chose cooperative learning, and forty (21.2 percent) respondents chose alternative grouping strategies. Integration was a choice for thirty-one
(16.4 percent) respondents, while content mastery was used by 90 (47.6 percent) respondents. Fifty-seven (30.2 percent) indicated higher level thinking strategies, and technology was implemented by ninety five (50.3 percent) respondents. Other strategies was indicated by thirteen (6.9 percent) respondents.

**TABLE 4.32: Instructional Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Teaching</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Grouping</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Mastery</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Level Thinking</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Strategies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.32 indicates that cooperative learning and the use of technology were selected by the majority of schools as being the most effective strategies in teaching students of varying abilities in one class. Team teaching and integration were not seen as the answer by most.

**SCHOOL SIZE, LOCATION, AND WEALTH**

As discussed earlier in Chapter IV, research question number five is addressed specifically with the other research areas. The question is
"How does school size, wealth, and geographical location affect the implementation of the TEA rule?" However, with one exception, there does not appear to be a significant difference in regards to school size, location, or wealth.

The one exception is in regards to the use of staff development and school size (see Table 4.6). The larger the school, the more likely the school was to conduct staff development. The range was from 47.5 percent in 1-A schools to 81.5 percent in 5-A schools.

CAMPUS ADMINISTRATORS' OPINIONS

The sixth research question asks, "What are the administrator's impressions of the effects of this rule on students in the school?" As the campus instructional leader, the principal is a key figure in the change process. The principal's support, or lack of, is instrumental in the success of this mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. This study seeks the answer to whether the principals are in favor of the mandate, and why. In addition to asking if they agree or disagree, the principals were asked to comment.

The original surveys were directed to the principal of each school. On the survey, the respondent (or person who completed the survey) was to mark their professional position in the school. As shown in Table 4.33, out of the 189 responses, 182 (96.3 percent) identified themselves as the principal. One (.5 percent) marked vice principal, while four (2.1
percent) was listed as "Other." Two (1.1 percent) did not respond to the item.

TABLE 4.33: Respondents' Professional Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.33 indicates that the person answering the survey was usually the principal, which was the intent of the study. All surveys were mailed to the school's principal, by name.

In the survey, the respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses (See Table 4.34). Of the 189 respondents, 155 (82.4 percent) agreed with the mandate. Thirty-three (17.5 percent) respondents disagreed, with one (.5 percent) not responding. At each end of the scale, 75 (39.7 percent) strongly agreed and 10 (5.3 percent) strongly disagreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses.

Table 4.34 indicates that the respondents agreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level classes overwhelmingly. There was a larger percentage strongly agreeing than strongly disagreeing. This may be due to principals' knowledge of recent research and literature on tracking, or possibly due to simple acceptance of a top-down mandate.
TABLE 4.34: Respondents' Opinion on Mandate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breaking the responses down by school size in Table 4.35, 33 of 40 (82.5 percent) respondents from 1-A schools agreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. In class 2-A, 30 of 39 (76.9 percent) respondents agreed with the mandate, and 38 of 45 (84.4 percent) respondents agreed in 3-A. 31 of 37 (83.8 percent) respondents in class 4-A agreed, while 23 of 27 (85.2 percent) respondents in class 5-A agreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses.

TABLE 4.35: Respondents' Opinion by School Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-A</th>
<th>2-A</th>
<th>3-A</th>
<th>4-A</th>
<th>5-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.35 indicates that respondents' opinion on eliminating below grade level classes is not affected by school size.
In regards to respondents' opinion and school location (See Table 4.36), 13 of 16 (81.3%) agreed with the mandate in South Texas. In South Central Texas 15 of 19 (78.9%) agreed, and 10 of 17 (58.8%) in South East Texas agreed. 27 of 31 (87.1%) agreed in Central Texas, while in East Texas 18 of 21 (85.7%) agreed. The number who agreed in North Central Texas was 28 of 33 (84.8%), and it was 13 of 14 (92.9%) in West Texas. In the Texas Panhandle 15 of 19 (78.9%) agreed, while 14 of 16 (87.5%) agreed in Far West Texas.

TABLE 4.36: Respondents' Opinion and School Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central Texas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Texas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Texas</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Texas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Panhandle</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West Texas</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.36 indicates that school location has little, if any, bearing on how respondents answered for their opinion on the elimination of below grade level courses. Agreement is widespread across the board.

In looking at school district wealth and the opinion of the respondent (See Table 4.37), 41 of 48 (85.4%) respondents in high wealth districts agreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. From medium wealth districts, 53 of 65 (81.5%) agreed, while 61 of 75 (81.3%) agreed from low wealth districts.

**TABLE 4.37: Respondents’ Opinion and School Wealth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Wealth</th>
<th>Medium Wealth</th>
<th>Low Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dis-Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.37 indicates that the wealth of the school’s district has little, if any, effect on the respondent’s opinion on eliminating below grade level courses.

Respondents were asked for any additional comments. The following is a summary of those comments:

- Our kids will not be able to compete in colleges and for the workplace without updated curriculum
- I like the extended course idea, it gives slower students additional time to succeed over the same amount of material/information
- Since eliminating below grade level courses, SAT and ACT scores have gone up. NAPT scores are improving. In TAAS, 100% mastery in writing for three years in a row with most scoring fours
- Those courses were needed for students who are not going to attend any college
- Students needing strong vocational or life skills will not be as prepared
- "Send Skippy back home to New York"
- The plan will add to the drop out rate
- Problem exists with 504 modifications, but TAAS is without modifications
- Teachers must learn to reach kids at their level of proficiency and move them forward - progress over process
- 25% of our students are college bound; increased standards are not necessary for everybody; technical and vocational education should be receiving more emphasis
- Teachers need more training
- English and science yes, algebra no; not all kids need algebra
- We are making constant, if sometimes slow progress. Students are better served than two years ago
- Encourage staff and students to excel, work hard and support this. We expect a lot from our students - we demand a lot from our total staff. When success is achieved it catches on and then it is a matter of continuing to support good work habits
- I agree, but phase in should be much slower
- Need consumer math for real life experiences
- We have put more money into TAAS preparation
- Lower level classes hinder high expectations, and high expectations have improved our scores dramatically
- Are we putting the horse before the buggy? Usually we start with an idea and develop it slowly. Now we check for competency before anything else. The idea that everyone needs three years of foreign language and math is foolish
- We increased the success rate for our students and improved our discipline. Before classes were dull and boring, discipline was awful, and there were no role models. More kids passed their work and self esteem increased
- There is a need for alternative graduation plans and diplomas. Many have achieved well, but a small core are experiencing great difficulties
- The best education for a few is the best for all
- Students entering high school 2-4 years behind grade level in all likelihood are going to crash and burn
- We have to start somewhere to raise expectations
- Must constantly monitor progress
- Some students can be productive citizens without taking high level high school courses
- It takes a lot more time for teachers to prepare for integrated, heterogeneously grouped classes.
- Staff must be given more preparation time and training.
- Content mastery is a must
- We must give students the chance to be successful in TAAS by providing appropriate courses
- It was time to get rid of the below level math. It served no purpose and did not allow students to grow
- In education we seem to always make changes that affect the high school student. We don't make the changes in the lower grades first
- We will probably experience a great number of failures before we see success
- We need more flexibility in graduation requirements for a few

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to determine the patterns of response of Texas schools in implementing the Texas Education Agency rule to phase out below grade level courses. Chapter I contains six research questions, which are the basis for the survey questions. This chapter reports the results of the data as collected and analyzed in Chapter III.

The first research question asks which of the four TEA options did schools chose to implement the new mandate. Option II was chosen by the majority of schools, at 61.2 percent. Option I was the choice of 35.6 percent, while Option III and IV each got 1.6 percent.

The second question asks what support was provided to assist in the implementation. 61.4 percent used some type of staff development, and the larger the school, the more likely they were to use staff development. Of those schools that used staff development, 38.7 percent dedicated 1-3 hours for it and the same percentage for 4-10 hours. Most schools conducted their staff development prior to the start of school at
39.2 percent. The most popular types of staff development were cooperative learning, 36.5 percent, teacher expectations, 36.5 percent, and matching learning styles, 34.9 percent.

Another type of support was in the use of technology. 65.6 percent of the schools reported an increase in the use of technology to assist in the implementation. The need for additional resources was noted by 45.5 percent of the schools.

The third question asks about the effects of the mandate on special programs, with 51.3 percent responding that it did have an effect on special programs. Of the special programs, 51.3 percent noted that special education was affected.

The belief system of the campus professional educators was asked in the fourth question. According to the respondent, usually the principal, 77.5 percent of the staffs agreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level classes. The best instructional strategies used in the implementation process were cooperative learning, 51.3 percent, technology, 50.3 percent, content mastery, 47.6 percent, and higher level thinking skills, 30.2 percent.

