AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT
AUDITS ON PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN TEXAS

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

Sunnye Murdock, B.S., M.Ed.
Denton, Texas
August, 1997

The purposes of this study were to (1) identify the recommendations of Curriculum Management Audits conducted in Texas Public School systems, (2) determine the degree to which each of the recommendations had been implemented, and (3) determine the perceptions of stakeholders as to the factors instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit. The researcher conducted interviews with superintendents and key central office administrators with a working knowledge of the audit report in each of the eleven Texas school districts studied. Respondents were asked to rate recommendations written for their districts using the following descriptors: Implemented, In Progress, Plan to Implement, Recommendation Modified, No Implementation. The ranking of recommendation implementation revealed that 85% of the recommendations made in the 11 audit reports reviewed in this study had received action toward implementation to some degree. Respondents were also asked to cite factors which facilitated or impeded recommendation implementation. Significant factors facilitating the implementation of recommendations were reported to be time, organizational structure/personnel and planning. The analysis of the collective
recommendations revealed that school board policies were not adequate to direct the design, delivery and monitoring of curriculum when measured against audit Standard One criteria. School districts in Texas rely on the Texas Association of School Boards' policy division for policies. Findings indicate that greater alignment between the Texas Association of School Boards' policies and Curriculum Management Audit criteria must be sought in order for school districts in Texas to meet this Standard. System-wide planning, curriculum documents, and program-driven budgeting processes were other areas requiring attention of the school districts in the study. Evidence of the extent of implementation of recommendations suggests that school districts valued the audit report with its recommendations. It can be generally concluded that the Curriculum Management Audit had a positive impact on the involved school districts.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Texas Public Schools are feeling the pressure brought to bear by the State's school accountability system, the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). Performance on state curriculum exams, drop out rates, attendance and performance on college entrance exams are factors that determine a campus or district "grade." Campuses and districts are then ranked with others of comparable characteristics as Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable or Low Performing. State-mandated site-based decision-making has placed an additional level of stress on building level administrators as well as central office personnel. Rewards for excellence and sanctions for low performance have district and campus administrators scrambling for tools to improve.

The Curriculum Management Audit is a high-powered method for unlocking the potential of a school district to make a direct and immediate impact on improving pupil achievement under any self-imposed local or state-mandated assessment system (English, 1995). The first curriculum management audit was employed by Fenwick English in Columbus, Ohio, in 1979. In 1988 the curriculum management audit was centered in the American Association of School Administrators in Arlington, Virginia. The American Association of School
Administrators developed training programs for educators to become curriculum management auditors who then performed audits nationally and internationally.

The curriculum management audit rests on a series of assumptions. First, the curriculum management audit assumes that school systems are "rational organizations." Second, the organization is ongoing; it continually upgrades and improves its operations and results. Third, the system has a generally accepted set of principles or objectives. The curriculum management audit assumes that school systems are rational and the unit of analysis is the school system. With specific reference to curriculum, the curriculum management audit assumes that the district's curriculum is purposive and reproducible.

The standards of the audit are grouped around organizational theory, not curriculum theory. Curriculum is designed within a system and delivered by a system. The standards of the audit are centered on operations and the theoretical base that governs the system. The fundamental questions addressed in the curriculum management audit revolve around whether the work of the system is resulting in the ability of the organization to improve student achievement (Steffy, 1995). By looking at five interrelated standards, the audit provides an assessment of district and school accountability founded in school effectiveness as measured by student achievement.

The first standard of the curriculum management audit is known as the Control Standard. A school system meets Standard One when it "is able to
demonstrate its control of resources, programs, and personnel." Educational program control and accountability are often shared among different components of a school system; however, "fundamental control of, and responsibility for, a district and its operations rests with the school board and top-level management staff" (English, 1992, p. 72). The audit is built on the premise that the first and foremost aspect of control is that the board have clear and strong curriculum management policies to direct the actions of staff.

Standard Two, the Curriculum Standard, focuses on direction for the curriculum. It assesses the follow-up steps of translating the policy, planning, and organizational control of Standard One into adequate design of the work plan, the curriculum, and effective delivery of the instructional program.

The interrelationships of organization components needed for quality control are addressed in Standard Three, the Connectivity and Equity Standard. Standard Three examines how a school system demonstrates internal connectivity and rational equity in its program development and implementation (Poston, 1995). A school system meeting Standard Three would be able to demonstrate its connectivity and equity by showing how its programs have been developed and implemented, and by having a curriculum that is:

- centrally defined and adopted by the board,
- clearly explained to principals and teachers.
accompanied by specific training programs to ensure implementation, and monitored by central office staff and principals.

The Assessment Standard, Standard Four, focuses on a school district’s assessment program and the management of those processes and procedures. A school system should use the results from system-designed and/or adopted assessment to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs (Streshley, 1995).

Achieving results is the main focus of Standard Five, the Productivity Standard, of the curriculum management audit (Greene, 1995). Productivity connotes a range of meanings for the practitioners of quality control. For educators, the use of the term productivity also typically evokes apprehension because of the traditional insistence that effective education cannot be measured (Green, 1995). A curriculum management audit premise is that results can be assessed and that there should be a relationship among goals and objectives, priorities, and costs.

Using these standards, an audit team of certified Curriculum Management Auditors reviews a school system’s documents, interviews all stakeholders, and identifies processes in determining the system’s ability to meet audit criteria. The team, generally composed of three to eight members, spends a week in the district to research and verify information contained in reports and documents submitted prior to the audit visit. Recommendations for school system improvement are
made based on findings of the audit team. Findings are "triangulated," corroborated with one another. Recommendations are presented along with a systematic outline for achieving the goal of improvement. Districts are presented a complete written report of all findings and recommendations developed by the audit team as well as an oral presentation by the Lead Auditor to the district’s Board of Trustees.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to (1) identify the recommendations of Curriculum Management Audits conducted in Texas public school systems, (2) determine the degree to which each of the recommendations have been implemented, and (3) determine the perceptions of stakeholders as to the factors instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit.

Conceptual Rationale for the Study

The Texas Curriculum Audit Center was established in 1995 by joint agreement with the American Association of School Administrators and the Texas Association of School Administrators. It was founded to assist Texas school administrators in improving their districts. In addition to its proven ability to function as a catalyst for change was the audit’s compatibility with other reform efforts including Strategic Planning and Site-Based Decision Making. Betty Steffy, University of Kentucky, maintains that the audit is an appropriate process
to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum management system of a school district with or without school-based decision making (Steffy, 1995).

The Texas Curriculum Audit Center focuses state-level efforts to assist Texas school districts in achieving maximum productivity and performance in the most cost-effective manner. The center supports the delivery of curriculum management audits, training programs, consultation and technical support services in Texas. The state-focused approach affords the center the ability to tailor its services to the specific needs of the districts it serves.

The Texas Curriculum Audit Center is in the third year of its efforts to design and implement the center. An evaluation of Texas audits will illuminate the successes, identify the problem areas and give direction toward improving processes for stronger support of Texas schools (Montgomery, 1996).

Definitions

1. National Curriculum Audit Center—a professional organization established at the American Association of School Administrators, in cooperation with Dr. Fenwick W. English in 1988. The center provides services essential to school reform. The emphasis is on student performance and learning as a result of financial outlays.

2. Triangulation—the use of multiple methods of data gathering in order to verify findings in the audit. In order to appear in the audit report, a fact must be
verified from at least two, hopefully more than two sources (NCAC Training Manual, 1994).

3. Texas Curriculum Audit Center—a professional organization established by joint agreement with the American Association of School Administrators and the Texas Association of School Administrators, and through the National Curriculum Audit Center. The center offers specialized training and conducts audits (with assistance of auditors certified by the American Association of School Administrators-National Curriculum Audit Center) to address the unique needs of Texas schools (Veselka, 1995, p. 9).

4. Curriculum Management Audit—a process designed to determine the degree to which the written, taught, and tested curricula are aligned and the extent to which all district resources are organized to support development and delivery of the curricula (Frase, English, & Poston, 1995).

5. Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)—an accountability system for the public schools in Texas which is based on the following principles: student performance, recognition of diversity, system stability, appropriate consequences, statutory compliance, local program flexibility, local responsibility and the public's right to know. Districts receive an accreditation status and campuses receive a performance rating based on stated criteria (TEA, 1996).
Limitations

Limitations are those generally associated with interviews. Questioning subjects in person required more time than sending survey forms by mail. The time allotted for the interview varied with the subjects. Interviewer effect may have produced variance in subject responses to questions.

The length of time since the school district received the audit report was a variable to be considered when analyzing the data. The working time for districts to review, assess and plan for implementation of recommendations varies from two years to five months.

Attempts to interview district personnel not granting a personal interview were made by telephone and through a written questionnaire. Interviewer effect was altered by the lack of personal contact and face-to-face observance of these respondents.

Research

Sample

The sample was 11 of the 12 Texas public school districts which have experienced a curriculum management audit under the auspices of the National Curriculum Audit Center and/or the Texas Curriculum Audit Center. Subjects included the superintendents and key administrative personnel who had a working knowledge of the audit and its findings and recommendations. The list of Texas
public school districts was provided by the Texas Curriculum Audit Center, a service of the Texas Association of School Administrators.

Procedures for Data Collection

Audit reports from the Texas school districts were reviewed. Recommendations presented to each district were identified and listed by district and standard. A set of questions designed to determine the degree to which the recommendations have been implemented by the district were administered during personal interviews with subjects. Subjects to be interviewed included the superintendents and key administrative personnel who had a working knowledge of the audit and its findings and recommendations.

An informational letter from the Texas Curriculum Audit Center notified the audited districts of this study and encouraged their participation. An introductory letter, stating the purposes of this study and requesting interviews was mailed to the identified superintendents. Individual interview dates and times were scheduled during the months of November and December, 1996 and January, 1997.

Instrument

The instrument for this study was a set of questions administered by personal interview. The interview is an often-used device for obtaining information and involves a face-to-face interpersonal situation in which one person, the interviewer, asks a person being interviewed, the respondent, questions designed
to obtain answers pertinent to the research problem (Kerlinger, 1992). The products of interviews, respondents' answers to carefully worded questions, can be translated into measures of variables. Interviews can be used for three main purposes: exploratory device, main instrument of the research, and it may supplement other methods. Interviews and interview schedules are subject to the same criteria of reliability, validity, and objectivity as other measuring instruments.

In order to pursue the purpose for the study, interview questions focused on the extent to which recommendations presented in the formal audit report had been implemented by the districts. Subjects were presented cards containing recommendations as found in the district's official audit report. For each recommendation, subjects were asked to indicate the degree to which the recommendation had been implemented using the following terms:

- Implemented
- In progress
- Plan to implement
- Recommendation modified
- No implementation

Open-end items included in the interview supplied a frame of reference for the respondents' answers. These open-end items allowed the interviewer to make better estimates of the respondents' involvement and attitude toward the audit. Open-end items included the following:
- What has the district done overall with the audit?
- What was the impetus for the audit?
- Who is responsible for implementation of recommendations?
- What are the Board's expectations for use of audit information?
- What is the Board's attitude toward the audit?
- What is the superintendent's expectation from the audit?
- What time frame has been established to accomplish all recommendations?
- What concerns do you have with implementing the audit recommendations?

The questions were developed in collaboration with a lead auditor with the National Curriculum Audit Center. Evidence of validity of the questions was provided through National Curriculum Audit Center and Texas Curriculum Audit Center personnel.

Data Analysis

The study was designed to determine the degree to which recommendations presented in the Curriculum Management Audit Report of participating school districts were being implemented. This was accomplished through interview research methodology.

For each Texas district in which a Curriculum Management Audit had been conducted through the National Curriculum Audit Center and/or the Texas
Curriculum Audit Center, an interview was requested with the superintendent and a central office administrator with a working knowledge of the audit and its findings. Subjects were asked to schedule 45 minutes with the interviewer in which general information and information specific to the recommendations for the district was gathered. Responses were entered into a computer or handwritten by the interviewer dependent upon the respondent's comfort level.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A curriculum audit is a process of examining documents and practices that exist within a peculiar institution normally called a "school" in a given time, culture, and society (English, 1988). Glatthorn (1994) defines curriculum auditing as a process of evaluating the management policies and procedures used to support the curriculum.

Historically, the audit function in schools was performed by the county superintendent and before that by individual members of the board of education. Prior to 1959, there existed a narrow application of auditing concepts in education. Most were used to determine fiduciary capacity and to detect fraud and accounting errors. In the 1960s several state agencies and private corporations requested the establishment of needs assessment programs, development of evaluation techniques, and an expectation for accountability in the education process. Over the next 10 years, several agencies and groups developed a variety of audit programs to look at systems and organizations. When Fenwick English joined the accounting firm of Peat Marwick Mitchell and successfully created a process of applying generally accepted accounting principles to the educational organization, the Curriculum Audit was born (Menchhofer, 1994).
When most administrators think about curriculum they think about curriculum guides. The word "curriculum" didn’t come into widespread use in education until textbooks were used in preparing teachers in normal schools (English, 1992). The definitions of curriculum are as varied as curriculum specialists and theorists. According to Fenwick English, curriculum is any document or plan that exists in a school or school system that defines the work of teachers. Glatthorn (1994) defines curriculum as the plans made for guiding learning in schools, usually represented in retrievable documents of several levels of generality, and the implementation of those plans in the classroom; those experiences take place in a learning environment that also influences what is learned. Squires (1987) writes that curriculum is a written organizational plan under which conscious decisions are made to enhance student achievement and promote responsible social behavior.

A curriculum management audit focuses on a school system’s overall curriculum process which includes design, coordination, alignment, articulation, delivery and monitoring. Curriculum design refers to the act of creating the curriculum in schools. Curriculum coordination refers to the extent of the focus and connectivity present within a school or school district.

Curriculum alignment is the conscious congruence of three educational elements: curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Alignment refers to the match between the content and format of the test and the content and format of the
curriculum. The closer the match, the greater the potential for improvement in student achievement. Improving the match between the formal instruction that occurs in the classroom and that which will be tested is the goal of curriculum alignment. Glatthorn describes curriculum alignment as a process of aligning the written curriculum (that found in curriculum guides), the tested curriculum (that which appears in tests), and the supported curriculum (that which is in textbooks and other resources) to make the taught curriculum (that which the teacher delivers) more effective (Glatthorn, 1994).

Curriculum articulation refers to the focus and vertical connectivity in a school system. To attain this connectivity, curriculum development must be well planned and performed with trained personnel. On going curriculum development includes the following steps:

- initial stage—recognizing the need for change and deciding to initiate planning for a specified development;
- planning stage—identifying a planning team and obtaining approval of the new development and detailed plans for implementing it;
- implementation stage—conducting a continuous process of identifying an implementation team and making initial contract with prospective learners; and
- evaluation stage—conducting periodic and ongoing evaluations concurrently with the preceding three stages.
Curriculum delivery refers to any act of implementing, supervising, monitoring, or using feedback to improve the curriculum once it has been created and put into place in schools.

Not only does the curriculum management audit attend to a school system's total curriculum framework, it also looks at the system's processes to ensure support for and control of curriculum and instruction. To ensure that the district's specified curriculum is being implemented, the audit must focus on such concerns as:

- is the curriculum being used?
- is there congruence among the written goals and objectives and what teachers are teaching?
- are teachers emphasizing the curriculum's objectives and concepts?
- what factors constrain implementation?

The recommendations for change made in an audit report should serve to increase the quality of education (Kimpston, Barber, & Rogers, 1984).

The curriculum audit requires a sizable investment of resources such as time, financial commitments, and the disruptions of normal administrative duties.

Frase (1995) reports three kinds of clients may commission an audit:

1. the school system itself at the superintendent's request,
2. an external support group such as a Chamber of Commerce or a corporate partner, and
3. a regulatory agency such as the state department of education.

When should a school district request an audit? According to Fenwick English, an audit is best when the following conditions exist:

1. When the stakes are high. When it is important to get an objective view or establish a new practice upon a firm foundation.

2. When the status quo is not acceptable.

3. When objectivity is necessary. Significant change is difficult and an outside look at a system can bring validation to making the reorganizational or restructural changes needed for improvement.