The fifth research question asks what difference does size, wealth, and location of the school make in responding to the survey. With a few exceptions, they made very little difference. Staff development and school size was one exception. The larger the school, the more likely staff development was used to assist staff in implementing the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses.
The sixth research question asks the opinion of the respondent, 96.3 percent of which were principals. 82.4 percent strongly agreed with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. Typical comments in support of the mandate included the idea of the students needing stiffer requirements to compete in college and the workplace, students have better self-esteem, decreased discipline problems, and more flexibility in math. Typical negative comments included that not every student is college-bound, harder on special education students making the transition to regular classes, etc.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Commissioner of Education, Lionel "Skip" Meno, mandated that certain below grade level courses would be eliminated for the 1992-1993 school year. He gave school districts four options to implement the mandate, according to what was best for their local situation.

This study was to describe the ways high schools in Texas responded to the Commissioner's mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. The questions to be answered included which option Texas districts chose, what support was provided upon implementation, the effects on other special programs, the opinions of the mandate by teachers and administrators, and the effects on any of these issues by the location, size, or wealth of the schools.

To effectively collect data, a combination telephone and mail survey was conducted. The telephone survey was to assist in the construction of a mail survey instrument. Telephone respondents were asked a series of questions related to the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses and the related literature on tracking and implementation. The results of this limited survey were studied for
appropriateness of content and effectiveness of questions. The final mail survey instrument questions were based on the telephone survey.

Once the mail survey instrument was constructed, a stratified random sample of Texas high schools was drawn based on school size, location, and district wealth. Addressed to the principal, the surveys were mailed to the schools in the sample. A minimum of ten percent of all schools in each category (school size, wealth, and location) were returned for analysis.

The data from the surveys were compiled and arrayed in descriptive statistics. Frequency and percentage distributions were the most common form in which the results were reported.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The study was conducted with 189 high schools from a cross-section of Texas arrayed according to size, location, and wealth. The results are stated according to the research questions listed in Chapter One. Question number five, which asks how school size, location, and wealth affects the implementation of the TEA rule, is generally addressed throughout the study and not separately.

Question number one asks which of the four options Texas high schools chose when implementing the TEA mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. Option I eliminated all such courses as of the 1992-1993 school year. Option II also eliminated the courses, but allows Algebra I to be taught over a two year period. Option III also eliminated
the courses, but allowed alternative instructional arrangements utilizing
more than one adult in the classroom. Option IV allowed 1992-1993 as
a transition year, offering the eliminated courses for elective credit only.

Option I was chosen by 35.6 percent of the high schools. Respondents, usually the principal, were asked to explain their choice. Most explanations discussed the fact that graduation, testing, and college admission requirements were getting tougher, and that tougher requirements was the only way to achieve the needed results. One respondent remarked that they wanted to "bite the bullet now in order to benefit the students in the long run." Another respondent noted that this is "the best way to stay within the law and raise expectations." It was also noted that tracking had led to behavior and academic problems, and the schools welcomed the mandate for change. Some respondents noted similar statements to one that said this option was "the easiest and most convenient to adopt."

Option II was selected by 61.2 percent of the high schools. This option allowed slower students an extended time (two years) to succeed in Algebra and build a good knowledge base, while still eliminating the basic courses. One respondent noted how this option gave them "the most flexibility to accelerate or slow down as needed." "Grouping was not effective, causing behavior problems and other negative results," according to another. Many stated that the implementation of content mastery was of great assistance in implementing this option.
School size, location, or wealth was not a major influence on the decision. However there were some interesting trends. Smaller schools chose Option I at a higher rate than larger schools. The reverse is true with Option II. 43.6 percent (highest percent for Option I) of the 1-A and 2-A schools chose Option I, while only 14.8 percent of the 5-A schools did. On the other hand, 81.5 percent of the 5-A schools chose Option II, whereas only 51.3 percent of 1-A districts did. This could be attributed to the larger schools having more flexibility to incorporate different plans. The smaller schools would have more difficulty having differentiated classes.

Option III was chosen by only 1.6 percent. One stated that their high special education population required this option for inclusion. Another said it best fit their needs based on current personnel, as well as staff opinions. In regard to school size, location, or wealth, there was no apparent difference.

Option IV was the selection of 1.6 percent. Comments included the opinion that "students needed these courses in spite of what the state thinks." "Other options would create undue hardships of slower students and allow some flexibility during the transition," said another. With school size, location, or wealth, there was no apparent difference.

Options III and IV would be difficult and complicated to implement. Using alternative instructional arrangements with more than one adult in the classroom would be very innovative for most schools, not to mention expensive. Option IV is not realistic for most
schools, as it is unfair to ask a student to take a core course as an elective. A transition year would not make much difference to the student, and would be just as easy a transition using Option II.

Question number two asked about the support that may have been provided to implement the TEA mandate. Staff development is often seen as the key to any successful implementation. Of the schools in the survey, 61.4 percent did use staff development to assist their personnel in the transition. It would be of interest to track the 38.6 percent of the schools that did not use staff development and see how successful they were in comparison.

When school size was considered, there appeared to be a difference in the use of staff development. The larger the school, the more likely to use staff development. At the 5-A level, 81.5 percent of the schools used staff development. The percentage goes down with each level, until only 47.5 percent of the 1-A schools used staff development. This may be due to accessibility to resources to conduct effective staff development, or simply due to the small number of staff in the small schools.

The idea of availability of resources to conduct staff development tends to show up in regards to school location. The highest percentage was in central Texas, 73.3 percent, where services are more available. The lowest percentage was in West Texas, 46.7 percent, which is largely remote geographically.

The schools that used staff development were asked how many hours were dedicated to staff development. 38.7 percent noted that they
utilized one to three hours of staff development dedicated to implementation of the mandate. The same percentage used four to ten hours of staff development. Only 9.2 percent dedicated eleven to fifteen hours to staff development, and 13.4 percent spent more than sixteen hours. With the demands on staff development time in areas such as special education (program to assist students with learning or emotional disabilities), Section 504 (program to assist students with disabilities not normally associated with special education), site-based decision making (a mandated management style where teachers and other staff members take part in the decision-making process), and bureaucratic paperwork (numerous reports and tasks to be completed outside of class time), it is understandable why many districts cannot put much time into staff development. However, with a new mandate such as this one which affects a large percentage of the staff, it is important for the staff development to be effective.

School size, location, or wealth are not major factors. However, the smaller schools seem to put more time into staff development than the larger ones. 50 percent of the 5-A schools had 1-3 hours of staff development, as opposed to 31.6 percent of the 1-A schools. On the other hand, 42.1 percent of the 1-A spent 4-10 hours, while only 31.8 percent of the 5-A did.

The respondents who used staff development were also asked when they conducted their staff development sessions. 39.2 percent stated they conducted their sessions prior to the start of school, and 25.9
percent had staff development during the school day. 24.9 percent conducted their sessions after school hours, and 7.9 percent used some other time.

Given a list of choices, respondents were asked what type of staff development training was used in their school to prepare for the transition. Two types were the choice of 36.5 percent of the schools: teacher expectations of student achievement (TESA) and cooperative learning. Matching teaching styles with learning styles was the choice of 34.9 percent of the schools, whereas technology and reading/writing across the curriculum both were the choice of 29.6 percent. Higher-level thinking strategies were taught in staff development in 27.5 percent of schools, and writing projects was used in 22.8 percent of staff development sessions. Alternative grouping practices was the choice of 12.2 percent, integration in 11.1 percent, team teaching and accelerated learning in 6.3 percent, and 5.3 percent used staff development of some other type.

In addition to staff development, technology was a possible type of support to assist in the implementation of the TEA mandate. In the survey, 65.6 percent of the schools responded that the use of technology was increased due to the implementation of the mandate. It is interesting to note that the schools in Far West Texas and South Texas both have the largest percentage responding positively on the use of technology. With fewer available resources, technology can be the great equalizer and the most convenient answer.
Other resources, including money and staff, were needed at 45.5 percent of the schools. A trend appears in relation to school wealth, where the poorer districts had the highest percentage (52.8 percent vs. 40 percent for high wealth schools) needing additional resources.

Question number three asked about the effects of implementing the TEA mandate on other programs, such as special education, English as a Second Language (ESL), or gifted and talented. Of the respondents, 51.3 percent stated that special programs were being affected. When asked specifically which programs, 51.3 percent stated special education and 9 percent said gifted and talented. ESL was noted by 15.3 percent of the respondents, while 2.1 percent stated it was other programs.

Asked to comment on the effect on special programs, many stated it was students in these programs that suffered the most under the mandate. Lower level classes assist in the transition from special education, and ESL students need the lower classes due to their language barriers. Many stated that those most affected are at-risk students and students slow in math, because special education students can be more easily modified. Several schools said more students are being referred and placed in special education classes because they cannot be successful in regular classes. Without basic classes, there is no longer a middle ground between special education and regular classes.

The fourth question asks about the belief system of the professional educators in the school. 77.5 percent of the respondents, usually principals, indicate that their professional staff agrees with the
TEA mandate. Note, however, that this was the opinion of the respondent, not the staff. There was no separate survey of the staff.

School size, location, and wealth are not major factors. However, the trend that low wealth school staffs tend to be more agreeable (80 percent vs. 72.9 percent for high wealth) is interesting.

The respondents were also asked what types of instructional strategies worked best under the implementation of the TEA mandate. The most popular answer was cooperative learning at 51.3 percent, while 50.3 percent of the respondents used technology as a good instructional strategy to help in the implementation of the TEA mandate. 47.6 percent used content mastery, 30.2 percent used higher level thinking strategies, and 21.2 percent chose alternative grouping strategies. 16.4 percent used integration, 11.1 percent selected team teaching, and 6.9 percent used some other type of strategy. This matches quite well with the types of inservice conducted, as stated under research question number two.

The fifth question addressed school size, location, and wealth in each of the other questions. With the exceptions noted elsewhere in this chapter, school size, location, and wealth are largely not factors in the decision-making process or in the mindsets.

The final and sixth question asked the administrator's impressions of the TEA rule on students in the school. Of the 189 respondents, 96.3 percent identified themselves as the principal. In the survey, 82.4 percent agreed with the rule and felt it would benefit students. In fact,
39.7 percent indicated that they strongly agreed with the mandate, while only 5.3 percent strongly disagreed.

Additional comments from the respondents further support the positive positions and comments as stated earlier. Many stated that without updated curriculum, our kids cannot compete in college and the workplace. Some schools spoke of already increased scores due to the mandate. Many reflected that expectations have risen, and students and staff are rising to the occasion. Discipline has improved in many schools, with self-esteem increased. Of course, it was noted several times that preparation for integrated, heterogeneously grouped classes require more preparation and training for teachers. Content mastery was a popular answer as a must for this program.

Negative comments were also noted and important to consider. Several stated that the below grade level courses were needed for students not planning to attend college. Others noted that the drop-out rate will probably increase, and that special education students will suffer. One respondent simply said, "Send Skippy back to New York."

INTERPRETATIONS

The Commissioner of Education in Texas, Lionel Meno, mandated that Texas high schools eliminate certain below grade level (or basic) classes from the curriculum. There was no choice, or site-based decision, by the local schools on whether or not the courses would be
offered. The only decision the commissioner allowed was how each school could implement the only four options available.

Option II was the choice of the majority of schools. Most principals (61.2%) indicated that Algebra I was the one course where extra time was needed the most. Class 5-A high schools embraced Option II, possibly due to the greater flexibility larger schools have in terms of personnel and resources. Option I was the choice of a little more than a third of the schools, which may be due to the fact it was the simplest to implement.

Options III and IV had few supporters. One explanation may be that Option III probably required an "innovative" school to implement the alternative instructional arrangements of more than one adult in the classroom, requiring dramatic changes in the way most schools arrange personnel. This option possibly requires extensive training, and was apparently more involved than most schools were willing to do. Option IV was not embraced which may be due to perception of delaying the inevitable. It also may not have been considered beneficial to the students since it was for elective credit only.

Staff development was seen as a key element to implementation by the majority of the schools, and the larger the school the greater the use. It also appears that schools in less populated regions of the state used staff development less. Effective staff development is not a simple affair, requiring a multitude of resources, personnel, planning, and
implementation. It may be that schools in more isolated parts of the state simply do not have the access to effective staff development.

Three-quarters of the schools had ten hours or less of staff development dedicated to the implementation of the mandate, and there was no time during the year that was preferred to conduct the inservice. Many schools have difficulty in finding time to conduct effective staff development, and this implementation appears to be no different. It may be that staff development is considered an "as time permits" project at the beginning of the year. Also, schools may not have the funding to plan and implement effective staff development. Another explanation may be that with other demands on staff development time (special education, site-based decision making, opening school procedures) there was little time left over for this mandate.

Schools did, however, have definite ideas on what type of training offered in staff development to meet the mandate. Cooperative learning, raising teacher expectations, and matching teaching styles with learning styles were most often seen as needed. While these types of strategies support the research in this area, they may also have been chosen due to their popularity. These strategies have gained much national recognition as effective strategies and are especially visible to principals.

Most schools indicated an increase in the use of technology in order to implement the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. Technology may be seen by the respondents as an appropriate and relatively simple method to individualize instruction in a heterogeneous
Technology can possible relieve the burden many teachers feel by having to teach students with a wide range of abilities.

Special education was cited by the majority as being affected by the new mandate. Basic classes had long been the placement for special education students who either were making the transition from special education classes to regular classes or simply needed the extra time and attention provided. With the new mandate, a choice had to be made between putting these students back into special education classes or into regular classes. The students who had always fallen between the cracks just found the crack wider.

Content mastery classrooms have been at least part of the answer for many schools. The fact Option II was so popular indicates the attractiveness of offering Algebra I over two years for the slower learner. Other schools have expanded their special education offerings, which may collide with the "least restrictive environment" philosophy.

Three-fourths of the schools indicated their staff was in agreement with the mandate to eliminate below grade level courses. However, many studies indicate the opposite, that teachers prefer the efficiency of teaching homogeneous classes (Oakes, 1985). Since this result is based on the principals' perceptions of their staff, the perception may not equal reality. The principals may be ignorant or naive on the opinions of their staffs, possibly based on poor communication. It also may be that the staffs are resigned to the continued mandates from the state. On the
other hand, it is possible that the professional staffs in this state truly believe that this mandate is appropriate and effective.

Based upon one year of implementation, the administrators were asked which instructional strategy worked best. Cooperative learning, technology, and content mastery were the most popular answers. These answers are also in line with what type of staff development was offered, as well as what the research indicates are most effective (Oakes, 1985). The least popular answers were integration and team teaching.

Overwhelmingly, the principals agreed with the mandate. Many cited the increased demand for students to be better prepared for the workplace and college as a benefit to no longer teaching just the "basics." The increased difficulty of TAAS, SAT, and other tests also demanded a tougher curriculum for all students. Others said expectations for students in basic classes have been too low, and now this mandate raises expectations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While this study reports many findings focused on the statement of the problem found in Chapter One, there are also many implications for further research in this and related areas. A longitudinal study that tracks schools who selected each of the four options would be very beneficial to see which is really the best option for the students. Case studies on the two-year Algebra I course, as well as the alternative instructional arrangements, would provide insight on their benefits.
Staff development is another area in which additional studies would be beneficial. Additional and more detailed studies showing which types of staff development are most effective in implementing the mandate to eliminate basic classes are needed. These studies need to not only examine how much staff development is ideal, but also what strategies work best.

Technology was seen in this study as an important part of the implementation, but additional studies in this area would be beneficial. Case studies showing exactly how technology is used in successful heterogeneous classes would be very useful, as well as what types of computer programs work best.

Special education students were the concern of most respondents in the implementation of this mandate, and further studies need to explore the extent of the perceived ill-effect. It would be valuable to know if more students returned to special education classes after the elimination of basic classes, or were they placed in the regular classes with more modifications. If special education students were placed in the regular classes, what instructional methods worked best?

The study noted that the respondents, usually principals, indicated that their staff was largely in agreement with the mandate. A separate survey of the staffs would be valuable to compare with the respondents perceptions. If there truly is agreement, it would be of interest to discover why. Also, staff surveys need to include their perceptions of instructional methodologies that work best in heterogeneous classes.
Finally, studies need to conducted on a longitudinal basis to find the long-term effectiveness of the mandate to eliminate basic classes. The commissioner stated that basic classes impeded the raising of test scores, and studies are needed to see if it does bring about the desired effect. Other studies are needed to find long-term effects of staff development, instructional strategies, and attitudes of the professionals.

SUMMARY

The July 15, 1992 memo by Texas Commissioner of Education Lionel "Skip" Meno was the beginning of major changes in the curriculum of Texas high schools. This memo instructed the high schools to phase-out certain below grade level courses, as they were determined by the Texas Education Agency as an impediment to raising performance standards. The below grade level courses impacted were in English language arts, mathematics, and science.

The appropriateness of grouping students according to ability was receiving renewed interest in recent years. This type of grouping had become common in most schools during the twentieth century, being the most efficient answer to educating an increasingly diverse group of students. Researchers like Jeannie Oakes and John Goodlad reported there were negative effects on students placed in below grade level classes. There was no gain in achievement due to this type of placement, and student self-esteem was low.
In the early 1990's, many education theorists saw a second wave of reform beginning to take hold in America's schools. The first wave began during the Reagan administration, emphasizing a top-down approach to reforming the public schools. As local educators bemoaned their lack of participation in the decision-making, the second wave made adjustments to the first. The second wave empowered teachers and other local educators, allowing most implementation decisions to be made at the local level. The state retained the authority to establish a vision and provide a framework, or standards.