4. When expertise is required. Auditors bring expertise in all areas of system operations. "Such expertise may see problems better and help those internal to the organization see solutions they did not imagine before the audit" (English, 1988, p. 18).

5. When the past and present are not well understood. An audit gives a picture of where a school system has been and were it is at the time of the audit. Administrators do not always know why they do certain things, or follow certain procedures. They are sometimes limited by their knowledge or biases.

6. When public confidence and trust must be reestablished or retained.

7. When results count. Are students learning what is important to learn?
8. When cost is important. It is important to know if the cost is bringing the desired results.

Since 1979, the curriculum management audit has used five standards against which information gathered by auditors may be analyzed. These standards are grounded in effective schools research. Ten common denominators describe, in general, effective schools:

- there is a strong leader with high but realistic expectations for students and staff;
- there is a sense that everyone cares about the organization and works together as a team;
- there are varied instructional practices;
- there is continuous staff development;
- there is good curriculum which is well planned, diverse, challenging, flexible, and not confined by school walls;
- there are well defined goals and expectations which are shared by all stakeholders;
- academic excellence is valued;
- students are expected to work hard;
- continuous improvement is sought through evaluation; and
- communication is fostered and there is a recognition that parents are partners (Butterworth, 1992).
With the body of effective schools research and sound management principles and practices as its base, the Curriculum Management Audit expects school systems to meet the criteria found in the five standards. Audit expectations begin with Standard One in which quality control is the fundamental element of a well-managed educational program.

Through the development of an effective policy framework, a local school board provides the focus for management and accountability to be established for administrative and instructional staff members. It also enables the district to assess meaningful use of student learning data as a critical factor in determining its success.

A school district meeting Curriculum Management Audit Standard One is able to demonstrate its control of resources, programs and personnel. Common indicators are: a curriculum that is centrally defined and adopted by the board; a clear set of policies that establish an operational framework for management that permits accountability; a clear set of policies that reflect state requirements and local program goals; a functional administrative structure that facilitates the design and delivery of the district’s curriculum; a direct line of authority from school board/superintendent and other central office officials to principals and teachers; organizational efforts in place to improve system effectiveness; documentation of school board and central office planning; and, a clear mechanism to define and direct change within the school system.
A school system meeting Standard Two has established a clear, valid and measurable set of pupil standards for learning and has set the objectives into a workable framework. Common indicators which auditors expect to find are: a clearly established set of goals and objectives adopted by the board; demonstration that the system is responsive to national, state, and other expectations; operations set within a framework that carries out the system's goals, objectives and sense of priorities; evidence of comprehensive, short and long range curriculum management planning; knowledge and use of current best practices and emerging curriculum trends; written curriculum that addresses both current and future needs of students; major programmatic initiatives designed to be cohesive; provision of explicit direction for superintendent and staff; and a framework for systemic curricular change.

To meet audit Standard Three a school system must be able to show how its program has been created as the result of a systematic identification of deficiencies in student achievement. It must also be able to demonstrate that it possesses a focused and coherent approach toward defining curriculum. Common indicators are: documents/sources that reveal internal connections at different levels in the system; predictable consistency through a rationale for content delineation within the curriculum; equity of curriculum/course access and opportunity; allocation of resource flow to areas of greatest need; specific professional development programs to enhance instruction; curriculum monitoring by central
office and site supervisory personnel; and teacher and administrator responsiveness to school board policies.

Standard Four criteria are a formative and summative assessment system; knowledge and use of emerging curriculum and program assessment practices; use of student and program assessment data; a vehicle for evaluating program effectiveness; a data base to modify or terminate ineffective educational programs; a method/means to relate to a programmed budget and enable the school system to engage in cost benefit analysis; and organizational data gathered and used to continually improve system functions. A school system meeting this audit standard has a full range of formal and informal assessment tools that provide program information relevant to decision making at all levels.

To meet the criteria of Standard Five, a school system must be able to demonstrate consistently-improved student achievement. Common indicators of a school system meeting this audit standard are planned and actual congruence among curricular objectives, results and financial costs; a financial data base that can track costs to results; specific means that attain better results in schools over a specified time period; planned interventions that raise pupil performance levels over time; school facilities that are well-kept, sufficient, safe, orderly and facilitate delivery of the instructional program; and district and school climate conducive to continual improvement.
The curriculum audit provides a framework for mutual trust. It helps to provide the necessary assurances through documentation and a paper trail to determine if the educational process is functioning, as described by local policies and curriculum guides. The audit provides better documentation of the organizational purpose, mission and methods for curriculum implementation and student assessment. The Curriculum Audit is an excellent tool to facilitate school improvement (Menchhofer, 1994).

There is a popular adage that claims: "When all is said and done, there is a lot more said than done." If a school is truly driven by established outcomes, then the pursuance of those outcomes will be evident throughout the system (Hendery, 1992). Why would a school district subject itself to the detailed scrutiny of outsiders in a public audit of its curriculum? Larry D. Coble, Superintendent of the Durham County, North Carolina school system, was committed to enhancing the national reputation of the district. He realized that improvements had to be ongoing and a curriculum audit would evaluate their program. Durham County’s audit, conducted in 1989, presented 13 recommendations. Strategies for addressing the recommendations were incorporated into the district’s strategic plan. Dr. Coble stated that he believed that the audit would help Durham schools take a giant step forward in becoming a significantly better school system with priorities in better order (Coble, 1989).
Reported findings of curriculum management audits nationwide indicated that the process is beneficial for school system improvement. Statements from superintendents whose districts were audited from January 1981 to January 1993 are contained in an American Association of School Administrators/National Curriculum Audit Center document, "The Superintendents Speak." One of the most prevalent themes throughout the responses was the relationship between the Curriculum Audit and strategic planning. Some felt that the audit should precede the planning function, creating a built-in action plan for change. Recommendations were found by the superintendents to be concrete, on target, and presented in a way that allowed implementation. Superintendents felt it important that an outside, objective validation of what was happening in their district was invaluable. Having objective reports also afforded the opportunity to make changes that would otherwise take years (Vertis, 1994).

Darlington County, South Carolina School Superintendent, Terry Grier, warned that what outside auditors report might not sit well with school board, staff, or community. Yet, an objective analysis of one's schools identifies a starting point for school reform (Grier, 1989). Although auditor's findings are sometimes painful, the proposed solutions have the potential to be healing over time. Most problems uncovered are not unique to a particular school district, and many recommendations stand as general principles of effective school operations.

An editorial in The Washington Post, following the Washington D.C school
district’s curriculum management audit, stated that the audit showed the depths from which the school system had to rise more than any other report published to that date (1992).

Texas Superintendents whose districts have been audited have yet to report their experiences. A school district in North Central Texas was one of the first two districts in Texas to request a curriculum audit. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction described the process of preparing for the audit in a publication of the Texas Association of School Administrators. "Only after careful research did our board of trustees decide to contract for an audit. The processes used to prepare for a curriculum audit, as well as the actual audit itself, have had a major impact on our district" (Griffin & Bryce, 1995). Dr. Griffin cites two key factors that are extremely important to consider before deciding to have an audit: an inventory of relationships the superintendent has with various constituencies, and, timing.

The audit is a powerful tool to improve education and cause necessary changes for restructuring organizations. It provides the vehicle for systematic change to occur in a much faster time frame. "The curriculum audit has made a positive impact and difference for us as we try to create an educational experience that prepares each student for success in the 21st century" (Griffin & Bryce, 1995, p. 18). Audits performed for Texas public schools have yet to be described in the literature.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The Curriculum Management Audit is a relatively new concept developed by Dr. Fenwick English in 1979. The audit is designed to determine the degree to which the written, taught, and tested curricula are aligned and the extent to which all district resources are organized to support the development and delivery of the curricula. The audit is based upon generally accepted ideas pertaining to effective instruction and curricular design and delivery, some of which have been popularly referred to as the "effective schools research." "The process is probably the single most powerful tool yet created for the improvement of curriculum, student achievement, and school districts, in general" (Downey & Vertiz, 1995, p. 39).

A curriculum management audit is an independent examination of three data sources: documents, interviews, and site visitations. These are gathered and triangulated, or corroborated, to reveal the extent to which a school district is meeting its goals and objectives, whether they are internally or externally developed or imposed. A public report is issued as the final phase of the auditing process.
The audit's scope is centered on curriculum and instruction, or any aspect of a school system's operations that enhances or hinders its design and/or delivery. It focuses like a laser on that which schools should be all about—learning (Fraze, 1995). The audit is an intensive look at how well a school system has been able to set valid directions for pupil accomplishment and well-being, concentrate its resources to accomplish those directions, and improve its performance over time.

The curriculum management audit does not examine every aspect of school operations. For example, auditors would not examine the vehicle maintenance records unless busses continually broke down and children could not get to school to engage in the learning process. In this sense, the curriculum management audit customarily centers its focus on the main business of schools: teaching, curriculum, and learning. Its contingency focus is that which, in the judgments of the auditors, and based upon data gathered during the audit, impinges negatively or positively on its primary focus. These are reported along with the main findings of the audit.

Like most analytical procedures that are embedded in a theoretical construct or model, the curriculum management audit rests on a series of assumptions. These assumptions are:

1. that the school system, or organization, is on going;

2. that the organization has a set of generally accepted principles;

3. that the audit process is reliable;
4. that school systems are rational organizations;
5. that curriculum is purposive and reproducible; and
6. that the unit of analysis is the school system.

The model for the Curriculum Management Audit is shown in the schematic below. The model has been published in the national professional literature, most recently in the American Association of School Administrators' best seller, *Skills for Successful School Leaders* (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1990).

*Figure 1.* A schematic view of curricular quality control.
General quality control assumes that at least three elements must be present in any organizational and work-related situation for it to be functional and capable of being improved over time. These are: (1) a work standard, goal/objective, or operational mission; (2) work directed towards attaining the mission, standard, goal/objective; and (3) feedback (work measurement) which is related to or aligned with the standard, goal/objective, or mission.

Within the context of an educational system and its governance and operational structure, curricular quality control requires: (1) a written curriculum in some clear and translatable form for application by teachers in classrooms or related instructional settings; (2) a taught curriculum that is shaped by and interactive with the written one; and (3) a tested curriculum that includes the tasks, concepts, and skills of pupil learning which is linked to both the taught and written curricula. This model is applicable in any kind of educational work structure typically found in mass public educational systems.

The curriculum management audit is organized around five standards, control, curriculum, equity, feedback, and productivity, against which to compare, verify, and comment upon a school system’s curricular management practices. These standards reflect an ideal management system, but not an unattainable one. They describe the working characteristics that any complex work organization should possess in being responsive and responsible to its clients.
The first standard of the curriculum management audit is known as the Control Standard. A school system meets Standard One when it "is able to demonstrate its control of resources, programs, and personnel" (English, 1988, p. 33). A school system meeting Standard One would be able to demonstrate its control of resources, programs, personnel by such indicators as:

- a curriculum that is centrally defined and adopted by the board of education;
- a clear set of policies that establish an operational framework for management that permits accountability;
- a clear set of policies that reflect state requirements and local program goals and the necessity to use achievement data to improve school system operations;
- a functional administrative structure that facilitates the design and delivery of the district's curriculum;
- a direct, uninterrupted line of authority from school board/superintendent and other central office officials to principals and classroom teachers;
- documentation of school board and central office planning for the attainment of goals, objectives, and mission over time; and,
- a clear mechanism to define and divert change and innovation within the school system to permit maximization of its resources, objectives, and mission (NCAC Training Manual, 1994, p. I.1).
The audit is built on the premise that the first and foremost aspect of control is that the board have clear and strong curriculum management policies to direct the work of staff. Through the development of an effective policy framework, a local school board provides the focus for management and accountability to be established for administrative and instructional staff members, as well as for its own responsibility. It also enables the district to assess meaningful use of student learning data as a critical factor in determining its success. Audit expectations call for an integrated approach toward both the design and delivery of the curriculum to allow a system to move rationally toward continuous improvement of its learner outcomes.

Strong curriculum policies provide specific guidance on all five standards. The audit specifies 21 criteria that result in strong curriculum management policies. They are presented in Figure 2 (NCAC Training Manual, 1994).

It is the audit team's role to determine what curriculum management policies exist. If they exist, are they strong, and are the policies used. Standard One represents the backbone of a school district. Without adequate policies and effective execution, a district's ability to organize personnel and monitor the progress of achieving its mission is diminished.
Written Directive Statements — policies that

1. Provide for *Control* require
   - an aligned written, tested, and taught curriculum
   - statements on curriculum framework approach
   - board adoption of the curriculum
   - accountability through roles and responsibilities
   - long-range planning

2. Provide for *Direction* require
   - written curriculum for all subject/learning areas
   - periodic review of the curriculum
   - textbook/resource adoption by the Board
   - content area emphasis

3. Provide for *Connectivity and Equity* require
   - predictability of the written curriculum from one level to another
   - vertical articulation and horizontal coordination
   - training for staff in the delivery of the curriculum
   - delivery of the curriculum
   - monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum
   - equitable access to the curriculum

4. Provide for *Feedback* require
   - an assessment program which is multifaceted
   - use of data from assessment to determine program/curriculum effectiveness and efficiency
   - reports to the board about program effectiveness

5. Provide for *Productivity* require
   - program-centered budget
   - resource allocation tied to curriculum priorities
   - environment to support curriculum delivery
   - data driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning

*Figure 2.* Policy criteria: Characteristics of strong curriculum management policies.
Standard Two, the Curriculum Standard, having clear and valid objectives for students, focuses on direction for the curriculum. Unless objectives are clear and measurable, there cannot be a cohesive effort to improve pupil achievement in measurable dimensions. Several expectations are considered in reviewing a curriculum system against Standard Two:

1. a clearly established, systemwide set of goals and objectives adopted by the board of education;
2. evidence of comprehensive, detailed, short- and long-range planning;
3. objectives that set the framework for the operation of the district and its sense of priorities;
4. provision of explicit direction for the superintendent and professional staff; and
5. demonstration of local control.

Common indicators auditors expect to find are written curriculum that addresses both current and future needs of students; major programmatic initiatives designed to be cohesive; a framework that exists for systemic curricular change and knowledge, local validation, and use of current best practices and emerging curriculum trends.

When auditors begin an analysis of a school district’s compliance with Standard Two, they posed three primary questions:

1. Does the system have clear and valid objectives for students?
2. Is the current format adequate to provide direction to the system for implementation of the curriculum?

3. Are the curriculum guides used?

In analyzing curriculum guides, auditors use a set of five criteria with subsets of adequacy standards with corresponding points for scoring. The total points achieved by a guide are determined as well as the rating for each of the five criteria. A maximum of 15 points is possible; guides achieving a rating of 12 or more points are considered strong, or adequate for Standard Two. Figure 3 is an example of a Curriculum Guide rating tool.

Data sources used in Standard Two include documents, interviews, and site visits. The primary data source is documents. The question of guide use requires the auditors to look for memoranda of instruction regarding dissemination and implementation of the guides. Interviews are used to verify availability, use, and related aspects of implementation. Interviews reveal awareness of guides, information about where guides are located, how they are, or are not used, and what problems they are perceived to have. Site visits help validate the presence in schools of documents communicating student learning objectives and expectations. Auditor walk-throughs can provide opportunities for observation of the actual use of guides or reference to them in the classrooms (Greene, 1995).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>0.</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and Validity of Objectives</td>
<td>0.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. no goals/objectives present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. vague delineation of goals/objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. states tasks to be performed or skills to be learned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. what, when, how actual standard is to be performed, and amount of time to be spent learning each objective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congruity of the Curriculum to the Testing/Evaluation Process</td>
<td>0.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0. no evaluation approach stated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. some approach of evaluation stated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. skill, knowledge, concepts which will be assessed</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. objectives are keyed to performance evaluation and district tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delineation by Grade of the Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes</td>
<td>0.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. no mention of required skills</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. prior general experience needed</td>
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<td>2. prior general experience needed in grade level</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. specific documented prerequisite or description of discrete skills required</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delineation of the Major Instructional Tools</td>
<td>0.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. no mention of textbook or instructional materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. names textbook or basic instructional materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. names basic text or instructional materials and supplementary materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. &quot;match&quot; between textbook or basic instructional materials and curriculum, objective by objective</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Linkages for Classroom Utilization</td>
<td>0.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. no linkages cited for classroom utilization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. overall, vague statement on linkage for subject approach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. general suggestions on approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. specific examples on how to approach key concepts in classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Curriculum guides as management tools.
Standard Two addresses the ways in which the curriculum management system provides direction to the implementation of the policies, goals, and priorities established by the school district in the design and delivery of its educational program. In meeting Standard Two criteria, a school district gives direction to the system in its pursuit of student achievement.