The implementation of the phase-out in Texas was to begin with the 1992-1993 school year. Schools were given four options on how to implement, depending on each school's needs. Option I eliminates all designated courses immediately. Option II also eliminates the courses, but allows Algebra I to be taught over a two year period. Option III allows for alternative instructional arrangements while eliminating the courses, and Option IV allows 92-93 to be a transition year with the affected courses offered for local credit only.

This study was to determine how Texas high schools implemented the mandate to eliminate below grade level classes, and what the educators' reactions were. Surveys were mailed to at least ten percent of all high schools in Texas, stratified according to location, size, and wealth. The surveys were addressed to the principals of the high schools. The surveys revealed a wealth of information on this subject. Option II was the most popular choice, with 61.2 percent of the schools.
Allowing Algebra I to be taught over a two year period appeared to be the key, as that subject was noted by the principals as being the most difficult for lower ability-level students.

Option I was the second most popular choice, with 35.6 percent. These schools felt that high standards were necessary with TAAS and other standards getting tougher for their students. Only 1.6 percent chose Option III and Option IV. In regards to school size, location, and wealth, there was no statistical significance.

Most schools (61.4 percent) used staff development to assist in the implementation of the elimination of below grade level courses. Of those schools who used staff development, 77.4 percent of the schools spent less than ten hours on this issue. The sessions were conducted either prior to the start of school (39.2 percent), during the school day (25.9 percent), or after school hours (24.9 percent).

The type of staff development to assist in the implementation revolved around different instructional strategies. Allowed to choose as many as may apply in their situation, the most popular instructional strategies discussed in staff development were teacher expectations of student achievement and cooperative learning. Both were the choice of 36.5 percent of the schools. Close behind in popularity was the idea of matching teaching styles to learning styles with 34.9 percent. Four other popular instructional strategies were technology (29.6 percent), reading/writing across the curriculum (29.6 percent), higher level thinking strategies (27.5 percent), and writing projects (22.8 percent).
Technology was used in 65.6 percent of the schools to assist in the implementation of their option. 45.5 percent needed other resources, including additional money or staff.

Special programs were being affected by the elimination of below grade level courses, according to 51.3 percent of the schools. Of those special programs, special education (51.3 percent) was cited as the one program most affected. The principals remarked that special education students needed this type of courses to assist in the transition from resource classes, and that more students were now being referred to special education.

Instructional strategies reported to work best under the new mandate are cooperative learning (51.3 percent), technology (50.3 percent), content mastery (47.6 percent), higher level thinking strategies (30.2 percent), and alternative grouping strategies (21.2 percent).

Interestingly, the respondents (96.3 percent principals) to the survey indicated that 77.5 percent of the professional teaching staff agrees with the elimination of below grade level classes. 82.4 percent of the respondents felt the mandate was beneficial to their students. They indicated that students need a more challenging curriculum to meet the demands of colleges and the workplace. Discipline is improving in many schools, as are test scores.

The commissioner of education and the local schools want to see increased test scores, and this mandate to eliminate below grade level courses was seen as a hindrance to that goal. While there appears to be
support at the local level for this mandate, as well as some research to support it, it will be many years before success can be claimed with this mandate.

This study described how schools responded to this mandate. The response was fairly consistent across the state, especially in regards to size, location, and wealth. Most schools chose the option that was the simplest to implement, that as well as met some student needs. Most schools used staff development to implement the mandate, and technology played a large role. Special education students are the ones most are concerned about with the elimination of basic classes, but content mastery is providing some relief at this time. The staff, especially the campus administrators, appear to be supportive in these early stages of implementation. For success, time will tell.
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APPENDIX A
MEMO FROM L.R. MENO
OF JULY 15, 1992
July 15, 1992

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

RE: Phaseout of Specified High School Courses

Recently, you received correspondence from this office citing the recommendation I made to the State Board of Education at its June meeting relating to the removal of certain high school courses from the list of courses approved for state graduation credit. The Board approved the rule for emergency adoption on second reading at the July meeting. The rule will be effective prior to the beginning of the 1992-93 school year.

Agency staff members have prepared the enclosed packet of information that should assist your planning for the anticipated changes. Attachment I is the rule as adopted in July. Attachment II outlines the impact of the rule change, and Attachment III includes a series of commonly asked questions and answers pertaining to the rule and its implementation. There are some important dates included, so please read this document carefully.

I believe you will find this information useful. If you need assistance, Agency staff are prepared to help.

Sincerely,

Lionel R. Meno
Commissioner of Education
§75.142 Description of a Well-Balanced Secondary Curriculum.

(a)-(b) (No change.)

(c) Secondary Grades 9-12.

(1) Each school district shall offer the courses listed in this subsection and shall maintain evidence that students have the opportunity to take these courses every year or at least every other year:

(A) English language arts - English I, II, III, IV (correlated language arts: I, II, III, IV); 

(B) Mathematics - Fundamentals of Mathematics, prealgebra, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Precalculus. (Trigonometry and either Elementary Analysis or Analytic Geometry may be offered in lieu of Precalculus); 

(C) Science - Biology I, Chemistry I, Physics I, Physical Science I, introductory biology. Science courses shall be laboratory oriented. 

(D)-(L) (No change.)


(3) School districts shall not offer Correlated Language Arts II-IV and Applied Biology courses for state graduation credit after the 1992-1993 school year. Students who have satisfactorily passed Correlated Language Arts II-IV and Applied Biology before the 1993-1994 school year may use the credits earned to meet state graduation requirements.

(4) School districts shall not offer the Precalculus course for state graduation credit after the 1993-1994 school year. Students who have satisfactorily passed Precalculus before the 1996-1997 school year may use the credit earned to meet state graduation requirements.
School districts shall provide each student the opportunity to participate in all courses listed in paragraph (1) of this subsection. Students shall be given the opportunity each year to select courses in which they intend to participate from a list that includes all courses in paragraph (1) of this subsection. For those courses where 10 or more students indicate that they will participate or the course is required for a student to graduate, the district shall teach the course. For those courses where fewer than 10 students indicate that they will participate, school districts shall employ options described in §75.162 of this title (relating to Options for Offering Courses) to provide the course and shall maintain evidence thereof. If a district is not going to offer the required courses every year, but intends to offer particular courses only every other year, the district must give notice of such fact to all enrolled students.

School districts may request exemptions from the commissioner of education from the requirements to provide other language instruction. The commissioner of education may grant such exemptions to districts which show evidence of unreasonable hardship.

Districts shall teach the essential elements as prescribed in the courses found in Subchapter D of this chapter (relating to Essential Elements - Grades 9-12). School districts shall ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn the essential elements.

For the school year 1992-1993 only, school districts may offer the below-level courses in paragraph (2) of this subsection for state graduation elective credit only if the schedule for phasing out the courses will cause an undue hardship on students due to the lack of readiness by the district. School districts shall not use the credits earned by students in below-level courses to satisfy the required credits in English language arts, mathematics, and science as specified in §75.151 of this title (relating to High School Graduation Requirements). School districts exercising this option will notify the commissioner of education of their intent to do so and the number of students enrolled by course.
ATTACHMENT II

IMPACT OF THE RULE CHANGE

The State Board of Education determined that an obstacle to raising performance standards is the existence of below-grade-level courses in English language arts, mathematics, and science. As a result, the Board amended Chapter 75, Subchapter E, Section 75.142 by emergency adoption. The amendment has the following impact:

1. After the 1991-92 school year, Fundamentals of Mathematics, Consumer Mathematics, Correlated Language Arts I, and Introductory Physical Science cannot be offered to satisfy state requirements for graduation. In 1992-93, these courses may only be offered for elective credit if the Texas Education agency is informed about the district's intent to do so. After the 1992-93 school year, the courses must be completely discontinued.

2. After the 1992-93 school year, Correlated Language Arts II-IV and Applied Biology cannot be offered to satisfy state requirements for graduation.

3. After the 1995-96 school year, Pre-Algebra cannot be offered to satisfy state requirements for graduation.

Please refer to the chart on the following page, titled "Proposed Below-Grade-Level Phaseout Schedule."
### Proposed Below-Grade-Level Courses Phaseout Schedule

(The school year indicates the last year the courses can be offered for state graduation credit.)

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<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>Correlated Language Arts I</td>
<td>Correlated Language Arts II-IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Mathematics</td>
<td>Consumer Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Algebra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Introductory Physical Science</td>
<td>Applied Biology</td>
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Staff development as related to the phaseout of below-grade-level courses would be provided simultaneously during each of the phaseout years.
ATTACHMENT III

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PHASING OUT BELOW-GRADE-LEVEL COURSES

General Questions Pertaining to All Three Subject Areas

Q1. What procedures will a district follow to notify the Commissioner of Education of its intent to continue offering below-grade-level courses for elective credit in 1992-93?

A. A district should submit a letter to Julian Shaddix, Associate Commissioner for Field Services, at the Texas Education Agency, by September 4, 1992. The letter must include the following information:
   - district's intent to offer the deleted courses
   - campus(es) on which the courses will be offered
   - number of course sections offered
   - total number of students enrolled by course
   - superintendent's signature

Q2. Should parents and students be notified that the deleted courses can no longer satisfy credits in English language arts, mathematics, and science required for graduation?

A. Yes. Parents of students enrolled in the deleted, below-level courses should be notified by September 4 or on the date of enrollment for students enrolling after September 4.

Q3. What actions can districts take to prepare for the 1993-94 school year?

A. Districts need to prepare for the 1993-94 school year at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Suggestions for preparing elementary and middle school students to take high school courses include:
   - provide accelerated rather than remedial instruction at all three levels
   - increase the rigor of elementary subjects and middle school courses
design and implement instructional strategies to enhance student learning at all levels.

design and implement an assessment/monitoring system that will clearly monitor what is being taught and learned at all levels.

alter daily schedules to provide additional time needed in English language arts, mathematics, and science.

design and implement Saturday and/or summer school programs to assist students in closing the existing learning gap.

Q4. Since the deleted courses for 1992-93 can be offered for elective purposes only, what impact will they have on other electives that students will take in subsequent years?

A. Because these courses will be used for elective purposes only, this action may reduce the number of electives these students take during the next three to four years if they take the minimum number of quality credits to graduate (21).

Assuming that students in schools on a six-period schedule pass all six courses the first year, these students will need to pass at least 11 required courses and four electives during the last three years of high school to satisfy the 21 credits required for graduation. It is reasonable to expect that these students will satisfy graduation requirements within the following three years; however, there may be a greater impact on course offerings and staffing. Given the possible impact on course offerings and staffing, it is important that districts closely examine electives currently offered and develop a four-year transition plan that gives consideration to course offerings and staffing.

Q5. If a student failed any of the four deleted courses in 1991-92 or before, can the student receive graduation credit when taking the course(s) again for credit?

A. No. The student may only receive elective credit for any of the four courses deleted after 1991-92.

Staff Development Question and Answer

Q. When can districts provide English language arts, mathematics, and science teachers with appropriate staff development for students who have been in below-level courses?

A. Staff development can be provided throughout the school year. Staff development for teachers is the key to providing sound instruction for all students, particularly those who are part of this transition. The Agency strongly urges districts to provide teachers with training in meeting the needs of students with
varying ability levels. Such training might include the following: team teaching, reading and writing as a process, teacher expectations, writing projects, and reading and writing across the content areas. Additional staff development suggestions for teachers include:

- Instructional strategies designed to accelerate learning
- Cooperative learning strategies
- Matching instructional strategies and learning styles
- Teacher expectations — influence of attitudes and beliefs on teaching and learning
- Alternative grouping practices to eliminate labeling and to maximize learning
- Integration/teaching of higher level thinking across the curriculum
- Other topics determined appropriate by the district.

Textbook Questions and Answers

Q1. May districts use the books adopted for use in Correlated Language Arts (CLA) as English I-IV books during the 1993-1994 school year?

A. Yes. The books that were adopted for CLA I-IV are appropriate for teaching English I-IV. CLA I-IV textbooks that are ordered for the 1992-1993 school year may be used as English I-IV textbooks thereafter.

Q2. If a district discontinues a course, what is it to do with the textbooks for that course?

A. With the exception of Correlated Language Arts (CLA) textbooks, surplus textbooks for discontinued courses should be shipped to the State Textbook Depository in Austin. Districts may not return CLA books to Austin. Districts that have surplus CLA books should contact their regional education service centers. (See also the third paragraph in the response to Question 7.)

Q3. Will districts have problems getting enough books for their mathematics students if they change students from Consumer Mathematics or Fundamentals of Mathematics to Pre-Algebra or Algebra? Are the publishers geared up for increases? Also, are there sufficient quantities of physical science and literature textbooks for students who change from Introductory Physical Science and CLA courses to regular courses?

A. Publishers are aware of the possibility of the changing needs for supplying textbooks. Publishers will make every effort to supply textbooks on schedule.
Q4. May districts use textbooks from discontinued high school courses as supplemental reference books for middle school or junior high school courses—for example, the Applied Biology textbooks?

A. Yes. The Applied Biology textbooks will be used as supplemental textbooks for Life Science (Grade 7) classes, beginning with the 1993-1994 school year.

Q5. Are there any special rules regarding the Applied Biology teacher's editions?

A. Life Science teachers (Grade 7) will receive copies of the Applied Biology teacher's edition for supplemental or reference use. Biology I teachers will also be eligible to receive copies of the Applied Biology teacher's edition, but only if sufficient stock is available.

Q6. What should districts do if they need additional information about textbooks?

A. The Textbook Administration Division will be providing additional information to local districts regarding necessary changes on requisitions. Questions should be addressed to: Kathie Jewell, (512) 463-9604; Norma Terbay, (512) 463-9618; or Dubhe Hobbs, (512) 463-9613.

Q7. What textbooks are districts entitled to use during the phaseout of below-grade-level courses?

A. Districts that decide to eliminate the courses Fundamentals of Mathematics and Consumer Mathematics prior to School Year 1992-93 will be entitled to either Pre-Algebra or Algebra I textbooks. District textbook coordinators will be contacted by the Division of Textbook Administration and asked to submit orders for the necessary Pre-Algebra and Algebra I textbooks on a supplemental requisition form as soon as possible. Districts may send their requisitions via FAX to (512) 475-3612.

All districts that intend to offer Applied Biology during School Year 1992-93 will be contacted by Textbook Administration within the next few days. Districts will be asked whether they prefer to use current or new textbooks during the last year that the courses may be offered for credit. Distribution of new textbooks will be based on the number of districts that indicate that they will continue using the current textbooks instead of the new textbooks. Teacher's editions for the new books will be supplied to Applied Biology teachers and, if available, to Life Science teachers for reference use. At the end of School Year 1992-93, districts will be required to return all new Applied Biology textbooks, including teacher's editions, to the State Textbook Depository in Austin. Beginning in School Year 1993-94, each Life Science teacher in the
state will be provided with an Applied Biology teacher's edition as well as a prorated supply of student editions to be used as supplementary material.

New CIA I-IV textbooks are being shipped as scheduled to those districts that ordered the textbooks. The textbooks, although adopted for use in CIA I-IV, may be used in English I-IV. Districts that received their orders of CIA I-IV textbooks prior to June 26, 1992, will contact their regional education service centers if adjustments to the orders are needed. Service centers will then work with districts in their areas to facilitate the exchange of textbooks among districts when extra textbooks are available.

If a district, working with its service center, has made every effort to find another district with which to exchange textbooks and yet has been unsuccessful, the district may telephone Paul Lindsey, Associate Commissioner for School Support, at (512) 463-9322. The Division of Textbook Administration will contact those districts whose orders will be shipped on or after June 29, 1992. Adjustments will be made to orders only before books are shipped to the districts.

**Correlated Language Arts (CLA) Questions and Answers**

Q1. Does a district need a waiver to eliminate (not offer) CLA II-IV in 1992-93?

A. No. The requirement for a district to offer CIA I-IV as specified in Chapter 75, Subchapter E, Section 75.142 (c)(1)(A) is being deleted.

Q2. Can CIA II-IV be offered in 1993-94 for elective credit, as we are allowing for CLA I in 1992-93?

A. No. Below-grade-level courses may be offered for elective credit during the 1992-93 school year only.

Q3. How can districts assist CLA students who are not ready for the change to English?

A. The Agency encourages districts to consider modifying the instructional program to meet the needs of these students. The allocation and use of resources such as materials, instructional time, and technology should be considered.

For example, materials written for a variety of ability levels should be provided and may supplement the state-adopted textbook. The textbook should not be viewed or used as the total curriculum for the course. Districts should explore ways of varying
Instruction such as an English I/Reading Improvement block for two class periods or an English I/CLA I block. In either of these examples, Reading Improvement and CLA I would count as state elective credit. Districts are encouraged to explore such possibilities. The use of technology should also be considered as a means of providing students with varied instruction.

**English as a Second Language Question and Answer**

**Q.** What impact will the proposed below-grade-level courses phase-out schedule have on the enrollment of limited English proficient students in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses?

**A.** The current rule does not affect the enrollment of limited English speaking students in ESL courses. Presently, two ESL credits may be counted to satisfy the English language arts graduation requirements. These students must earn two additional credits in English language arts courses listed in Chapter 75 as state-approved courses for graduation.

While the rule does not impact the placement for 1992-93, it is important that districts consider and plan for transitioning students after 1992-93 when CLA I-IV will no longer satisfy graduation requirements. Such a plan should provide for the varying needs of students and ensure that course offerings will prepare them to attain the desired outcomes. The Division of Bilingual Education staff is preparing models to assist districts in this area.