The Connectivity and Equity Standard is the third standard in the curriculum management audit. A school system meeting Standard Three would be able to demonstrate its connectivity and equity by showing how its programs have been developed, implemented and conducted, and by demonstrating a curriculum that is:

- centrally defined and adopted by the board,
- clearly explained to principals and teachers,
- accompanied by specific training programs to enhance implementation, and
- monitored by central office staff and principals (English, 1988).

In addition, a school system meeting this standard is able to demonstrate that it possesses a focused and coherent approach toward defining curriculum.

The auditors expect to find a highly developed, articulated, and coordinated curriculum in the school system that is effectively monitored by the administrative and supervisory staffs at the central and site levels. To meet the criteria of
Standard Three a system would have the following characteristics (NCAC Training Manual, 1994):

- documents/sources that reveal internal connectivity at different levels in the system;
- predictable consistency through a coherent rationale for content delineation within the curriculum;
- equity of curriculum/course access and opportunity;
- allocation of resource flow to areas of greatest need;
- a curriculum that is clearly explained to members of the teaching staff, building-level administrators, and other supervisory personnel;
- specific staff development programs to enhance curricular design and delivery;
- a curriculum that is monitored by central office and site supervisory personnel; and,
- teacher and administrator responsiveness to school board policies, currently and over time.

Equity analysis focuses on specific characteristics of organizational behavior and characteristics related to its specific criteria. Fifteen specific criteria, issues and questions are used to compare school systems to Standard Three. These criteria are:

1. Administrative and supervisory practices
2. Class size practices
3. Course offerings and access
4. Demographic distribution
5. Financial and funding resources
6. Grouping practices and procedures
7. Individual differences considerations
8. Instructional time utilization
9. Materials and facilities
10. Promotion and retention practices
11. Special program and services delivery
12. Staff development and training
13. Student management practices
14. Support service provision
15. Teacher assignment and work load (Poston, 1995, p. 164).

By using equity analysis in school quality improvement efforts, educational leaders and policy makers can establish greater control of quality and greater likelihood of improvement of educational practice and organizational results over time.

Standard Four, the Assessment Standard, looks at how the school system uses the results from the system-designed and/or adopted assessment to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs. A school system meeting
this audit standard has designed a comprehensive system of assessment/testing and uses valid measurement tools indicating how well its students are achieving learning goals and objectives. Indicators for Standard Four are:

- a timely and relevant base upon which to analyze important trends in the instructional program;
- a vehicle to examine how well specific programs are actually providing desired learner outcomes;
- a data base to compare the strengths and weaknesses of various programs and program alternatives, as well as engage in equity analysis;
- a way to provide feedback to the teaching and administrative staffs regarding how classroom instruction may be evaluated and subsequently improved;
- a data base to modify or terminate ineffective educational programs; and
- a method/means to relate to a programmed budget and enable the school system to engage in cost-benefit analysis (NCAC Training Manual, 1994, p. 4.1).

A school system meeting this audit standard has a full range of formal and informal assessment tools that provide program information relevant to decision making at classroom, school, district, and board levels. A curriculum management auditor uses six criteria to judge the quality of a district’s assessment program. These are:
1. the assessment program is keyed to a set of goals and objectives adopted by the board of trustees;

2. assessment program data are used extensively at the building level to engage in program review and modification;

3. assessment program results demonstrate consistent improvement over a longitudinal time period;

4. assessment data are used to terminate ineffective educational programs;

5. the comprehensive assessment program produces data that are used as a base to establish needed programs; and

6. assessment program results are publicly reported to the board of trustees and the community on a regular basis (English, 1988).

The time and effort spent developing effective feedback loops is very worthwhile. Deployed properly, they become the driving force for positive changes in a school system (Streshley, 1995).

Standard Five, called the Productivity Standard, is met when a school district demonstrates:

- planned and actual congruence among curriculum objectives, results, and financial costs;

- specific means that have been selected or modified and implemented to attain better results in the schools over a specific time period;
- a planned series of interventions that have raised pupil performance levels over time and maintained those levels within the same cost parameters as in the past;

- a financial network that is able to track costs to results, provide sufficient fiduciary control, and is used as a viable data base in making policy and operational decisions; and,

- school facilities that are well-kept, sufficient, safe, and orderly, that comply with all requirements, and facilitate delivery of the instructional program (Greene, 1995, pp. 214-215).

Auditors look at a cycle of results, costs, and improvement. Productivity occurs when the same or increased/improved results are achieved with the same or fewer costs over time. Standard Five analysis for the curriculum management audit unveils the organization's productivity in a comprehensive way (Greene, 1995).

Qualifications for curriculum management auditors are extensive. All auditors must have actual experience in conducting the affairs of a school system at all levels audited. They must understand the tacit and contextual clues of sound curriculum management. Auditor preparation includes a five-day training seminar in which prospective auditors receive instruction in the analysis of each audit standard. The seminar is an intensive instructional experience designed as a prerequisite for certification as an external auditor. To apply for admission to the certification program candidates must submit a letter of application stating
background, experience and interest, a current resume, a writing sample and a letter of support from the candidate’s superintendent indicating how the training might be applied to the home district. Cost of the course and hotel accommodations are the responsibility of the audit candidate. The comprehensive course builds knowledge of the discipline of the curriculum audit process, the audit as a management tool for strategic reform, the auditor’s role, review and practice of specific skills necessary for analyzing data and writing reports, and procedures for how to apply the knowledge base to a district.

Candidates learn how to carry out an external examination of the curriculum design and delivery system of a school district, identify and apply five standards of sound curriculum management, and develop specific recommendations for improving curriculum management and advancing education effectiveness. Based on successful completion of the training seminar, candidates’ written assignments are graded according to auditor standards.

Following acceptance into the program, the candidate is ranked as an Intern, ready to do an audit. The intern supplies his own expenses during the internship audit, but participates as a full member. Successful performance during the internship advances the candidate to the status of Certified Auditor. Should an auditor wish to serve as a Lead Auditor, the Advanced Training Course is required as well as successful performance as Lead Auditor under the supervision of one or more veteran Lead Auditors.
An audit team is composed of five to eight educators from across the state and/or nation who have been trained in the audit process and declared certified auditors. One or more Interns may accompany the audit team into a district. Prior to the team's arrival in the contracting school district, numerous documents, telephone interviews and other forms of data gathering have been accomplished. Upon arrival, the audit team is greeted with an entrance dinner and "getting acquainted" session with key district officials and community members. The five days the team spends in the district are intense. Interviews, site visits and further document analysis are conducted to triangulate data. Evenings are spent in reviewing information, drafting preliminary findings and developing probes for the next day's research. On the final day in the audited district, the Lead Auditor presents a draft of the findings and recommendations developed by the audit team to the superintendent.

Once the auditors return to their home districts, three to four weeks of report writing are required to complete the final audit report. All drafts are submitted to the Lead Auditor who compiles the official report of findings and recommendations. Approximately six weeks following the audit team’s visit to the contracting district, the final audit report is delivered. The Lead Auditor makes a formal presentation to the board of trustees as well as providing the written document. Once the final document is delivered to the contracting district, the audit team has no further contact with the district or its officials. The
Lead Auditors from the Curriculum Audit Center are often contacted to return to an audited district to clarify the focus of recommendations to various groups, provide assistance in carrying out the plan for recommendation implementation, or serve as consultant for staff development efforts.

Articles and research studies describing curriculum management audits that have been conducted for school districts are limited. The literature base consists of descriptive accounts written by superintendents (Vertis, 1994) and two research studies focusing on three school districts in the northeastern United States (Kemen, 1993; Menchhofer, 1994). One article written by an administrative team in Texas discussed the steps in planning for an audit (Griffin & Bryce, 1995). At the time of this study, 12 curriculum management audits had been conducted in Texas. As yet, there have not been reports in the literature describing the audits or the findings from the audits. Therefore, this study is timely.

Research Design

To accomplish the goals of the study, school district administrators with a working knowledge of the audit report were interviewed. Key district officials were presented cards on which questions relating to the recommendations were printed. These one-on-one interviews provided the vehicle for data gathering for the three research objectives.

During the interviews, answers to open-ended questions provided information necessary for gaining insight into use of audit findings and recommendations,
the extent to which recommendations had been implemented, and factors which were perceived as facilitators/impediments to the implementation of recommendations.

Sample

The sample for this study was 11 of the 12 Texas public school districts which had experienced a curriculum management audit under the auspices of the National Curriculum Audit Center and/or the Texas Curriculum Audit Center as of September 1996. The list of Texas public school districts was provided by the Texas Curriculum Audit Center, a service of the Texas Association of School Administrators.

Procedures for Collection of Data

Lead Auditors with the National Curriculum Audit Center met with the researcher over a period of several months to develop appropriate probing questions for the data gathering.

In October 1996, an introductory letter from the Director of the Texas Curriculum Audit Center went out to superintendents of districts in Texas who had received a curriculum management audit (Appendix A). The letter explained the purpose of this study and requested their participation. The letter included identifying information about the researcher and that a request for interviews would follow. In late October 1996, the researcher mailed letters of request to
each superintendent of the districts identified by the Texas Curriculum Audit Center. The letter explained the purposes of this study and requested interviews with both the superintendent and another central office administrator who had working knowledge of the audit and its recommendations.

Follow up telephone calls established interview dates and times during the months of November and December 1996 and January 1997. Where possible, both the superintendent and another central office administrator were scheduled in separate appointment times. By the request of some districts, superintendent and central office administrator interviews were conducted jointly. Each appointment was planned for approximately 45 minutes in length. Verification of appointment dates and times was made by telephone one week prior to the scheduled interview.

During the months of November and December 1996 and January 1997, this researcher traveled to the identified districts to conduct personal interviews with participants. Two sets of predetermined questions were prepared on five inch by eight inch cards. One set focused on the recommendations contained in the district's audit report designed to determine the status of implementation of the recommendations. The other set of questions was open-ended, designed to allow the interviewer to make estimates of the respondents' involvement and attitude toward the audit. Responses during the interview process were recorded by hand and later entered into a computer database program.
Variations in the process occurred in three districts. The superintendent of one district became seriously ill and was unable to participate. In two other districts, central office administrators scheduled for interviews were unexpectedly called away, preventing interviews with administrators other than the superintendents for these districts. Both agreed to supply responses in writing; one returned completed card sets. A fourth district had recently experienced the resignations of key central office personnel with integral knowledge of the audit. In this case, only the superintendent was interviewed.

**Instruments**

The instruments for this study were two sets of questions administered by personal interview. The interview is probably man’s oldest and most often used device for obtaining information. The interview is a face-to-face interpersonal situation in which one person, the interviewer, asks a person being interviewed, the respondent, questions designed to obtain answers pertinent to the research problem (Kerlinger, 1992). The products of interviews, respondents’ answers to carefully worded questions, can be translated into measures of variables. Interviews can be used for three main purposes: exploratory device, main instrument of the research, and it may supplement other methods. Interviews and interview schedules are subject to the same criteria of reliability, validity, and objectivity as other measuring instruments.
In order to pursue the purposes for the study, interview questions focused on the extent to which recommendations presented in the formal audit reports had been implemented by the districts. Subjects were presented cards (Appendix B) containing recommendations as found in the district’s official audit report. For each recommendation, subjects were asked to indicate the degree to which the recommendation had been implemented using the following terms:

- Implemented
- In progress
- Plan to implement
- Recommendation modified
- No implementation

In addition, respondents were asked to identify factors which facilitated/impeded implementing the recommendations.

Open-end items included in the interview supplied a frame of reference for the respondents’ answers. The open-end items listed below allowed the interviewer to make better estimates of the respondents’ involvement and attitude toward the audit.

1. Who/what was the impetus for the audit?
2. Who is responsible for implementation of recommendations?
3. What is the superintendent’s expectation from the audit?
4. What are the Board’s expectations for use of audit information?
5. What is/was the Board's attitude toward the audit?

6. What has the district done overall with the audit?

7. What time frame has been established to accomplish all recommendations?

8. What concerns do you have with implementing the audit recommendations?

9. What factors do stakeholders perceive to be instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit?

The questions were developed in collaboration with Dr. Carolyn Downey, lead auditor with the National Curriculum Audit Center and Professor at San Diego State University. Evidence of validity of the questions was provided through National Curriculum Audit Center and Texas Curriculum Audit Center personnel.

Procedures for Analysis of Data

*Research Purpose 1*

Identify the recommendations presented in the audit report of each audited district.

The 11 audit reports were reviewed by the researcher. The recommendations for each district were identified and listed on index cards.
Research Purpose 2

Indicate the degree to which recommendations have been implemented using the terms Implemented, In progress, Plan to implement, Recommendation modified, or No Implementation.

At the time of interview, the researcher presented each respondent with a set of 5 x 8 inch cards on which each recommendation had been identified by Standard. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree of implementation using the descriptors. Following the interview, responses were entered into a computer data base. If there was disagreement between administrators interviewed as to the status of a recommendation, the researcher scored the recommendation according to the superintendent’s analysis. Listings of recommendations by district and standard were developed with totals for each descriptor calculated. Illustrations of the findings were depicted in charts and tables in order to visualize any trend or common characteristics between districts audit reports.

Research Purpose 3

What factors facilitated/impeded recommendation implementation?

Determining the perceptions of stakeholders as to the factors instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit was accomplished through personal interviews with superintendents and key central office administrators of each participating district. One of the open-ended questions on the set of 5 x 8 inch
cards was "What factors have facilitated/impeded recommendation implementation"?

Interview responses were hand recorded at the time of interview and later entered into a computer database. Responses were organized into similar categories: Funding, Time, Organizational Structure/Personnel, Leadership, Staff Development, School Board Support, Growth in Student Population, Planning Processes and Community Support. A category, "Other," was used to record those factors which did not adequately fall into one of the before-named categories. An accounting of responses in each category was displayed in table form to facilitate analysis.

Additional Open-Ended Questions

To gain further insight into the scope of implementation of recommendations and attitudes toward the audit report, respondents were asked a set of open-ended questions cited previously. The degree of direct involvement of the interviewee and other district personnel in the audit process was sought to add validity to responses and conclusions drawn from data gathered. Answers to questions were scripted by the researcher and later entered into a computer database program. Common responses for participating districts were determined and used to form conclusions regarding recommendation effectiveness.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purposes of this study were to (1) identify the recommendations of Curriculum Management Audits conducted in Texas public school systems, (2) determine the degree to which each of the recommendations had been implemented, and (3) determine the perceptions of stakeholders as to the factors instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit.

Personal and written interviews were conducted using questions designed to gather information regarding recommendations for each district, the extent to which districts had acted upon the recommendations and factors having an impact on the implementation of recommendations. In each identified school district, both the superintendent and a central office administrators, where possible, were questioned. The results of these interviews follow in discussion form.

Findings and Discussion

Individual Districts

District A. Located in the southwest section of a large city, this district is an urban community and has the largest ethnic mix of any school district of
comparable size in Texas, with 57 languages spoken. The district began in 1917 with the opening of the first school. Since that time the district has grown to a student enrollment of more than 34,000 with 30 school campuses. Enrollment growth has averaged 1,256 students per year, approximately 3.6% per year, over most of the past 10 years. The district’s instructional expenditure per pupil was $2,657. The need for additional schools to accommodate student enrollment growth and a relatively low property value per student has given this district the fourth highest tax rate in the geographical area.