**Mathematics Questions and Answers**

**Q1.** May students who take the Fundamentals of Mathematics (FOM) or the Consumer Mathematics course during the 1992-1993 school year use the credit toward meeting the three units of mathematics required for state graduation?

**A.** No. However, the credit may be used as one of the seven units of state elective credit required for high school graduation.

**Q2.** If students are allowed to take the FOM or the Consumer Mathematics course for state elective credit only during the 1992-93 school year, will they be able to satisfy the mathematics requirement for state graduation in four years of high school?

**A.** Yes. Students will be able to satisfy the mathematics requirement by satisfactorily passing three approved mathematics courses in Grades 10, 11, and 12 or by taking more than one course in the same year.
Q3. May students who enter the ninth grade during the 1992-93 school year and who are functioning one or more grade levels below in mathematics be enrolled in the Pre-Algebra course?

A. Yes. Students may take the Pre-Algebra course and meet one of the three credits of mathematics required for state graduation until the end of the 1995-96 school year. The Pre-Algebra course will be deleted after the 1995-96 school year.

Q4. Will school districts need to submit a waiver to offer the FOM and Consumer Mathematics courses during the 1992-93 school year?

A. No. State Board of Education rule requires the school district to notify the Commissioner of Education of its intent to offer the courses and the number of students enrolled in the courses.

Q5. Is the Informal Geometry course scheduled to be phased out in the future?

A. No. There are no plans to phase out the Informal Geometry course.

Q6. May school districts continue to submit waivers to develop and implement programs such as Algebra I over two years?

A. Yes. The phasing out of below-level courses does not have an impact on such programs.

Science Questions and Answers

Q1. What was the rationale for phasing out the Introductory Physical Science and Applied Biology courses?

A. The State Board of Education has acted to phase out all below-grade-level courses to raise standards of performance for all students and to prepare them for success in the real world. Introductory Physical Science and Applied Biology have not adequately prepared students for real-world requirements.

Q2. What courses have been phased out and when?

A. Introductory Physical Science was phased out at the end of the 1991-92 school year. Applied Biology will be phased out at the end of the 1992-93 school year. All other courses will be retained.
Q3. Can school districts offer Introductory Physical Science for local credit for the 1992-93 school year?

A. Yes, but as an elective science credit only. Students may no longer use Introductory Physical Science as one of the two science credits needed for graduation. After the 1992-93 school year, Introductory Physical Science may no longer be offered by school districts for credit.

Q4. Where should students in Introductory Physical Science be placed in 1992-93 and subsequent years?

A. They should be placed in Physical Science. The purpose of phasing out the below-grade-level courses is to raise the level of expectations of the students and provide them with courses that are more challenging as well as better aligned with real-world requirements. By using modifications in the Physical Science course (e.g., instructional strategies, team teaching, different learning styles, teacher expectations), teachers can help students be successful.

Q5. Should science staff development be part of the phase-out process?

A. Any school district phasing out Introductory Physical Science should provide staff development for faculty. Modification may be necessary for many of the students entering Physical Science or Biology I for the first time. These modifications may be in the materials used, time, teaching with other members of the faculty, cooperative learning techniques, learning styles, teacher expectations, and technology.

State Compensatory Education (SCE) Questions and Answers

Q1. May state compensatory education (SCE) monies be used to help make the transition? How?

A. Yes. SCE monies are for districts to assist students who are in at-risk situations. SCE monies may be used to provide staff development, procure materials and equipment needed, and provide additional instruction time such as tutorials, extended day, additional instructional period, Saturday instruction, summer school, reduced class size, etc.

Q2. May school districts use SCE funds to provide support services for students enrolled in courses such as Pre-Algebra and two-year Algebra I?

A. Yes. SCE funds are to be used to improve and enhance the regular school program so that identified students in at-risk situations
can achieve success in school and meet the desired student outcomes such as attaining grade-level proficiency, performing satisfactorily on state assessment instruments, and graduating from high school. Special innovations that satisfy basic program requirements may be funded provided they are specifically designed to meet the needs of students identified for courses such as Pre-Algebra or the two-year Algebra I program and are not a standard approach to the courses.

Q3. In general, how can state compensatory education (SCE) resources be used to facilitate the academic success of students who were formerly in below-grade-level courses?

A. Many students who were formerly in below-grade-level courses meet the criteria for students in at-risk situations as stated in Texas Education Code (TEC) §21.557. SCE resources can be used to improve and enhance the regular education program to address strengths and needs of these students. The following four steps must be taken to ensure the programs improve and enhance the education of students in at-risk situations:

1. Specific student needs should be identified through a comprehensive needs assessment.
2. Strategies should be designed that, based on best practices, are likely to respond to the identified needs.
3. Evaluation strategies that measure the extent to which programs effectively respond to the identified needs should be defined.
4. Uses of SCE must be identified in board policy.

Q4. Can SCE funds be used to provide staff development to help teachers foster the academic success of students who were formerly in below-grade-level courses?

A. Yes, definitely! Teachers in regular classrooms must be given the tools to address the needs of students in at-risk situations adequately. Such staff development can help ensure that all students will achieve success in regular classes, thereby improving and enhancing educational opportunity for students in at-risk situations. The heterogeneity of students in a classroom provides an opportunity to ensure that all students have access to quality instruction, if teachers are given the necessary skills to meet the challenges associated with heterogeneous groupings. These skills should be provided through ongoing staff development programs.

In planning staff development programs, attention must be given to identify the needs of students in at-risk situations as well as the needs of their teachers. Also, planning should ensure that selected staff development programs have proven records in enhancing the capacity of regular classroom teachers to meet the
needs of students in at-risk situations. Finally, planning should include evaluation strategies that will allow the assessment of the success of staff development activities in producing the desired outcomes.

Strategies that provide training-of-trainers models may be an efficient use of resources. Teachers, administrators, and support personnel may be given opportunities to receive high caliber training and then provide leadership in the training of other school district personnel.

Q5. Can school districts use SCE resources to reduce class size as a means of ensuring the success of students who were formerly in below-level courses?

A. Yes. Reducing class sizes in heterogeneous settings is an effective strategy to ensure the success of students in at-risk situations, especially when teachers are provided staff development to increase their capacity to meet the needs of all students.

The following is an example of how SCE funds might be used to reduce class sizes:

Previously, a school had one section of English I and one section of Correlated Language Arts (CLA) I with a total of 60 students. The school decided to provide an additional section of English I so that there are three heterogeneous sections of English I with 20 students in each classroom. Class size was reduced from 30 students to 20 students in each class; therefore, one-third of the costs associated with each classroom (teacher salaries, etc.) can be paid from state compensatory education resources.

Q6. Can a school district use SCE funds to pay the percentage of a regular classroom teacher's salary that is equal to the percentage of students in at-risk situations taught by that teacher?

A. SCE funds can only be used to improve and enhance the education of students in at-risk situations. Simply placing an identified student in a regular classroom does not enhance the likelihood of the student's success in the classroom. In general, SCE funds cannot be used to pay a percentage of the regular classroom teacher's salary if no other improvements or enhancements are incorporated into the program.

Q7. Can school districts use SCE resources to purchase hardware and software for computer-assisted instruction (CAI) programs?

A. Yes, in most cases. To use SCE resources to provide CAI, the program must be determined to be a potentially effective response to the identified needs of students in at-risk situations. Also, there must be evaluation strategies to determine the effectiveness of CAI in meeting identified needs.
CAT programs are likely to be most effective in meeting the needs of students in at-risk situations when teachers are provided staff development that focuses on the coordination of CAT activities with the regular curriculum. Computers and computer software can enhance a teacher's effectiveness. They cannot adequately replace quality teaching.

Q8. Can a school district use SCE resources to provide a two-year Algebra I course?

A. Yes, in most cases. To use SCE resources to provide a two-year Algebra I course, the program must be determined to be a potentially effective response to the identified needs of students in at-risk situations. Also, there must be evaluation strategies to determine the effectiveness of the course in meeting identified needs.

Among the best practices in the implementation of such a course is a continuous progress model. In such a model, students may advance to higher levels of mathematics upon mastery of the objectives of Algebra I. For some students, mastery may occur within three semesters. Other students may need the entire two years.

Q9. What are some other best practices in the use of SCE resources to facilitate the academic success of students who were formerly in below-grade-level courses?

A. A variety of strategies have been shown effective in ensuring the success of students in at-risk situations; however, these strategies will only be effective when they are designed and implemented in response to the specific needs of identified students. Also, the success of the strategies is dependent upon the extent to which teachers have received high-quality staff development related to the various strategies. Finally, because each situation is different, any program should be evaluated annually to ensure the program's success in meeting the needs of identified students.

The following are some proven strategies for ensuring the success of all students in heterogeneous groupings:

- cooperative learning
- peer assistance tutoring
- integrated curricula/cross-curricular planning
- accelerated learning
- content mastery
- rapid remediation
- flexible scheduling
- block scheduling
- clustering teachers
- team teaching
- gifted/talented strategies
Q10. Who can districts contact for additional information about the use of SCE resources?

A. Darlene Yone, education program director in the Office of Accelerated Instruction, can be contacted at (512) 463-9374.

Q11. Can the district use the SCE funds to pay for instruction beyond the regular English as a Second Language (ESL) program to help students make the transition to on-grade-level English, mathematics, and science courses?

A. Yes. Districts may choose to train teachers to use ESL methods in regular content courses. Districts may also choose to provide longer class periods or other strategies to accelerate instruction. These strategies should prepare students to succeed in the regular, on-grade-level courses.

Q12. Can the district use SCE funds to pay the salaries of bilingual and ESL teachers to help students make the transition from ESL to on-level English courses?

A. Yes, if the course is designed to provide added value to the instruction to meet student needs more effectively. For example, SCE may be used:

- to reduce the class size
- to provide additional time in ESL classes
- to provide an additional teacher in the classroom for more intensive instruction

Special Education Questions and Answers

Q1. Will admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meetings need to be convened to address the change in status of FOM and CLA?

A. The basic answer to this question is yes. In Spring 1992, most ARD committees selected for students with disabilities FOM and CLA as the mathematics and English credits the students would need to meet minimum graduation requirements. As a result of the SBOE decision that FOM and CLA can be offered for state credit as an elective only, the ARD committee will be required to:

1. determine on an individual basis the appropriateness of FOM and CLA to continue to meet student needs in light of the SBOE's decision; and

2. discuss the need to drop FOM and/or CLA from the student's schedule and replace them with English I or Algebra I with support such as content mastery from special education; or
(3) discuss the need to keep FOM and/or CLA on the student's schedule and add English I or Algebra I and teach them in combination; or

(4) discuss the need to keep FOM and/or CLA on the student's schedule and add English I or Algebra I next year (FOM and CLA become elective credit); or

(5) discuss the need to keep FOM and/or CLA on the student's schedule because after reviewing the student's needs it is determined that FOM and/or CLA would be appropriate (FOM and CLA become local credit courses counted toward graduation by the ARD committee); or

(6) discuss the need to drop FOM and/or CLA from the student's schedule and replace them with special education instruction; and

(7) depending upon the option chosen, the ARD committee may need to adjust the student's placement (instructional setting) and schedule of services (time); the committee possibly may need to justify placement in special education for those students now receiving special education services for 50% or more of the instructional day.

No matter what the ARD committee chooses to do, the district must inform the parents of all decisions relating to this change.

Q2. How will this change affect students with disabilities who currently have graduation plans that include FOM and CLA as required subjects to meet the requirements of the individual educational plan?

A. If the student has already taken the courses (i.e., before September 1992) the student will receive credit for these two courses toward graduation. If the student is scheduled to take the courses September 1992 or after, the ARD committee will need to convene to discuss whether the courses should be dropped and others added or whether the courses should remain and the other courses added during the next school year.

Q3. How will this change affect the need to justify least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with disabilities receiving special education services?

A. If the ARD committee determines that FOM and/or CLA should be dropped from the student's schedule and replaced with special education instruction, then the committee might be required to justify LRE if the change places the student in special education for 50% or more of the instructional day.
Q4. If an admission, review, and dismissal (APP) committee determines that a student with disabilities needs FOM or CLA to receive an appropriate education, can the committee select one or both of these courses and apply it toward graduation?

A. Yes, if the committee determines on an individual basis that a student's needs require FOM and CLA to receive an appropriate education, the committee would provide the necessary justification for its decision and the student would graduate under the requirements of his or her IEP. FOM and CLA would appear on the Academic Achievement Record (AAR) as a local course selected by the ARD committee to provide appropriate education.

Q5. How should FOM and CLA be listed on the AAR for students with disabilities who receive elective credit and/or graduation credit as determined by the APP committee?

A. If the courses are considered electives, the courses would be placed in the elective section of the AAR. If the courses are to be considered for credit toward graduation as determined by the APP committee, the courses would be placed in the section of the AAR that specifically pertains to that subject and would also carry an "SL" to the right of the dotted line to indicate special education/local credit and graduation under the requirements of the IEP.

Q6. Currently, some districts hold an ARD committee meeting for every change in the student's regular education course schedule. This has been done because they thought when a student changed courses, the graduation plan was also changed. This has been cumbersome and has required many additional meetings. Is this necessary?

A. Not necessarily. There is no single answer to this question. The individual educational plan (IEP) must specify the extent to which the student will participate in regular education and the amount of time in each setting. The graduation plan usually specifies certain courses to be completed, including elective courses, or specifies the goals and objectives the student needs to complete in order to graduate through the IEP. If the APP committee does not identify specific courses as a part of the student's IEP, then the committee would not have to meet to approve individual courses or course changes. Also if the APP committee identifies certain groups of courses as a part of the student's IEP, then the APP committee would not have to meet to approve individual courses and course changes for that group. The student could make schedule changes in the same manner as any student in the district.

On the other hand, if the APP committee specified a certain regular course and identified modifications necessary for the student to be successful in the course and those modifications were not applicable for the new course, a course change would need to be made by the APP committee. However, minor changes from one course to another would not constitute a change in placement and would not require ARD action. Similarly, if the student needs a change to a
course that is much more difficult, the ARD committee would need to consider the appropriateness of the course and any modifications necessary. Finally, if a student is not doing well in a course and a course change is being recommended, the APD committee needs to meet to consider whether the course change is appropriate or whether other methods can be used to ensure student success.

Questions and Answer Regarding Options for Implementation

Q. What options may districts use to implement the phase-out schedule for below-grade level courses?

A. Districts may follow one of four possible options:

OPTION I

Districts may choose not to offer any of the following deleted courses during the 1992-93 school year:

- Correlated Language Arts I
- Fundamentals of Mathematics
- Consumer Mathematics
- Introductory Physical Science

Prerequisite Conditions for Successful Transition

- Teachers exhibit readiness to teach the desired outcomes using a variety of instructional strategies designed to address different student learning rates and learning styles and to accelerate student learning.
- Staff development has been provided or will be provided early in the 1992-93 school year to assist teachers to make the transition required.
- Instructional resources are available to teach additional classes in English I, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, and Physical Science. Resources needed may include teaching materials, equipment, and textbooks.
- Students exhibit readiness to engage in the more rigorous courses.

Advantages

- Students will be provided the opportunity to engage in more rigorous courses without delay.
- Students will be able to enroll in courses for which required credits may be earned in English language arts, mathematics, and science.
Disadvantages

Disadvantages to this option are dependent on the student, teacher, and district readiness level and on the extent to which prerequisite conditions are in place.

Recommendations

The intent of the rule is to offer students the opportunity to enroll in more rigorous courses. Take caution to ensure that instruction is not diminished in any way for students who may not be adequately prepared due to prior educational experiences. Instead, use alternative instructional strategies to provide for learning experiences needed and to accommodate different student learning rates and/or styles.

Staff development will definitely be needed. Provisions should be made to adequately prepare teachers for this change.

OPTION II

Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-93 school year and may apply for waivers to teach Algebra I over a two-year period. Several districts have already received approval for such requests.

Students enrolled in a two-year Algebra I course must remain enrolled in the course for two years and may earn two credits, thus satisfying two of the three required mathematics credits.

Prerequisite Conditions for Successful Transition

A district that wishes to teach Algebra I over a two-year period of time needs to submit a waiver request to Julian Shaddix, Associate Commissioner for Field Services. The waiver request needs to include the following guarantees:

1. The two-year course is as rigorous as the one-year course.
2. Appropriate curriculum adjustments have been made for the courses.
3. All established essential elements of instruction for the course(s) will be taught.
4. The instructional staff was involved in the decision and have ownership in the development and implementation of the course(s).
5. The local board of trustees has approved the waiver request.

Teachers exhibit readiness to teach the desired outcomes using a variety of instructional strategies designed to respond to different learning rates and to accelerate learning.
Staff development has been provided or will be provided early in the 1992-93 school year.

Expectations have been clearly defined for what is to be taught during the two-year period.

Needed instructional resources are available.

Students exhibit readiness to engage in the more rigorous courses.

Advantages

Students will be provided the opportunity to engage in more rigorous courses without delay.

Provisions are made for students with different learning rates to receive additional instructional time for learning.

Disadvantages

Disadvantages are dependent on:

- district and student readiness levels
- current status of courses to be offered
- current status of student and teacher schedules
- possible impact of alternative arrangements on personnel needed

Recommendations

The intent of the rule is to offer students the opportunity to enroll in more rigorous courses. Caution must be taken to ensure that instruction is not diminished in any way for students who may not be adequately prepared due to prior educational experiences. Instead, use alternative instructional strategies to provide for learning experiences needed and to accommodate different student learning rates and/or styles.