Student demographics reflect a 31% African American, 26% Hispanic, 23% White and 20% other ethnic group enrollment. Thirty-seven percent of the student population is classified as Economically Disadvantaged.

The Board of Trustees consists of seven community members. The district possesses many attributes that provide a platform for attaining highly effective management and delivery of curriculum. The board is unified in agreement to seek quality instruction. The superintendent is an experienced, highly-skilled leader who had been with the district less than two years at the time of the audit.

The Curriculum Management Audit was performed for District A in April 1995. Eleven recommendations were presented. These recommendations covered each standard as indicated below:

Standard 1 (Control) 4 recommendations
Standard 2 (Curriculum) 1 recommendation
Standard 3 (Equity)  1 recommendation  
Standard 4 (Assessment)  3 recommendations  
Standard 5 (Productivity)  2 recommendations  

Both the superintendent and assistant superintendent of District A were interviewed. Their responses regarding each recommendation indicated that three recommendations had been implemented, six were in progress and two had not been implemented:

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Design, adopt and implement a set of comprehensive curriculum management policies and ensure implementation district wide.

There had been no implementation for this recommendation due to factors which included financial considerations, commitment of staff time, and other projects within the district that were currently in progress.

Recommendation 2: (S2-Curriculum)—Improve existing curriculum guides, address all areas of the district curriculum in guides and ensure their consistent use.

Funds had been allocated for the completion of this recommendation. Work was in progress; time was a major factor.

Recommendation 3: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement a comprehensive system to ensure the use of data for program evaluation and assessment of all students.
The superintendent indicated that the recommendation had been implemented but did not elaborate as to specific actions. The contributing factor was the desire to use data to improve instruction. The assistant superintendent confirmed this assessment by stating, "Teachers are excited to have usable data and want to use it to improve instruction."

Recommendation 4: (S1-Control)—Reorganize the administrative structure and job descriptions to create more effective design and delivery of curriculum.

Job descriptions had not been altered, but the administrative team had been reorganized for improved efficiency. This recommendation was termed as implemented by the assistant superintendent. The superintendent chose not to respond to either question regarding this recommendation.

Recommendation 5: (S3-Equity)—Establish and implement equitable and effective curriculum and instructional practices.

The objective of educational equity efforts is to produce comparable academic outcomes for all students. In order for a school system to ensure that it delivers to each student the curriculum content and services necessary for academic success, data must be available which describes the impact of the various components of the educational system on student outcomes. Because disaggregated information was not readily accessible to this district's decision makers there existed a critical gap in the management system which ensured equitable access to all student groups.
The superintendent believed that this recommendation had been implemented. However, he stated "The administration's recognition of the decline in student achievement was the determining factor in implementation rather than a result of the audit report." The assistant superintendent described implementation as ongoing as a result of the superintendent's desire to ensure quality.

Recommendation 6: (S1-Control)—Restrict Board activities to macro-management and behaviors that foster good will and are respectful of staff time and duties.

The recommendation had been implemented and work continued through training for Board members. The Board persisted in a "hands-on" approach to their position, but the administration was seeing improvement.

Recommendation 7: (S4-Assessment)—Focus staff and assessment procedures on increasing productivity through high quality instruction and supervision.

Professional literature emphasizes that teachers are the most influential element in the educational process and that principals can be invaluable in organizing the school to facilitate learning. The auditors did not find evidence of such practice in this district. Teacher evaluation procedures were found to be ineffective; thus this recommendation to refocus principals' role to that of ensuring high quality instruction.

Implementation was in progress with monies having been appropriated for staff development.
Recommendation 8: (S4-Assessment)—Plan interventions for improvements in a systematic way and ensure follow up evaluation data are used in decision making.

The superintendent did not comment, but the assistant superintendent described the recommendation as in progress. Lack of administrator training in the use of data was deemed a restrictive factor in the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 9: (S1-Control)—Design and implement a comprehensive long-range plan to establish and sustain constancy of purpose toward greater student learning.

Both officials interviewed described the recommendation as implemented. Factors influencing implementation were the willingness of the superintendent and Board to support district efforts, the evaluation of the state mandated student assessment program, Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) results, and identifying what must be done to improve student learning.

Recommendation 10: (S5-Productivity)—Design and implement a program-driven budgeting process and documents that link priorities, resources and results.

The recommendation was in progress. The assistant superintendent indicated that the Board's inability to "see the big picture" was impeding full implementation.
Recommendation 11: (S5-Productivity)—Establish a plan to reduce school enrollments to more manageable sizes and to address other facility needs in future remodeling and construction.

Although new facilities were being constructed, rapid student growth made full implementation of this recommendation impossible. The superintendent reported that $50 million per year was required to maintain the current facilities. The tax base for District A could not support the scope of construction necessary to meet the demands placed on the district by the increase in student enrollment. Although the district would open two additional ninth grade centers for the 1997-1998 school year, the 1,600 students per year increase in enrollment would quickly necessitate additional construction.

In responding to the open ended questions, the superintendent felt that the district had done little with the audit report. He stated that he "disagreed with the concept of ‘all wrong’ without a few ‘good perks.’" Standard state compliance and accreditation reports for Texas school districts include both commendations and recommendations as compared to the audit report which presents only recommendations for improvement.

The audit report was used as a tool to reorganize the administrative team and to move the board members into more appropriate behaviors. Both officials indicated that the audit report was not made public due to the attention to Board behaviors and equity issues. Documents reviewed by the audit team revealed that
Board members had acted inappropriately and in some instances their actions were not in compliance with state law and board policies governing school board member behaviors. The superintendent described the report as "too politically volatile to publicize widely." Although the Board requested the audit, the superintendent supported the request for the purpose of obtaining a tool to precipitate needed change. "However," the superintendent stated, "the Board didn't take the audit report to heart." He felt the "affirmative action piece" had invalidated the audit report. Findings within the audit report pointed out disproportionate representation of minority groups in programs such as gifted and talented and student support services.

The assistant superintendent believed that the superintendent had presented the audit report to the Board in a positive manner and had prevented the alienation of community and staff. No time frame had been established for implementation of recommendations and neither official cited concerns with implementing the audit recommendations.

District B. This district is located in North Texas and is near an air force base which influences the growth of the town’s population as well as the school district’s. The district began with a single teacher in a one room building in 1907. A small house built by one of the earlier pioneers for a shed housed five pupils at the start of the session in 1907, and by the end of the first year, the student enrollment had increased to 75 students. In August of 1908 a four-room
frame structure was constructed. Oil was discovered in the area in 1912 and the city became an oil town. The farming community was crowded by thousands who came from around the world to seek their fortunes.

At the time of the interview, the school system had three elementary schools, one junior high school and one high school. The district was expecting an increase of 800 students as a result of the increased employment at the military base. Enrollment at the time of this study was 3,478 students, which included 8% African American, 5% Hispanic, 85% White and 2% other ethnic groups. Economically Disadvantaged students numbered 30.7% of the student population. The per pupil instructional expenditure was $2,363.

The Board of Trustees is composed of seven members. There have been 21 different board members in the previous nine years. The superintendent, who had been with the district nine years when the audit was performed, spoke of a dedication to reform in curriculum and its management. This district has a fine reputation in the community and in the State. Parent and community support for continuous improvement is strong.

The researcher interviewed the superintendent in person. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction was unavailable, but responded to the question sets in writing. May 1994 was the date of District B’s Curriculum Management Audit. The report presented 11 recommendations spread over the audit standards as follows:
Standard 1 (Control)  3 recommendations
Standard 2 (Curriculum)  3 recommendations
Standard 3 (Equity)  2 recommendations
Standard 4 (Assessment)  1 recommendation
Standard 5 (Productivity)  2 recommendations

The administrators interviewed reported that of the 11 recommendations, 2 had been implemented and the remaining 9 were in progress.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Refine, adopt, and implement a comprehensive set of Board Policies to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.

Both administrators interviewed described the recommendation as in progress. A curriculum director had been employed and the Board members were involved in leadership training to gain more knowledge in the instructional process. Board support of this recommendation was considered a positive factor.

Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—Redesign the organizational structure to articulate effectively system-wide as well as site based management.

The recommendation was in progress. Factors impeding implementation were identified by both administrators as the district's site-based decision-making plan and some staff positions that could not be eliminated as quickly as desired. The director said, "Some existing staff positions cannot be modified or eliminated until some staff retire."
Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Design a process to facilitate systemic change; determine long-range plan feasibility.

Described by the superintendent as in progress; Board involvement was a positive influence according to both administrators.

Recommendation 4: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system.

The Director of C & I responded that "the Board wasn't comfortable with a curriculum management system; they needed more guidance." However, both officials felt that work was being done to implement the recommendation. Vertical teams had been established to look at the district's curriculum and staff training was planned.

Recommendation 5: (S2-Curriculum)—Establish challenging student learning which focuses on real world expectations.

It was reported both in the audit report and during the interview with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction that the district’s staff was unfamiliar with national and state standards for student learning. Changes in course offerings at the high school level were taking place as a result of the audit report. Comprehensive staff development was necessary to focus staff on 21st Century standards.

In responding to this recommendation the superintendent said, "The audit opened our eyes regarding what our students were offered." Administrators
selected in progress as the descriptor for the recommendation, and expressed that time was a factor in implementation.

Recommendation 6: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement a comprehensive program and student assessment plan to ensure use of meaningful data in decision making.

The district had entered into a collaborative project with a university to pilot a technology driven curriculum management system. Time to determine results of the pilot would be a factor in the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 7: (S3-Equity)—Establish and implement equitable curriculum and instructional practices.

Although the superintendent "didn’t completely agree" with this recommendation, he reported that it had been implemented while the curriculum director termed it in progress. Agreement as to the process to accomplish the goal was not complete among the Board and administration, although initial steps had been taken with the establishment of vertical teams.

Recommendation 8: (S2-Curriculum)—Restructure special education programs to reflect best practices.

The administration of District B described this recommendation as an "eye opener." It brought to the attention of the Board and administration that Special Education had been operating in isolation for years. This recommendation was made a top priority and efforts were underway to provide staff development in
current practices and to work toward the integration of the special education and regular education programs.

Recommendation 9: (S3-Equity)—Design and implement a comprehensive staff development plan to assure effective design and delivery of the curriculum.

The district's reliance on the Regional Educational Service center for assistance and the employment of a curriculum director were seen as positive contributing factors to the implementation of this recommendation. Also, the formation of the Staff Development Committee was beneficial in successful implementation.

Recommendation 10: (S5-Productivity)—Move current budget planning process toward a comprehensive program-centered approach.

Described as in progress, this recommendation would require work toward determining programs and priorities. "Great success has been achieved here and the goal will be accomplished in good time," proclaimed the superintendent.

Recommendation 11: (S5-Productivity)—Develop and implement a long-range facilities plan and plan for bond election.

The superintendent expressed appreciation for the audit report in identifying needs. Although the district’s last bond proposal was defeated, the staff was redesigning the proposal with task forces working to gain community support. The recommendation was in progress at the time of the interviews.
Overall, the audit report had focused the district on a clear direction in developing its accountability system. The report was being used to identify needs within the district and to implement a three-year plan for curriculum renewal.

The superintendent was the driving force in contracting for a Curriculum Management Audit. He felt that an external analysis of the district's status was crucial in getting the Board to accept the necessary changes. The outside report provided validation for needs previously identified by district staff. According to the Director, "By securing an outside source, deficiencies had more validity and action would result more quickly." The relatively long tenure of the superintendent helped to stabilize the Board which had experienced extensive turnover. The superintendent was encouraged that the Board was using the audit report as a guide for improvement. Their attitude toward the audit report was positive, and their persistent focus on facilities was derailed by the report's identification of deficiencies in the instructional program. The Board had incorporated the audit report into the superintendent's evaluation by monitoring recommendation implementation through scheduled progress reports.

Officials interviewed stated a time frame for implementation ranging from three to eight years. Concerns with audit recommendation implementation included difficulty in moving from the "status quo," Board and community may become content with limited changes, and having adequate time to properly implement priority recommendations.
Positive factors contributing to the implementation of recommendations were cited as the community belief that the audit validated concerns and needs previously identified, teachers appreciation for the audit’s attention to their concerns, and ineffective teachers and administrators had left the district following the audit report.

District C. Located on the west side of a major Texas city, District C was founded in 1898 and has a rich heritage of stable leadership. The district has only had three superintendents in 70 years.

Despite declining population in surrounding communities, the district has had steady growth in the past seven years, and the demographics of the district have evolved to a current student enrollment of about 1% African American, 22% Hispanic, 76% White, and 2% Other ethnic groups; 46.6% of these students come from economically disadvantaged households. The district includes 14,000 residents and five schools. Total enrollment in the district is 3,120 students. Instructional expenditures per pupil was reported at $2,382.

District C is characterized by effective leadership at the Board and Superintendent levels, energetic and enthusiastic faculty and staff and a reasonable range of programmatic offerings. The current superintendent assumed his position in 1993. There are seven board members.

Due to illness, the superintendent of District C was unable to provide a personal interview or respond to the question sets in writing. Information regard-
ing the audit report for District C was obtained in a personal interview with the Director of Curriculum.

District C's Curriculum Management Audit, performed in August 1996, presented findings which led to 10 recommendations. Identified by standard they represent:

- Standard 1 (Control) 4 recommendations
- Standard 2 (Curriculum) 1 recommendation
- Standard 3 (Equity) 2 recommendations
- Standard 4 (Assessment) 2 recommendations
- Standard 5 (Productivity) 1 recommendation

Of the 10 recommendations for this district, none were completely implemented, five were in progress, plans were developed for the implementation of two, and three had no implementation planned for at the time of the interview.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Continue to implement sound and effective long-range planning, coordinate all components of system planning and use continuous improvement strategies, including feedback and assessment, to drive decisions.

Termed in progress, the superintendent had the format in place to accomplish this goal. The curriculum director stated "Texas law support for this recommendation is a positive factor in its implementation."
Recommendation 2: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a quality curriculum management system which includes a comprehensive set of core learner objectives in all content areas.

"The audit gave clear direction for this recommendation and rectified what had already been done in the district," responded the curriculum director. "This recommendation is in progress."

Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Restructure roles and responsibilities of administrative personnel to ensure sound and effective organizational practices.

The Curriculum Director chose not to comment on this recommendation stating, "This lies within the purview of the superintendent."

Recommendation 4: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement a comprehensive, multidimensional district assessment program to provide meaningful data for decision-making in student learning, program evaluation and the improvement of teaching.

Although limited by a vehicle to gather data, the curriculum director described this recommendation as in progress. "Doing everything with the end in mind" was the major focus for successful implementation.

Recommendation 5: (S1-Control)—Organize and assign staff responsibility for organizational assessment to provide sound and useful data for organizational decision making.
The recommendation was reported to be in progress. No factors were cited as impeding or facilitating the implementation.

Recommendation 6: (S3-Equity)—Develop and implement ways to overcome inequities in student learning among diverse groups in student placement, program offerings, and access to effective instruction.

The director of curriculum stated that the district planned to implement this recommendation. They were looking at tests for identification purposes, yet the staff lacked training and knowledge in this area. "Much staff development would be required," the curriculum director stated.

Recommendation 7: (S1-Control)—Develop a comprehensive set of board policies to focus organizational actions and direct curriculum design and instructional delivery for excellence to all programs and services.

There had been no implementation for this recommendation and no limiting or supporting factors were cited.

Recommendation 8: (S3-Equity)—Design and implement a comprehensive and focused staff development plan to maximize human resource development and effective curriculum delivery.

There were plans to implement this recommendation according to the director of curriculum
Recommendation 9: (S5-Productivity)—Adopt a four-year plan for implementation of a program-based budget and allocation system to improve cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

The implementation was in progress. "The superintendent has started efforts here by sending his business team to training the last year and an additional team of personnel to training during the current year," the curriculum director reported.

Recommendation 10: (S4-Assessment)—Refocus and redefine principal responsibilities for continuous improvement of the curriculum and instruction.

The director of curriculum could not respond as to the status of this recommendation.