Staff development will definitely be needed. Provisions should be made to adequately prepare teachers for this change.

OPTION III

Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-93 school year. Districts may choose to offer English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that satisfy required credits for graduation by using alternative instructional arrangements which utilize more than one adult in the classroom. Some examples are the following:

- Use of a team-teaching concept to help reduce pupil-to-teacher ratio and to provide for the needs of students with different learning rates.
Use of specially funded resource teachers to assist the regular course teachers.

Use of instructional assistants.

Prerequisite Conditions for Successful Transition

Staff development has been provided or will be provided early in the school year to assist teachers in developing effective teaching teams.

Staff members are willing to teach using a team concept.

Students exhibit the appropriate readiness level.

Advantages

Same as for Options I and II

Disadvantages

Same as for Options I and II

Recommendations

Examine current enrollments in courses to be deleted. Determine if deletion of course(s) will result in excess teachers who may be in team-teaching situations. Assign these teachers plus others from specially funded programs to team with regular program teachers.

If federal funds are to be used for this option, write federal program applications or amend current applications if already submitted to allow for teaming of special program teachers with teachers of regular courses.

If instructional assistants are assigned, set high performance criteria, provide adequate training, and utilize the various specially funded program monies as appropriate.

Determine how state compensatory education (SCE) monies may be used for this purpose and budget accordingly. Amend board policy on SCE as needed.

OPTION IV

If the proposed schedule for phasing out the courses will cause an undue hardship on students due to lack of district readiness, a district may choose to use the 1992-93 school year as a transition year by offering the deleted below-grade-level courses for elective credit only.
Prerequisites Conditions for Successful Transition

Parents and students should be notified and understand that the courses offered—Correlated Language Arts I, Fundamentals of Mathematics, Consumer Mathematics, and Introductory Physical Science—may be taken for elective credit only and will not satisfy the graduation requirements for English language arts, mathematics, and science.

Districts should provide staff development to prepare teachers to use a variety of instructional strategies designed to respond to different learning rates and accelerate learning.

Districts should develop instructional strategies and curriculum documents for the courses to be offered during the 1993-94 school year.

Districts should identify and procure instructional resources needed for the 1993-94 school year.

Instructional strategies used to teach the below-grade-level courses during the 1992-93 school year should be designed for the purpose of accelerating student learning so that students will be better prepared to succeed in regular courses.

Advantages

Districts that have not engaged staff in readiness activities for teaching the regular courses to below-grade-level students—i.e., staff development, curriculum development, scheduling of students—will have one year to prepare for the transition.

Students' schedules do not need to be changed.

Teachers' schedules do not need to be changed.

Disadvantages

Student enrollment and participation in the more rigorous courses will be delayed.

Unless closely monitored, instruction in the below-level courses will neither challenge students nor prepare them for the more rigorous courses to be taken during the 1993-94 school year.

Students should still take the full required number of courses in mathematics, English language arts, and science beginning in 1993-94.

Recommendations

If this option is chosen, it will be imperative that instruction is closely monitored and that every effort is made to prepare students to take the more rigorous courses beginning with the 1993-94 school year.
Recommendations (continued)

Districts should make provisions for students to take the required courses during the next three years or advise parents and students of the possibility that students must be enrolled in high school five years to complete graduation requirements.

Districts should develop and implement systems to monitor what is being taught and what is being learned.
APPENDIX B

MAIL SURVEY INSTRUMENT
APPENDIX B: Mail Survey Instrument

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SURVEY AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE AND RETURN IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED. THANK YOU.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION:

NAME__________________________________________________________

SCHOOL NAME____________________________________________________

SCHOOL ADDRESS__________________________________________________

1. In what educational service region is your school located? (circle one):
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   11  12  13  14  15  16  17  18  19  20

2. What is the classification of your high school? (check one)
   5A____  4A____  3A____  2A____  1A____

3. What is your position? (check one)
   PRINCIPAL____  VICE PRINCIPAL____  OTHER____

4. Which of the four options listed by TEA (a description is attached) best describes your school's plan in meeting the directive to phase-out below-grade-level courses? (Check one)
   OPTION I _____  OPTION III _____
   OPTION II _____  OPTION IV _____

5. Briefly explain your school's reasons for selecting the option checked in question 4: (use space on back if needed)

6. Prior to 1992-1993 school year, which of the following courses were offered at your school? (Check as many as apply)
   _____Correlated Language Arts I
   _____Fundamentals of Mathematics
   _____Consumer Mathematics
   _____Introductory to Physical Science
   _____Pre-Algebra
   _____Correlated Language Arts II-IV
   _____Applied Biology
7. If offered prior to 1992-1993, did your school delete any of the following courses for 1992-1993? (Check where applicable)

- Correlated Language Arts I-IV: Yes____ No____
- Applied Biology: Yes____ No____
- Pre-Algebra: Yes____ No____

8. Did your school participate in some type of staff development to implement your plan? (Check one) Yes____ No____

9. If yes, how many hours of staff development? (Check one)
   1-3____  4-10____  11-15____  16+____

10. If yes, when did this staff development occur? (Check as many as apply)
    Prior to start of school____   After school hours____
    During school hours____       Other____

11. If yes, what type of training was provided in staff development? (Check as many as apply)
    Team teaching
    Reading and writing across the curriculum
    Teacher expectations of student achievement
    Writing projects
    Accelerated learning
    Cooperative learning
    Matching teaching strategies and learning style
    Alternative grouping practices
    Integration
    Higher-level thinking
    Technology
    Other:____________________________________

12. Does the plan affect your special programs? (check one) Yes____ No____
13. If yes, which programs? (check as many as apply, and explain)

____ Special Education  ____ English as a Second Language
____ Gifted/Talented  ____ Other:

Explain:

14. Has your school increased the use of technology to implement the plan? (check one)

Yes____  No____
If yes, explain:

15. Did your plan require additional resources (money, staff, etc.)? (check one)

Yes____  No____
If yes, explain:

16. What instructional strategies appear to work best with your plan? (check as many as apply)

____ Team Teaching
____ Cooperative Learning
____ Alternative grouping practices
____ Integration
____ Content Mastery
____ Higher level thinking
____ Technology
____ Other:

17. As educators, what is your staff's professional opinion on eliminating below-grade-level courses? (check one)

Strongly agree____  Somewhat agree____  Agree____
Somewhat disagree____  Strongly disagree____
18. As a principal, what is your professional opinion on eliminating below-grade-level courses? (check one)

Strongly agree____ Somewhat agree____ Agree____

Somewhat disagree____ Strongly disagree____

19. Additional Comments:____________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

(NOTE: In order to place this document within the body of the dissertation, the original 8.5" x 14" one page, back to back, document has been reformatted to a four page, front-only document. The text, however, is unchanged.)
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE COVER LETTER
APPENDIX C: Sample Cover Letter for Mail Survey

4124 Woodenrail
Irving, Texas 75061

(Date)

(Principal's Name), Principal
(High School's Name)
(High School's Address)

(Principal's Name):

Enclosed is a survey on the impact your school is experiencing due to the commissioner's ruling to eliminate below-grade-level classes. This survey is being conducted to fulfill requirements for a doctoral dissertation at the University of North Texas. I am also an administrator at Irving High School in Irving, Texas. Your help in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated.

Your school was randomly selected based on school size and geographic location. The results of this survey will indicate how this ruling is being implemented across the state and the impact of its implementation. You may choose to remain anonymous, regardless all information will remain confidential. Upon request, a copy of the results will be mailed to you.

This survey should not take more than a few minutes of your time. The questions are direct, and should not require any research on your part. In writing any comments, do not be restricted by the space available; feel free to write on the back or on an additional sheet of paper. A postage-paid envelope has been provided for you to return the survey. Your quick response will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Neil Dugger
SUMMARY OF TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY’S OPTIONS TO PHASE-OUT BELOW-GRADE-LEVEL COURSES

Note: In a TEA memo dated July 15, 1992, the Texas Commissioner of Education Lionel Meno outlined four options districts may use to implement the phase-out schedule for below-grade-level courses. The following is a summary of the four options:

**OPTION I**
Districts may choose not to offer any of the following deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year:
- Correlated Language Arts I
- Fundamentals of Mathematics
- Consumer Mathematics
- Introductory to Physical Science

**OPTION II**
Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year and may apply for waivers to teach Algebra I over a two-year period.

**OPTION III**
Districts may choose not to offer any of the deleted courses during the 1992-1993 school year. Districts may choose to offer English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that satisfy required credits for graduation by using alternative instructional arrangements which utilize more than one adult in the classroom.

**OPTION IV**
If the proposed schedule for phasing out the courses will cause an undue hardship on students due to lack of district readiness, a district may choose to use the 1992-1993 school year as a transition year by offering the deleted below-grade-level courses for elective credit only.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