In response to the open ended questions, the curriculum director gave credit to the superintendent as being the impetus for the audit. "The superintendent felt the audit would assist in building an efficient structural framework for the district," she explained. At the time of the interview, the Board had seen the report, but all staff had not. The Board was "at first divided about the results of the report but later voted unanimously to go ahead." A time frame of three to five years had been established for recommendation implementation. Major concerns expressed were time and personnel. Instrumental factors in ensuring the implementation of recommendations were the leadership of the superintendent and the support of the Board.
District D. A suburb of a large metropolitan area, this Pre K-12 school system serves more than 19,800 students. The history of education in District D has its origins in the 19th century when most schools were private or church-affiliated. The current district was formed in 1963 when two districts merged. The new district experienced rapid growth during those early years, with that growth scheduled to continue well into the 21st century. It is projected that the district will house more than 22,000 students by the turn-of-the-century.

Serving parts of six different communities, the district is the 44th largest school district in the state and the sixth largest in its county. With more than 2,000 employees, it is the second largest employer in the district. Student population by ethnic group includes 6.8% African-American students, 21.9% Hispanic students, 60.9% White students and 10.4% Other ethnic groups. Twenty-seven percent of these students were classified as Economically Disadvantaged.

District D is considered one of the finest school districts in the State of Texas based on citations and awards reviewed by the audit team. The system has received numerous types of recognition over the years and has distinguished itself in many areas. The community has come to expect excellence from its schools and has provided support over the years to reflect its commitment. Instructional expenditures per student were reported to be $2,644.

Only the superintendent, who had served District D for two years at the time of the audit, was interviewed. An interview with the Assistant Superintendent for
Instruction was not possible due to temporary disability. The Curriculum Management Audit was performed for District D in April, 1995. The report contained ten recommendations divided among standards as follows:

- Standard 1 (Control)  4 recommendations
- Standard 2 (Curriculum)  3 recommendations
- Standard 3 (Equity)  1 recommendation
- Standard 4 (Assessment)  1 recommendation
- Standard 5 (Productivity)  1 recommendation

According to the superintendent, 1 recommendation had been implemented, 8 were in progress, and 1 was in the planning stage.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Refine, adopt and implement a comprehensive set of Board policies to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.

Implementation of this recommendation was in progress. The district had no policies in place which specifically addressed curriculum management and monitoring. "Policy development is a time consuming process and other projects impede the district's progress toward complete implementation," reported the superintendent.

Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—Design and implement a comprehensive long-range plan that is feasible, data driven and provides targets for curriculum and instruction.
The superintendent selected in progress as the descriptor for this recommendation. Due to rapid student growth the district had been involved in bond passage. He expressed that this "recommendation was a priority, but combined with several other recommendations regarding the curriculum and instruction program, it would take time to complete." The district was developing a systematic planning approach and these recommendations would be a vital part of the plan.

Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Define the purpose and administrative procedures of the teacher evaluation program.

According to the superintendent, this recommendation would be the last one scheduled for implementation. He felt the district must first define the instructional and management system prior to defining what instruction is expected to look like. Once accomplished, the district will focus on the teacher evaluation process and necessary staff training.

Recommendation 4: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a curriculum management system which ensures quality control and provides higher expectations for student learning.

The superintendent reported that the Board resisted this suggestion at first citing money and a traditional mind set as the inhibitors. The Board later agreed to the project and implementation was in progress. The district was developing an electronic curriculum system using a commercial product. The superintendent
predicted a three year process for the implementation of the electronic curriculum management package. The commercial product will be adapted to meet the district’s needs.

Recommendation 5: (S2-Curriculum)—Revise and develop functional curriculum guides to direct instruction.

This recommendation, tied to other curriculum recommendations, was in progress.

Recommendation 6: (S2-Curriculum)—Focus on continuous improvement of the delivery of curriculum and its articulation and coordination.

According to the superintendent, vertical teaming, developing a graduate profile, and designing curriculum goals were the components the district felt necessary in building a quality program. This recommendation was described as in progress by the superintendent.

Recommendation 7: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement a comprehensive curriculum and student assessment plan to ensure informed decision making.

Although cited to be in progress, the superintendent stated that the assessment program would depend upon the curriculum which would be developed. Teams were being sent to districts across the nation to determine what constitutes excellence and what a student assessment program should look like.
Recommendation 8: (S1-Control)—Design and implement efficient organizational structures to optimize productivity.

The Curriculum Division was redesigned and retitled Instruction and Learning. The superintendent stated that "The organizational structure moved away from content supervisors, or coordinators, and now has generalists and area directors." The school board supported the reorganization and the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 9: (S5-Productivity)—Establish a comprehensive program-driven approach for setting budget priorities.

The superintendent reported this recommendation to be in progress. Factors affecting complete implementation were time and the identification of programs.

Recommendation 10: (S3-Equity)—Improve curricular monitoring, instructional practices and curriculum rigor.

This recommendation was in progress at the time of the interview. The superintendent recognized the need to enhance the monitoring portion of the recommendation. The recommendation included specific instruction for requiring principal accountability for the improvement of instruction. The report suggested the expectation that principals spend 40% of the school day in classrooms or working with staff on improvement of curriculum delivery. Factors impeding the implementation are substantial staff development needs and getting administrators and teachers to change the current paradigm of "We're doing OK, so why
"Campus administrators must be deeply involved in the instructional process. This will take time," according to the superintendent.

Impetus for the audit in District D came through the superintendent. He had learned about the Curriculum Management Audit in 1984 and had met Fenwick English. The district was in need of change and the superintendent felt the audit was the best way to focus the district on what needed to be done to continue to improve. He described the audit report as the "Bible" for the instructional division. It had become "the engine for the systematic planning process."

"The Board was skeptical when I first proposed the curriculum audit," said the superintendent. "They lacked understanding about the audit process and the information that would be provided to the system. Once the audit was completed and the report delivered, the Board was impressed with the professional manner in which the audit was conducted and were truly impressed with the quality of the audit report." The superintendent felt that to see the true impact of the audit, the audit process should be revisited in the future. The district had set a three to five year timeframe for implementation, but the superintendent felt it would be an ongoing process.

Very few concerns with implementing the audit were expressed. Good buy in from the administrative team made meeting goals more efficient. Factors that might impede the impact of the audit were time, money and commitment. The
superintendent hoped that the attitude, "this too shall pass," would be set aside and not side track the efforts.

District E. District E is a pleasant, active suburban extension of a large metropolitan area. Founded in 1855, the school district has a tradition of providing opportunities for educational growth and development. The district has grown steadily over the past 140 years, and the high school was accredited in 1936. The district includes a complete program from kindergarten through high school, with approximately 9,945 students enrolled. The rate of growth of the district has slowed and projections indicated that the number of students will continue to decline slowly for the remainder of the century. The student body is comprised of a multicultural population, including about 59% White, 21% African-American, 12% Hispanic, and 8% from other ethnic groups. Economically Disadvantaged students reflect 24.7% of the student enrollment. The majority of revenue for the district comes from local sources with an instructional expenditure per student of $2,358.

District E is governed by a seven member board of education. The superintendent was appointed to the post in July of 1993. The district demonstrates rich diversity and academic opportunities.

Having been newly appointed, the superintendent requested the Curriculum Management Audit which was performed in March 1994. The audit report
presented 10 recommendations. These recommendations spanned the standards as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Control)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 (Curriculum)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Equity)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 (Assessment)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (Productivity)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The researcher jointly interviewed the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. Of the 10 recommendations within the audit report, they reported that 2 had been implemented, and the remaining 8 were in progress.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive set of Board policies to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.

This recommendation was in progress with the assistant superintendent placed in charge of working on policies.

Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—Design and restructure administrative organization to optimize and facilitate productivity.

The recommendation had been implemented. A number of central office administrators had left the district which provided opportunity for restructuring the organization. The superintendent expressed the belief that "this recommendation had to be implemented immediately to gain maximum efficiency."
Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Continue implementation and broaden community involvement in strategic planning to sustain and build constancy of purpose and shared commitment to district goals.

The Board and administration were committed to the strategic planning process. The assistant superintendent added that "the culture was in place to implement this recommendation without encountering roadblocks."

Recommendation 4: (S2-Curriculum)—Redirect the primary focus of principals on continuous improvement of the delivery of the curriculum and its articulation and coordination.

The school officials interviewed stated that teachers did not perceive a need to improve. The audit report illustrated the fact that teacher evaluations reflected that "all was well" and improvements in teaching were not needed. Because no teachers had been rated unsatisfactory, the report suggested that summative ratings of teachers may have been inflated. "Principals are now required to spend 40% of their time in the classroom," responded the superintendent. This recommendation was in the process of implementation. Staff training was cited as a crucial ingredient in successful implementation.

Recommendation 5: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a quality curriculum management system which includes a comprehensive set of significant learner expectations to be achieved by all students in all content areas and at all grade levels.
The staff had begun implementation of this recommendation in the four core areas as directed by the Board. Both administrators stressed that "the Board wanted this recommendation implemented immediately."

Recommendation 6: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a broad effort to develop and revise curriculum guides to ensure quality and internal consistency.

The administrators interviewed reported that the four core areas were complete. The Board was the impetus for the implementation of this recommendation. "A reluctance to change on the part of some administrators and many teachers is a factor impeding implementation," said the assistant superintendent when asked to list factors facilitating or impeding implementation.

Recommendation 7: (S3-Equity)—Establish and implement equitable curriculum and instructional practices.

This recommendation was in progress. The interviewees stated it would take time to set parameters, "fight tracking of students", bridge the gap in achievement levels, and improve attitudes toward low achievers.

Recommendation 8: (S4-Assessment)—Design and implement a comprehensive staff development plan to maximize human resource development and effective delivery of curriculum.

A new position, Director of Staff Development, had been established. The implementation of this recommendation was in progress.
Recommendation 9: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement a comprehensive program and student assessment plan to ensure use of meaningful data in decision making.

The employment of a Director of Assessment had facilitated the implementation of this recommendation. There was good Board support for the recommendation according to both administrators interviewed.

Recommendation 10: (S5-Productivity)—Change current budget practices to a comprehensive program-driven approach for controlling costs and enhancing quality improvement.

The superintendent and assistant superintendent responded that this recommendation would be "slow to implement." The superintendent indicated that key people were being sent for training in program based budgeting and that principals would be trained the following year. The recommendation was described as in progress.

The superintendent explained that the audit report had been merged with the strategic plan to form one document. The audit report was being followed "to the letter." Policies relating to curriculum were in the process of being rewritten. The district plan called for a three-to-five-year implementation time line. Equity issues, however, would take up to 10 years to rectify.

The administrators interviewed believed that the Board expected all aspects of the audit report to be looked at and each recommendation implemented in
some fashion. "Although the board was at first uncertain as to the necessity of the audit, they were very positive after receiving the audit report and spent time each month studying progress of recommendation implementation," reported the superintendent.

Both administrators expressed few concerns with audit implementation. Those factors that would slow down the progress were commitment of the entire administrative staff and too much change too quickly. "How much change can people take" was a concern expressed by the administrators. Both agreed that changes in the organizational structure made the staff more efficient, but any significant change in the top level leadership would cause a major delay in the implementation of the recommendations.

District F. District F is located in the eastern part of the state. Consisting of six campuses, the clientele of District F is an assortment of corporate executives, middle managers, professional and technical workers, blue-collar workers, farmers and laborers. The economy is stable and diversified, driven by manufacturing, oil and gas industry, agriculture, ranching, health care and a broad range of service-type businesses.

The school district was officially established in January 1881. Since the consolidation of smaller districts into District F in 1959, the district has been the largest district in the county. Within the last decade the district has experienced moderate growth, which is projected to continue throughout the 1990s.
Enrollment in the district has been slightly increasing over the past several years. At the time of the audit the student enrollment was 4,453. The ethnic breakdown of the student body reflects 61.9% White, 14.7% Hispanic, 23% African American and 0.4% Other. The Economically Disadvantaged pupils numbered 45.2% of the student population. Per pupil expenditures for instruction was reported at $2,509.

District F is governed by a seven member Board elected at large with a history of long-term service by members. The current superintendent, in his first year of service with the district at the time of the audit, was described as a "highly visible leader" by the auditors. Only the superintendent of District F was interviewed. Central office administrators with a working knowledge of the audit report had recently left the employment of the district. It was the superintendent's opinion that "the departures were due in part to the audit recommendations and, perhaps, certain personnel felt threatened by the surety of changes taking place within the district."

The Curriculum Management Audit, which took place in August 1996, provided 12 recommendations for District F. At the time of the interviews, 9 implementations were in progress, plans were in place to implement 1 recommendation, 1 recommendation had been modified, and there were no plans to implement one. The recommendations spanned the Audit Standards as follows:

Standard 1 (Control) 4 recommendations
Standard 2 (Curriculum)  1 recommendation
Standard 3 (Equity)  2 recommendations
Standard 4 (Assessment)  3 recommendations
Standard 5 (Productivity)  2 recommendations

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Develop and implement a systematic integrated long-range planning process to focus the district on continuous improvement.

This recommendation was in progress with the strategic plan scheduled to be presented in March 1997.

Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—Refine, adopt, and implement a comprehensive set of locally directed curriculum management policies to focus the district on its educational needs.

The district was working on the curriculum policies and had plans to look at the management portion at a later time. The implementation was termed in progress.

Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Establish collaborative decision-making structures that utilize high stakeholder involvement.

The Strategic Planning Process in place in the district was a result of this recommendation. Seven action teams had been formed to study the audit report and develop action plans for recommendation implementation.
Recommendation 4: (S1-Control)—Redesign roles and responsibilities for greater productivity and accountability.

The superintendent had plans to redesign the organizational structure although there had been no implementation of this recommendation at the time of the interview. The superintendent reported that "two key personnel units had left the district since the audit, the assistant superintendent and the business manager."

Recommendation 5: (S2-Curriculum)—Create a curriculum management system and a climate that fosters a relevant and challenging curriculum.

The implementation was in progress with the establishment of a large committee which was meeting as a part of the strategic planning group. The superintendent anticipated a problem with the committee’s not setting standards high enough.

Recommendation 6: (S3-Equity)—Expand technology capabilities to support instruction.

A strategic planning action team was working on this recommendation.

Recommendation 7: (S3-Equity)—Design and implement a process for reducing several inequities throughout the system.

This recommendation pointed out that the district’s hiring practices had not produced a teaching or administrative staff comparable to the ethnic makeup of the community; thus, the district was looking at recruitment practices, seeking to hire minority administrators and teachers. They were also looking at student
placement. The audit report identified areas of inequity and inconsistency in the placement of students in special programs. The superintendent termed this recommendation as in progress.

Recommendation 8: (S4-Assessment)—Develop and implement a comprehensive data driven staff development plan for all employees which supports system goals and priorities.

The superintendent disagreed with this audit recommendation. Because he preferred to focus on campus needs, this recommendation had been altered. He reported that there would be a focus on major concerns with site based decisions facilitated by the central office. He said "We need to accept the responsibility for the problem and find a solution."

Recommendation 9: (S4-Assessment)—Develop and implement a systematic assessment program for measurement of student achievement throughout the curriculum.

The strategic plan called for customized educational plans. This recommendation was in progress, but the superintendent reported that "the fragmented school organization" made the transfer of student information difficult, thus impeding the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 10: (S4-Assessment)—Establish a data driven assessment program for instructional interventions and system operations.
This recommendation was in progress and the superintendent reported that factors facilitating the implementation were a specialized reading program for elementary students and an extended year program.

Recommendation 11: (S5-Productivity)—Move toward a program driven budgeting approach for making fiscal decisions.

The superintendent described the district staff as "having had no previous experience with setting budget priorities." Staff training, scheduled to begin in January 1997, would assist campus teams in matching their planning with the budget. The superintendent expected the transition to be "a painful process."

Recommendation 12: (S5-Productivity)—Establish a long-range facilities plan and redesign grade configuration.

The strategic planning committee was addressing this recommendation.

The request for an audit was made by the new superintendent shortly after his appointment to District F. He felt the audit brought an objective view to problem identification. He stated that "the report fulfilled 75% of my expectations." The audit was being used as a baseline for strategic planning. There were seven action teams for which the audit report helped to articulate concerns.

The Board of District F expected that the recommendations would be implemented, although some might be modified. The superintendent described the Board as "having a positive attitude toward the audit and they believed that
the community action teams, through strategic planning, would use the audit report as the baseline of their work." A three year time frame had been established for implementation depending on funding.

The superintendent expressed no concern with recommendation implementation. "Change was needed," he said. "The major factor to consider is: how fast can we move?" The superintendent felt he was the more instrumental factor; the central office and community were very positive. He realized that some felt threatened by the new leadership style and by his accountability focus. He had encountered resistance to the audit report from the teaching staff.

*District G.* During the 1930s and 1940s, petrochemical plants and industrial development contributed to the economic growth of this district's geographical area. Located near the Gulf Coast and the State's major port city, District G became an independent school district in 1943. At that time the school served the children of three distinct groups: the descendants of the early settlers of the area, a small African American community, and the new residents brought by industrial expansion. In the mid 1950s, a biracial committee was established to make recommendations for the integration of schools. Pressure on the district to integrate brought increased tension in a segregated community. There were major differences, not only geographically, but also socially and economically. The first major effort to deal with the segregation issue occurred in 1966, when the board determined to build a new high school for all the students.
Historians suggest that integration led to major changes in the community. From that time, although there was a continuing increase in the student population and the demographics began to change resulting in an African American majority population within the school district.

District G has a community population of approximately 30,000. The district included eight campuses with approximately 4,690 students at the time of the audit. The ethnic background of students was 60.3% African American, 29.4% White, 9.3% Hispanic, and 0.9% Other. The percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students in the district numbered 39.4%. Instructional expenditures of $2,450 per pupil were reported.

A seven member Board of trustees governs the district with members of the Board serving staggered three-year terms. They are elected using a single member district approach representing certain geographical areas. The superintendent is appointed by the board. The superintendent of District G had been with the district approximately one year at the time of its curriculum management audit.

In April of 1996, District G underwent a Curriculum Management Audit. The report presented 12 recommendations covering the Standards as follows:

Standard 1 (Control) 4 recommendations
Standard 2 (Curriculum) 3 recommendations
Standard 3 (Equity) 1 recommendation
Standard 4 (Assessment) 2 recommendations

Standard 5 (Productivity) 2 recommendations

Interviews were conducted with both the superintendent and the assistant superintendent. They reported that nine recommendations were in the process of implementation and there were plans to implement the remaining three.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Design a collaborative, systemic organizational structure to optimize quality decisions.

Both administrators interviewed described this recommendation as in progress. The audit report was deemed a facilitating factor for implementation, while staffing might hinder progress.

Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—Create a systemic long-range planning process for continuous improvement which includes collaboration among all stakeholders.

The superintendent reported that "the district was developing the plan and communicating the plan with the community," while the assistant superintendent described the recommendation as implemented. The audit report was the facilitating factor in implementation.

Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Develop and adopt policies to establish effective curriculum management design and delivery for quality control.
This recommendation was in progress with the Texas Association of School Board's policy division scheduled to work with the district in policy development. Time was deemed an impeding factor by both administrators.

Recommendation 4: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a quality curriculum management system.

Plans were in place to begin implementation. The need for teacher training was cited as an inhibiting factor. The superintendent's intent to hold teachers accountable for curriculum delivery and student achievement was new to the staff. The assistant superintendent said, "This staff has never had a superintendent to hold teachers accountable for student performance." Efforts were underway to communicate the philosophy to teachers and community.

Recommendation 5: (S2-Curriculum)—Recommit the focus of the organization on academic excellence.

The superintendent had been meeting with community groups to present the district's commitment; the focus on excellence was written into the five year plan. "The superintendent's visits to community groups has been a positive factor in the acceptance of the audit report," stated the assistant superintendent. This recommendation was considered in progress.

Recommendation 6: (S1-Control)—Establish procedures to ensure program cohesiveness and alignment with district student learnings.
The structure for implementation was not yet in place. While the superintendent planned to implement this recommendation, providing time for teacher collaboration and coordinating efforts with assessment and staff development were seen as factors to be overcome.

Recommendation 7: (S2-Curriculum)—Design/revise and implement curriculum guides to ensure a challenging curriculum.

The intent was to purchase Project ABCD, an electronic curriculum, and to urge teachers to hold higher expectations for students. The superintendent described this implementation as in progress.

Recommendation 8: (S3-Equity)—Establish and implement equitable curriculum and instructional practices.

Past history and district traditions were seen as inhibitors to the timely implementation of this recommendation. Activities were being initiated to focus teachers on the equity issues.

Recommendation 9: (S4-Assessment)—Design and implement a comprehensive staff development plan to maximize organizational change.

Planning to implement the recommendation was in progress. Responsibilities had been assigned to administrative assistants and a coordinated district-wide effort was seen as a positive means to achieving the district’s goal.

Recommendation 10: (S4-Assessment)—Establish a comprehensive system for program and student assessment.
The incorporation of Project ABCD was seen as a step toward accomplishing this recommendation. The implementation was in the developing stages.

**Recommendation 11: (S5-Productivity)—Develop standards and assessment benchmarks for each district support service operation and modify operations for cost effective operations.**

Although the assistant superintendent reported, "The district has program driven budgeting," the superintendent did not believe that an appropriate structure was in place to implement this recommendation. However, the superintendent indicated that he planned to implement this recommendation in the near future.

**Recommendation 12: (S5-Productivity)—Develop and implement a comprehensive financial and budgeting planning process which promotes sound fiscal decisions.**

"Quick action to improve the system was essential" the superintendent emphasized. He indicated that consultants would be required to assist the implementation of this recommendation. Extensive staff development was needed.

Newly appointed to District G, the superintendent requested the Curriculum Management Audit. The Board accepted the request as they recognized the need for change. "People don't argue with a report from a credible outside source," the superintendent stated. The administrators described the board as "courageous; using the audit report as a road map to improvement." The superintendent was
seen as the driving force behind implementation of recommendations. Following the receipt of the audit report, the administration of District G had established the District Education Improvement Plan Committee which incorporated all recommendations into the district plan. Recommendations had been shared with the community and the audit report was serving as the baseline for needed change. It was hoped that implementation could be completed by the year 2000. The superintendent described the curriculum and instructional changes as major objectives. He predicted that "other recommendation implementations would be spread out over time." Administrators expressed concerns with implementation as the management of it and follow through. On the positive side, they felt that the understanding and knowledge of key community persons were advantageous as well as the commitment to quickly address major recommendations. The assistant superintendent cited "acceptance, not criticism" as a factor. "The document is a snap shot of where we are, what we should do."

*District H.* Located in the north central portion of the state, District H has within its boundaries numerous communities, each unique in its demographic structure and geographic location. The economy of the area is diversified by manufacturing, state-supported institutions and agriculture. The district is composed of an assortment of professional and technical workers, laborers, ranchers and farmers. Since the district began in 1948 as a consolidation of small rural schools, growth has been slow, but steady. Housing developments are
beginning to emerge in many communities served by the district and rapid growth is a high probability in the future. Predicted enrollment by the year 2000 is 5,305.

The population of District H is highly diversified with 26% of the student population being economically deprived. The estimated population served by District H is 18,556. Student enrollment at the time of the audit was 4,057. The racial/ethnic composition of the population was 1% African American, 7% Hispanic, 91% White and 2% percent Other ethnic groups. The reported per pupil expenditure for instruction was $2,648.

This district has a seven-member board of trustees, elected at large, and an appointed superintendent. Beginning tenure as the district's leader in 1995, the superintendent was perceived by the administrative team as "taking the district in the right direction."

In January 1996, the Curriculum Management Audit was performed for District H. A total of 12 recommendations were presented which represented the Standards as follows:

- Standard 1 (Control) 3 recommendations
- Standard 2 (Curriculum) 2 recommendations
- Standard 3 (Equity) 2 recommendations
- Standard 4 (Assessment) 2 recommendations
- Standard 5 (Productivity) 3 recommendations
Interviews with both the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction revealed that two recommendations had been implemented, nine were in progress and one remained in the planning stage.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Design a collaborative, systematic organizational structure.

The superintendent reported, "A collaborative structure was in place when he arrived in the district so reorganization was easier than expected." He indicated that the structure still needed to be "flattened, but with the rapid student growth, any further reorganization was difficult." The Board was supportive of the recommendation and it was felt that, in time, the optimum structure could be achieved.

Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—Establish and implement an integrated planning process for increased student productivity.

Strategic planning was not supported by the Board according to the superintendent. Both administrators stated that a district-wide planning committee was working on various goals but shared the concern that leadership within the committee was impeding progress.

Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Develop policies to establish curriculum management design and delivery.

Implementation was taking place at the time of the interviews. Policy revisions were planned for the summer of 1997.
Recommendation 4: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a curriculum management system which sets high expectations for student learning.

The implementation was in progress with the limiting factors described as time and money. The assistant superintendent expressed concern over "pressure from the conservative right in the community which slowed progress."

Recommendation 5: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement aligned curriculum guides which challenge student learning.

The district was working with the Regional Education Service center to develop curriculum guides with appropriate alignment. The process would require time to complete.

Recommendation 6: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement a comprehensive program and student assessment plan to ensure use of meaningful data in decision making.

The district planned to implement this recommendation. Inhibiting factors cited were time and money.

Recommendation 7: (S3-Equity)—Establish and implement equitable curriculum and instructional practices.

Implementation was in progress. The superintendent indicated "difficulty in establishing what is high quality and having all agree to that degree of quality."

Recommendation 8: (S3-Equity)—Modify program design and delivery in career and technology education and technology utilization.
A partnership with a major technology manufacturer had brought the district both financial and staff development support for the implementation of this recommendation. Weekly meetings were underway to plan staff development and other areas of support for the district.

Recommendation 9: (S4-Assessment)—Create and implement a comprehensive staff development plan to maximize effective design, delivery, and support of the curriculum.

While the specific campus needs often conflict with district-wide staff development needs, this recommendation was in progress. A district committee had looked at campus plans and used the audit as targets for staff development offerings. Inhibiting factors to complete implementation were listed as time and money.

Recommendation 10: (S5-Productivity)—Change the current budget process to a program driven approach for setting priorities.

While the superintendent felt this implementation was in progress, the assistant superintendent saw no evidence of implementation. She saw "no efforts to move in that direction." Both administrators expressed concern over the lack of sufficient funds for supporting district needs. The superintendent said "Once the 'have-tos' are taken care of, there's little left." The business department had no experience or training in program driven budgeting and no effort had been made in that direction.
Recommendation 11: (S5-Productivity)—Modify support areas of custodial, maintenance and warehousing to provide efficient organizational operations.

Work was in progress for this recommendation. A lack of staff was seen as a factor impeding the process.

Recommendation 12: (S5-Productivity)—Create a comprehensive long-range facility plan and authorize a bond election to optimize the learning environment.

A 45 million dollar bond issue had been passed by the community; however, there was still concern that this bond would provide for only the six buildings currently needed with no planning for future needs.

When the newly appointed superintendent requested the curriculum audit, the Board thought the report would point out areas to be "fixed." "The depth and breadth of the report was a welcome surprise to the Board," the superintendent reported. The district was using the report as a planning document. It was the agenda for the board budget retreat and had been merged into the district's long-range plan.

Responsibility for implementation of recommendations had been assigned to area superintendents. A five year or more time frame was predicted for implementation. The partnership with the technology manufacturer had had a major impact on the district's planning. Concerns expressed with implementations were a lack of support staff and a lack of true understanding on the part of the Board. In addition, fiscal issues were a major concern of the superintendent.
Factors influencing the impact of the audit were listed as personnel, money, attention to detail, time and Board support.

District I. District I is located on the northeastern edge of a major metropolitan area in north central Texas. The district has an exemplary record of academic and nonacademic performance over many years. The community has been characterized with high socioeconomic levels. Over a 10 year period, this district had experienced extensive population growth. This population increase had brought with it an elevation of the total number of minority students. The district reported approximately 65 languages are spoken within the homes of the student population. Student demographics reflected an enrollment at the time of the audit of 78.6% White, 5.4% African American, 7% Hispanic, and 8.7% other ethnic groups. The district included 46 campuses and a student enrollment of 38,565 at the time of the audit. Of the total student population, 8.9% were classified as Economically Disadvantaged. Instructional spending per pupil was reported to be $2,866.

The district is governed by a seven-member board of trustees and an appointed superintendent. The superintendent was in the first year of tenure at the time of the audit. During his interview for the position, he introduced the concept of a curriculum management audit. After being selected as superintendent, he moved forward with his desire to have an audit performed for District I. Believing it to be a tool for direction, he officially presented the proposal to the
Board in the Fall of 1995. The Curriculum Management Audit was performed in March 1996. The final audit report contained 10 recommendations. Standard representation was:

- Standard 1 (Control): 3 recommendations
- Standard 2 (Curriculum): 2 recommendations
- Standard 3 (Equity): 1 recommendation
- Standard 4 (Assessment): 3 recommendations
- Standard 5 (Productivity): 1 recommendation

The superintendent and assistant superintendent were interviewed jointly. At the time of the interview no recommendations had been implemented. The superintendent explained that "the report had been reviewed with principals and the Board. Advisory groups had been formed and had adopted the report as an improvement model to evaluate the recommendations." Community wide committees had been established and were reviewing recommendations prior to planning and proposing any action. The teams were to begin meeting in January 1997 to review their study of the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Design and implement sound and effective long-range planning for continual improvement and organization focus including needs diagnosis, facilities, finance, technology, assessment of performance, and curriculum.
Recommendation 2: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management system.

Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Restructure roles and responsibilities of administrative personnel to ensure sound and effective organizational practices.

Recommendation 4: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement a comprehensive, multidimensional district assessment program to provide meaningful data for decision making in student learning, program evaluation and the improvement of teaching.

Recommendation 5: (S4-Assessment)—Organize and staff a division for organization assessment to provide sound and useful data for decision making.

Recommendation 6: (S2-Curriculum)—Redesign and implement an approach to revise and develop curriculum guides to ensure quality and internal consistency and devise a process-centered integrated curriculum to establish connections with content area learner objectives.

Recommendation 7: (S3-Equity)—Develop and implement a plan to overcome inequities in student learning among diverse groups over a five year period.

Recommendation 8: (S1-Control)—Focus organizational activities on strengthening policy requirements to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.
Recommendation 9: (S4-Assessment)—Design and implement a sound and focused staff development plan to maximize human resources and effective curriculum delivery.

Recommendation 10: (S5-Productivity)—Adopt a four year plan for implementation of a program based budget and allocation system to improve cost effectiveness and efficiency.

Board involvement with the various teams was seen as a positive factor in the implementation of recommendations. The top administrators said that "although the Board had concerns over the quality of the report, which contained numerous typographical and grammatical errors which cast a shadow over the credibility of the report, they were positive about the issues addressed and the need for change." A five year time frame had been established and the superintendent felt "another audit down the road would give a good look at progress." Sustaining momentum, budgetary implications, equity issues, and buy in by all principals were given as concerns with implementing the recommendations. The superintendent expressed concern about the audit team's need to "remove strong personal biases from the reporting process." The administrators interviewed believed that the audit report provided the necessary "push" to complete the needed revision of curriculum guides, refine the assessment piece and decentralize the budget process.
District J. A large suburban public school system located north of the state’s capital in the central portion of the state, District J had an estimated population of 822,603. The first school to operate in this district was established in 1848. For the next 70 years most schools in the area were local rural districts offering K-8 education. The rural schools were consolidated in 1913. Since consolidation, the district has experienced explosive population growth.

Thirty campuses, most less than 20 years old, serve the student population. The district served more than 24,900 students at the time of the audit, with ethnic diversity reported as 76% White, 14% Hispanic, 6% African American, and 4.4% Other. Economically Disadvantaged students totaled 18.9% of the student population. It is estimated that student enrollment will increase by more than 1,000/year over the next five years. Student spending for instruction was reported at $2,747 per pupil.

The district is governed by an appointed superintendent and a seven-member board of trustees. Shortly after being appointed in 1994, the superintendent requested the curriculum management audit. Initially the Board declined the audit request, but money was found in the budget and the Board later agreed.

The Curriculum Management Audit was conducted for District J in March of 1995. The superintendent of District J was the only central office administrator available for interview. Several recent vacancies in central office staff
positions prevented additional interviews. Fifteen recommendations were con-
tained in the audit covering the Standards as follows:

- **Standard 1 (Control)**: 10 recommendations
- **Standard 2 (Curriculum)**: 1 recommendation
- **Standard 3 (Equity)**: 2 recommendations
- **Standard 4 (Assessment)**: 1 recommendation
- **Standard 5 (Productivity)**: 1 recommendation

The superintendent reported that four recommendations had been implemented, 
nine were in progress and one was still in the planning phase of implementation.

**Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—**Develop, adopt and implement a usable 
mission statement and set of district-wide achievement objectives.

The audit report stated that the mission statement and goals established by 
District J had little or no impact upon the system and were not usable in their 
present form. For the district to be a more cohesive unit and have clearly defined 
goals and objectives, these statements must be improved.

According to the superintendent, this recommendation had been 
implemented.

**Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—**Revisit and reconsider a comprehensive 
strategic and long-range system plan to establish and sustain constancy of purpose.

Strategic planning was in progress and was estimated to take three to five 
years to complete.
Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive set of board policies to direct curriculum and management and ensure quality control.

The superintendent said, "Work is in progress; the success rests with TASB policy division." In addition, the district was contemplating a bond election.

Recommendation 4: (S1-Control)—Establish an Office of Educational Accountability and a Central Curriculum Council.

The structure had been established with the Office of Educational Accountability being placed under the Associate Superintendent for Program Evaluation. The Central Curriculum Council had been formed and was functioning at the time of the interview. However, the superintendent expressed concern that "the Curriculum Council would become a censorship committee and political factors in the community could impede the full implementation of the recommendation."

Recommendation 5: (S3-Equity)—Refine and enlarge the Unique School concept as a vehicle for addressing inequities in the system.

The superintendent felt that this recommendation had been readily accomplished as the model to improve evaluation procedures was well defined in the audit report.

Recommendation 6: (S1-Control)—Refine and clarify the relationship between campus improvement plans and Board approved achievement targets.
Implementation was in progress. Campus Improvement Plans were reflective of Board goals and Board goals reflected the audit report. The superintendent identified a major obstacle as staff cynicism: "this too shall pass."

Recommendation 7: (S1-Control)—Implement a systematic leadership development program which ensures a high quality leadership cadre.

The district was working with a local university to provide courses customized to its leadership needs.

Recommendation 8: (S1-Control)—Develop and implement a philosophy which reflects more accurately the concept of the middle school.

A study was in progress with results to be reported in May 1997.

Recommendation 9: (S1-Control)—Reorganize central office personnel involved in training and development into a single integrated operation.

Implementation included shifting the staff development department into the instructional division. The department was charged with designing new standards.

Recommendation 10: (S1-Control)—Develop and implement a formal process for receiving and acting upon district generated reports.

The process in place had been strengthened. The superintendent felt that "the auditors had received a biased report on this issue." According to the superintendent, certain directors had different expectations for presentation of reports that did not align with current operating procedures. The superintendent's attitude toward this issue was "if it's not broke, don't fix it."
Recommendation 11: (S1-Control)—Revise and expand job descriptions to conform to the restructured table of organization.

The superintendent expressed his preference for a fluid organizational chart. He stated, "Vacant positions were not automatically filled, but often revamped." Some job descriptions were not formally adopted at the time of the audit, according to the superintendent.

Recommendation 12: (S3-Equity)—Establish and implement equitable curriculum/instruction and personnel hiring practices,

The Board and administration have a responsibility to ensure that all students, regardless of where they reside in the district, have the benefit of the same curriculum and course offerings. The audit report found it questionable that all students in District J had this assessability.

The superintendent described this recommendation as in progress, and chose not to elaborate further.

Recommendation 13: (S5-Productivity)—Revise the budgeting process and the budget to a more programmatic format to permit wider involvement and cost benefit analysis.

The superintendent asked, "How do we monitor or know the dollars spent on instruction and what is the result?" He stated his intent to modify this recommendation.
Recommendation 14: (S4-Assessment)—Develop a comprehensive student assessment program which includes advanced placement exams.

The superintendent felt that implementation of this recommendation was two years "down the road." The staff was involved in looking for a standardized testing program.

Recommendation 15: (S2-Curriculum)—Engage in programmatic adjustment to the school curriculum.

The superintendent described this recommendation as in progress but had no further comment.

Expectations for use of the audit were listed as a tool to bridge the gap and guarantee that students move within the district with "continuity and commonality." The superintendent said, "The audit gave the authority to make changes without the political backlash." The Board and community were committed to using the audit for improvement. A three to five year time frame had been established to accomplish most implementations.

The superintendent stated that the district would need help with the curriculum recommendations and was concerned about fiscal constraints in relation to implementation as well as the clarification and sequence of recommendation implementation. Factors that could affect the impact of the audit were continued Board buy in, holding the principals accountable and making the curriculum objectives become a reality in the classrooms of the district.
District K. Located in the rural prairie area 30 miles northwest of the southern gulf coast region, District K was founded 100 years ago. The district reflects an economy based on agriculture, oil, small businesses and local government agencies. The system has grown steadily with an enrollment at audit time of approximately 2,300 students served on five campuses. Student demographics reflected 20.88% White, 76.2% Hispanic, and 2.38% African American. Sixty percent of the students were classified as Economically Disadvantaged. Expenditures per pupil for instruction was $2,586.

The governance team consists of seven elected trustees and a superintendent who had been with the district two years at the time of the audit. Leadership was sound and committed to mutually accepted and developed organizational goals and objectives. Both administrators had attended training in portions of the audit process and were committed to having an audit performed in District K. The Board approved the superintendent’s request for an audit and the Curriculum Management Audit was carried out in September 1995. The report delivered a total of 13 recommendations:

- **Standard 1 (Control)**: 3 recommendations
- **Standard 2 (Curriculum)**: 3 recommendations
- **Standard 3 (Equity)**: 1 recommendation
- **Standard 4 (Assessment)**: 3 recommendations
- **Standard 5 (Productivity)**: 3 recommendations
Interviews were conducted with the superintendent and curriculum director separately. These administrators reported that of the 13 recommendations presented, 1 had been implemented, 8 were in the process of implementation, plans were made to address 3, with no implementation planned for 1 recommendation.

Recommendation 1: (S1-Control)—Develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive set of board policies to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.

The superintendent believed that the implementation was complete while the curriculum director felt some work was still to be done. A lead auditor from the National Curriculum Audit Center had spent time with the district assisting with policy revision. The director expressed a concern with "a lack of understanding of the time required" by some administrators and Board members. Factors impeding total implementation were felt to be time and money.

Recommendation 2: (S1-Control)—Restructure roles and responsibilities of Board and Superintendent to ensure sound and effective organizational practices.

Termed in progress, the superintendent reported that the Board had received training as per state mandate.

Recommendation 3: (S1-Control)—Refine and disseminate comprehensive long range plans to foster congruence with district activities and actions.
The district’s strategic plan had been in place for over two years at the time of the audit. The audit made the plan more long range and altered the planning calendar. The superintendent stated, "As campuses tend to operate independently, this implementation would require a great deal of communication and staff development." The implementation was in progress.

Recommendation 4: (S4-Assessment)—Revise teacher evaluation process to identify teacher skill needs for professional improvement and growth.

There had been no steps to implement this recommendation at the time of the interviews. Both administrators responded that the district was waiting for the revision of TTAS (Texas Teacher Appraisal System).

Recommendation 5: (S2-Curriculum)—Design and implement an approach to review and develop curriculum guides which ensure quality and internal consistency.

With the formation of vertical teams and training on acceptable curriculum guides, both administrators felt that implementation of this recommendation was well under way.

Recommendation 6: (S2-Curriculum)—Improve existing curriculum guides, address all areas of the district curriculum in guides, and ensure their consistent use.

Implementation was in progress with time being cited as the chief factor in completion of the district’s goal.
Recommendation 7: (S2-Curriculum)—Develop and implement an approach to redesign curriculum courses of study to ensure internal consistency and high quality instructional practice.

Plans were in place to implement the recommendation. The superintendent described this recommendation as having made "less progress than #6." Redesigning curriculum was described as "a very slow process."

Recommendation 8: (S4-Assessment)—Design and implement a sound and focused staff development plan to maximize human resource development and effective curriculum delivery.

Administrators felt they must follow the state requirements for staff development. Areas of need had been identified. This recommendation was rated as plan to implement.

Recommendation 9: (S4-Assessment)—Establish and implement comprehensive, multidimensional district assessment program to provide meaningful data for decision-making in student learning, program evaluation and the improvement of teaching.

This recommendation was targeted as the next major project.

Recommendation 10: (S3-Equity)—Develop and implement a plan to overcome inequities in student learning among ethnic groups over a six year period.
Arrangements had been made for a consultant to work with the district to develop policies on equity. The curriculum director described this as "the superintendent's area."

Recommendation 11: (S5-Productivity)—Adopt a four-year plan for implementation of a program based budget and allocation system.

The district’s management plan called for program-driven budgeting. An orientation session had been delivered and the staff was being trained.

Recommendation 12: (S5-Productivity)—Develop quality improvement processes to eliminate inconsistencies in district operations.

While extensive work remained to be done, this implementation was in progress. Areas of responsibility had been defined and the administrators realized the necessity of having clear standards established.

Recommendation 13: (S5-Productivity)—Provide adequate spaces to house all students.

According to the curriculum director, "due to the Board's philosophy of 'pay as you go,' this recommendation was not being implemented." It was not a top priority with the Board, which was described by one administrator as having "limited vision."

The audit report had been separated into parts by responsibility, and placed into notebooks. The document had been fused into the strategic plan and incorporated into the District Improvement Plan. A time line of seven to eight
years had been established for completion of recommendation implementation. Concerns with implementation expressed by administrators were Board support, being able to see results, frustration on campuses and a realization about where the district was prior to the superintendent’s arrival. "The suggestion to have an audit was not well received at first by the Board," the curriculum director said. "But if the superintendent says the audit report is on target, then the Board will support the recommendations." She also added, "Because all administrators do not have a background, or sufficient knowledge of the process, they don’t fully understand the implications of the audit report."

Factors which played a role in the potential of the audit were listed as resentment by employees regarding the findings, wider acceptance of the audit report and an inability to see the district as it really was. On the positive side, the five day training the district received from audit personnel was believed to be very beneficial; having the report presented in three separate meetings enhanced understanding by all stakeholders; and the commitment of the superintendent to facilitate change for improved performance.

Collective District Findings and Discussion

A total of 126 recommendations were delivered to the 11 districts represented in this study. Table 1 outlines the date of audit for each district and the status given to each recommendation. The number of recommendations implemented, in progress, planned to implement, those that have been modified, and
those for which no implementation was planned is shown in table format. The
total recommendations presented in each district’s audit report is also displayed.
Table 2 depicts the composite breakdown of recommendation implementation by
its status: implemented, in progress, plan to implement, modified, or no
implementation. Of the 126 recommendations found in the 11 audit reports, 15
were reported as having been implemented, 80 were in progress, districts were
planning to implement 12, 2 had been modified and no implementation had taken
place for 17 of the recommendations. More than one-half of the written recom-
mendations were ranked as in progress. Ten of the 17 recommendations
identified as not being implemented were for District I. Through its strategic
planning process, the district had intentions of acting upon each of its 10 recom-
mendations in some manner.

Table 3 displays the number of recommendations in each audit standard by
district. Forty-five recommendations were made for Standard One. Policy,
organizational structure and planning were addressed in terms of improvement
needed and a plan for achieving results. More recommendations were made in
this area of policies than in any of the other Standards. Standards Two and Four
each received 23 recommendations. The scope, content coverage and quality of
curriculum documents were addressed in these recommendations, along with
student assessment and program evaluation. Sixteen recommendations were
written for Standard Three. Equity of access to programs and instructional
practices were cited along with detailed guidelines for reaching the stated goals.

Standard Five received 19 recommendations. Budgeting, interventions and facilities were addressed through comprehensive plans for system-wide improvement. Governance responsibilities as well as administrative responsibilities for accomplishing stated objectives were provided for districts in each recommendation.

Table 1

Recommendation Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Plan to implement</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
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Table 2

Total Recommendations by Status

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<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Implemented</td>
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<tr>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan to implement</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>No implementation</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3

*Analysis of Recommendations by Audit Standard*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Std. 1 Control</th>
<th>Std.2 Curric.</th>
<th>Std.3 Equity</th>
<th>Std.4 Assess.</th>
<th>Std.5 Product</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>H</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>J</td>
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<td>K</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
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</table>

While the recommendations are fairly evenly distributed across standards, Standard One was addressed most often. The issue of policies, organizational structure, and planning which are found in Standard One were of most concern to auditors visiting Texas school districts. Districts were directed to refine local policies to comprehensively address curriculum design, delivery, monitoring and
assessment. The importance of local policies which focus on the districts' educational goals and the communication of the goals and mission to all staff was stressed in the recommendations.

Quality leadership requires clearly identified roles and responsibilities assigned to personnel in the performance of necessary functions for school improvement. Clarification of responsibilities, job descriptions which clearly defined responsibilities, and a comprehensive appraisal system were issues addressed in Standard One recommendations. In addition, systematic planning is considered essential for organizational improvement. Recommendations called for long range planning processes that established common goals collaboratively and included benchmark marks for periodic evaluation.

National Curriculum Audit Center/Texas Curriculum Audit Center criteria exists for rating district policies, planning, job descriptions, curriculum guides, budgeting processes and evidence of continued productivity. Each standard contains criteria for rating these critical components of a productive organization. As called for in Standard One, for a district's board policies to be deemed adequate as rated against audit criteria, they must meet 70% of the 22 criteria for board policies. The characteristics of good policies for curriculum management are:

1. Provides for Control—Requires:
   a. Aligned written, tested and taught curriculum
   b. Philosophical statement of curriculum approach
c. Board adoption of the curriculum
d. Accountability through roles and responsibilities
e. Long-range planning system wide

2. Provides for Direction—Requires:
   a. Written curriculum for all subjects
   b. Periodic review of the curriculum
   c. Textbook/resource adoption by the board
   d. Content area emphasis

3. Provides for Connectivity and Equity—Requires:
   a. Predictability of the written curriculum
   b. Articulation and coordination of the curriculum
   c. Training for staff in the delivery of the curriculum
   d. Delivery of the curriculum
   e. Monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum
   f. Equitable access to the curriculum

4. Provides for Feedback—Requires:
   a. A program and student assessment plan
   b. Use of data from assessment to determine program/curriculum effectiveness and efficiency
   c. Reports to the board about program effectiveness

5. Provides for Productivity—Requires:
a. Program-centered budget
b. Resource allocation tied to curriculum priorities
c. Environment to support curriculum delivery
d. Data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning

(NCAC Training Manual, 1994, p. 1.9)

Table 4 illustrates each district's ranking as compared to the specific standards. Four of the 11 districts audited met 70% of the criteria for board policies. While a numeric ranking for District J was not printed in the report, their policies were characterized as "not adequate." The areas addressed under Criterion 3, Connectivity and Equity, appear to have been the areas of greatest deficiency for the districts in this study. Because Texas public schools rely heavily on the Texas Association of School Board's (TASB) policy division for their school board policies, the deficiencies were consistent throughout the districts. Common policy deficiencies for all districts were related to curriculum design, development, implementation, and assessment. Also lacking were policies which focus on curriculum monitoring and which assign responsibilities relating to curriculum issues to specific personnel. Policies prepared through TASB's service which focus on curriculum do not currently address all criteria as outlined by the audit standards.

Audit criteria used to assess system planning includes 11 components:

1. Mission—general purpose beliefs and educational goals;
Table 4

District Rankings by Standard Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Met Policy 48% Criteria (S1-Control)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>N.A.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning (S1-Control)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Desc. Criteria (S1-Control)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curr. Guide Coverage Quality (S2-Curriculum)</td>
<td>80% ✓</td>
<td>83% ✓</td>
<td>55% ✓</td>
<td>59% ✓</td>
<td>N.G.* 61%</td>
<td>55% 67%</td>
<td>N.G.* 64% ✓</td>
<td>77% ✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 ✓</td>
<td>11.7 ✓</td>
<td>7.3 ✓</td>
<td>8.6 ✓</td>
<td>6.7 ✓</td>
<td>10.6 ✓</td>
<td>7.4 ✓</td>
<td>8.9 ✓</td>
<td>7 ✓</td>
<td>9.1 ✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Budget Processes (S5-Productivity)

Productivity (S5-Productivity)

- ✓ - criteria met
- *N.G. - information not given in report
- *N.A. - not adequate (ranking not given in report)
- blank - criteria unmet

2. Critical Analysis—a collection of vital data regarding all facets of the internal and external environments of the organization;

3. Assumptions—a prediction of events and conditions that may influence the performance of the organization;
4. Components—goals which are grouped for communication and management;
5. Objectives—statements of results which are measurable and have time limitations;
6. Evaluation—statements of conditions that show evidence that an objective is achieved;
7. Action plans—action plans to achieve objectives;
8. Integrating Functional Plans—plans integrated with one another to achieve overall goals;
9. Monitoring—system for assessing the status of activities;
10. Stakeholders' Involvement—stakeholder involvement; and
11. Linkage Documents—all documents in the system aligned to the plan.

For planning documents to be termed adequate, they must meet 70% of these criteria. Table 4 indicates that only districts A, C, and K were reported to have adequate planning processes.

Job descriptions were collected by auditors and rated according to established criteria. The curriculum management audit requires positions that are responsible for some aspect of curriculum design and delivery have clear job expectations written into the job descriptions. Job descriptions should clearly delineate job titles, qualifications, the immediate links in the chain-of-command,
functions, duties, and responsibilities. Exemplary job descriptions clearly illustrate the alignment of the position to the curriculum and the expectations regarding curriculum design and delivery. The following rating system is used to assess a district’s set of job descriptions:

- **Missing**—no statement made
- **Inadequate**—Statement is present but missing basic ingredients
- **Adequate**—Clear statement present but weak in curriculum quality control statements
- **Strong**—Clear statement present, including several aspects of curriculum quality control
- **Exemplary**—Clear statement present, including curriculum quality control statement of alignment, design, and delivery of the curriculum.

Districts C, D and I had adequate job descriptions according to the audit reports. No review of job descriptions was made in the audit report for District K.

Curriculum documents are reviewed in two ways: for content coverage and for quality. To determine coverage, each course listed as being offered in a district is expected to have a curriculum document. A comparison is made to determine the extent to which the district has accomplished this objective.

Quality is judged according to curriculum management audit Standard Two criteria for rating curriculum documents which include clarity and validity of objectives, alignment, scope and sequence, prerequisites, delineation of
instructional tools and resources, and clear linkages for classroom use. The maximum score for a document is 15 points; a curriculum guide is considered strong if it receives a rating of 12 or more. The average of all document ratings is considered when determining if a district’s curriculum quality is described as adequate by the auditors. Table 4 indicates that none of the districts’ curriculum was considered adequate by the auditors. Scores ranged from a high of 11.7 to a low 6.7. The content coverage required a score of 70% to be classified as adequate. Only three of the districts studied met this expectation (Chart 4).

To determine if a district practices program-driven budgeting, auditors reviewed the budgeting process against six components of program-driven budgeting as outlined in Standard Five, the Productivity Standard. These components are demonstrable connections between assessments of curriculum effectiveness and resource allocation, rank ordering of program components, cost benefits of curriculum program components delineated in decision making, budget requests described in terms of performance or results, budget requests compete based upon criticality of need, and priorities in the budget process are set by key educational staff. Table 4 indicates that none of the districts studied were found adequate with regard to their budgeting processes.

School districts in Texas are in the formative years of state mandated Site Based Decision Making. Collaborative budgeting processes are replacing top-down monetary allotments for departments and campuses. Policies and
procedures outlining these practices are slowly making their way into organizational operations across the state. However, even adequate implementation of program driven budgeting has not been achieved as evidenced by the analysis of budgeting processes in the districts of this study.

Standard Five also calls for evidence that a district is exhibiting continuous improvement. Curriculum Management Auditors look for three characteristics in a district in which continuous productivity is occurring:

1. Planned and actual congruence between curriculum and costs;
2. Demonstration of specific means selected to attain better results over time; and
3. Demonstration of planned interventions to raise pupil performance over time within the same financial parameters.

Without well-defined planning processes, procedures for the analysis of data for decision making, and program driven budgeting as an integral part of a school system, meeting the criteria for productivity is difficult when compared to audit standards. As shown in Table 4, all districts reviewed in this study failed to meet these expectations.

The third purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of stakeholders as to the factors instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit. Open ended questions were posed to interviewees to gather information regarding real or perceived factors which were either impeding or enhancing efforts to
implement audit recommendations. Table 5 lists the most frequently offered factors and the number of times each was cited.

Table 5

Factors Facilitating/Impeding Recommendation Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Facilitated Implementation</th>
<th>Impeded Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Org. Structure/Personnel</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board Support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Student Population</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Processes</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The factor most instrumental in implementing the recommendations was district planning processes. Whether already in place at the time of the audit, or developed as a result of the audit report, planning for change was seen as most
advantageous in facilitating change and/or implementation of the recommendations. Most districts surveyed have incorporated the audit report into either the District Improvement Plan which is required by the State of Texas, or it has become the blueprint for Strategic Planning. Having an appropriate and effective organizational structure in place was the second most frequently cited factor facilitating implementation.

Strong leadership in upper level positions was deemed very important to the improvement process. In almost every district visited, the superintendent was the impetus for bringing the audit to the district and was seen as the motivating force to complete implementation.

Time to plan, provide staff development, develop an effective organizational structure and to create policies and curriculum as directed in the audit reports were seen as critical factors in successful implementation. Administrators felt pressured to show immediate results from the audit report, but realized that developing a quality program required three to five years. The need to train staff in effective teaching practices, curriculum design and delivery, and instructional monitoring was slowing the implementation process. In some cases, refocusing school board members toward instructional issues was viewed as a critical objective. Given adequate time and with the support of the Boards of Trustees, all district officials interviewed believed that the majority of audit recommendations would be successfully implemented.
Additional Open-Ended Questions Summary

In order to gain insight into the scope of recommendation implementation and attitudes toward the audit report, open-ended questions were presented during interviews.

1. Who/what was the impetus for the audit?

The superintendents in the districts studied were reported to be the driving force behind the curriculum management audit. Requests to Boards by superintendents to contract for an audit were generally approved immediately. In several districts, the Boards required more information before voting the necessary funds to conduct the audit.

2. Who is responsible for implementation of recommendations?

Districts were evenly divided in the assignment of responsibilities for implementing audit recommendations. The administrative teams or district-wide planning teams were assigned recommendations to study and make proposals for implementation. Ultimately, however, the superintendents were accountable to Boards for the use of the audit report.

3. What is the superintendent’s expectation from the audit?

Superintendents in the districts studied were aware of the need for change to bring about needed organizational improvements. Those who were beginning their service in the district expected the audit to give credence to their own assessments of district needs. The superintendent with nine years tenure recognized that
an outside source was needed to "jump start" his district towards change. They spoke of the importance of an external analysis to validate recognized deficiencies. Superintendents expected the audit report to provide a tool for change within their systems, to focus the organization on change for educational improvement and to serve as a building block for the districts. One superintendent characterized the audit report as a "Bible for our instructional division."

4. What are the Board's expectations for use of the audit information?

School boards' expectations for the audit report were much the same as superintendents'. They anticipated using the report as a guide for improvement. Several administrators believed that their Board expected every recommendation to be acted upon in some fashion.

5. What is/was the Board's attitude toward the audit?

While several administrators reported that their Board was skeptical when the request to contract for a curriculum management audit was first presented, once the report was received they were impressed with the quality of the report and the depth and scope of recommendations presented. Overall, Boards were positive about the audit and all but one district reported that their Boards were positive about the anticipated results from implementation of recommendations.

6. What has the district done overall with the audit?
Only one district studied reported that little had been done with the audit report. All other districts were using the report as a baseline for long-range planning.

7. What time frame has been established to accomplish all recommendations?

Most recommendations were given three to eight years for implementation. Those recommendations which dealt with equity issues were given up to 10 years to implement fully.

8. What concerns do you have with implementing the audit recommendations?

Time and money were cited as key concerns for top level administrators. Adequate personnel to manage areas of the audit report was also mentioned. Board buy-in along with long-term commitment by administrators to follow through with implementation concerned several superintendents.

9. What factors do stakeholders perceive to be instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit?

As reported in other data, key factors cited by administrators interviewed included time, organizational structure, staff development and planning processes. Table 5 illustrates the most frequently cited factors affecting recommendation implementation.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary

The purposes of this study were to (1) identify the recommendations of Curriculum Management Audits conducted in Texas public school systems, (2) determine the degree to which each of the recommendations had been implemented, and (3) determine the perceptions of stakeholders as to the factors instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit. While two previous dissertations have looked at the Curriculum Management Audit, only a total of four school systems were included. Implications from these studies support the concept that the Curriculum Management Audit is an effective process for determining the status of a school system and providing a blue print for improvement.

The literature regarding the importance of formal curriculum, its alignment and articulation, lends credence to the audit's focus on a school system's control and support of curriculum processes. Evidence of the necessary support mechanisms for providing effective teaching and learning—policies, budget, equity of access—validate a school system's mission which is student achievement. The
incorporation of effective schools research into audit standards provides a basis for recommendations which foster both enhanced student achievement and system productivity. The audit process review of policies relating to curriculum development, delivery and monitoring and the emphasis on continuous improvement are characteristic of practices found in successful schools. In addition, the audit's focus on instructional program review, evaluation and decision making based on identified needs is in line with practices which support system improvement.

The Sample

The sample was 11 of the 12 Texas public school districts which had experienced a curriculum management audit under the auspices of the National Curriculum Audit Center and/or the Texas Curriculum Audit Center prior to September 1996. The list of Texas public school districts was provided by the Texas Curriculum Audit Center, a service of the Texas Association of School Administrators.

Procedures for Data Collection

Audit reports from the Texas school districts were reviewed. Recommendations presented to each district were identified and listed by district and Standard. A set of questions designed to determine the degree to which the recommendations had been implemented by the district were administered during personal
interviews with central office administrators from the districts. Included were the superintendents and key administrative personnel who had a working knowledge of the audit and its findings and recommendations.

An informational letter from the Texas Curriculum Audit Center notified the audited districts of this study and encouraged their participation. An introductory letter, stating the purpose of this study and requesting interviews, was mailed to the identified superintendents. Individual interview dates and times were scheduled during the months of November and December 1996 and January 1997.

Instrument

The instrument for this study was a set of questions administered by personal interview. In order to pursue the purpose for the study, interview questions focused on the extent to which recommendations presented in the formal audit report had been implemented by the districts. Subjects were presented cards containing recommendations as found in the district’s official audit report. For each recommendation, subjects were asked to indicate the degree to which the recommendation had been implemented using the following descriptors:

- Implemented
- In progress
- Plan to implement
- Recommendation modified
- No implementation
Open-end items included in the interview supplied a frame of reference for the respondents' answers. These open-end items allowed the interviewer to make better estimates of the respondents' involvement and attitude toward the audit.

Open-end items included the following:

- What has the district done overall with the audit?
- What was the impetus for the audit?
- Who is responsible for implementation of recommendations?
- What are the Board's expectations for use of audit information?
- What is the Board's attitude toward the audit?
- What is the superintendent's expectation from the audit?
- What time frame has been established to accomplish all recommendations?
- What concerns do you have with implementing the audit recommendations?

The questions were developed in collaboration with a lead auditor with the National Curriculum Audit Center who is also a professor at San Diego State University. Evidence of validity of the questions was provided through National Curriculum Audit Center and Texas Curriculum Audit Center personnel.

Research Design

The study was designed to determine the degree to which recommendations presented in the Curriculum Management Audit Report of participating school
districts had been implemented. This was accomplished through interview research methodology.

For each Texas district in which a Curriculum Management Audit had been conducted through the National Curriculum Audit Center and/or the Texas Curriculum Audit Center, an interview was requested with the superintendent and a central office administrator with a working knowledge of the audit and its findings. Subjects were asked to schedule 45 minutes with the interviewer in which general information and information specific to the recommendations for the district was gathered. Responses were entered into a computer or handwritten by the interviewer dependent upon the respondent’s comfort level.

Findings

Two factors may have hindered the researcher in obtaining a complete data set from which to draw valid conclusions. First, the inability to interview both the superintendent and another central office administrator with working knowledge of the audit report in four of the districts prevented corroboration of data and could allow personal bias toward audit recommendations and/or the auditors to skew the district’s reported status. Literature regarding the interview process lists personal bias as a concern to be considered when using this method of data gathering. Second, the length of time since the delivery of the formal audit report and the date of the interviews must be considered when analyzing the extent of district progress toward implementation.
Purpose One

Identify the recommendations of the Curriculum Management Audits conducted in Texas public school systems.

Identification of the recommendations presented in the final audit report for each district was made through a review of each audit report. A total of 126 recommendations were written collectively for the 11 districts studied. The recommendations were categorized according to the Audit Standard they represented. Audit reports recommendations reflected a strong emphasis on Standard One, the control standard. Typical recommendations called for the design of board policies for curricular control, organizational restructuring, and the development of short and long term planning processes.

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) prepares school board policies for Texas districts. Policies calling for curriculum documents which are aligned with assessment programs and those which delineate curriculum monitoring responsibilities are not currently found in TASB’s database. This dependence on TASB’s policy service could be a contributor to the audited districts’ lack of policy development and low rankings on policy criteria.

Overall, the audited districts were found lacking in effective curricular policies, scope of curriculum document coverage and quality, evidence of the use of assessment data in decision making, and budgeting processes which are program driven.
Purpose Two

Determine the degree to which each of the recommendations have been implemented.

The degree to which recommendations had been implemented was determined by asking each respondent to select the descriptor which best reflected the degree of implementation for each recommendation. Responses were tabulated according to descriptor. For those instances in which two administrators disagreed as to the status of a recommendation, the researcher recorded the superintendent's analysis for tabulation.

The audit reports listed 126 recommendations, collectively, for the 11 districts reviewed. Fifteen recommendations were described as implemented, 80 were reported to be in progress, districts were planning to implement 12, 2 recommendations had been modified, and 17 had experienced no steps toward implementation. Eighty-five percent of the recommendations presented in the formal audit reports reviewed by this researcher had received action toward implementation to some degree. This demonstrates the positive impact of the Curriculum Management Audit on school districts. The fact that districts valued the recommendations and identified the significance of the findings is made clear through the numbers of implementations which were both completed and in progress at the time of this study.
Purpose Three

Determine the perceptions of stakeholders as to the factors instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit.

The identification of factors which facilitated or impeded recommendation implementation as perceived by stakeholders was achieved through the presentation of a set of open ended questions during the interview process. Numerous factors were described during the interviews, but those mentioned must often included funding, time, organizational structure, personnel, leadership, staff development, school board support, enrollment growth, community support, and planning processes.

Factors which were perceived as positive facilitators for implementation of the recommendations included an organizational structure which provided leadership in the areas of curriculum management and monitoring. Embedded within the organizational structure issue was the belief of those administrators interviewed that effective instructional leadership is a dominant force in the appropriate use of any audit report. Also deemed essential was the availability of sufficient personnel to manage policy and curriculum development, provide support for instructional staff and to analyze data to enhance decision making. In addition to organizational structure and numbers of personnel units, adequate time to implement major recommendations was listed as key to successful goal achievement. The literature stresses the importance of time in any change process
and its impact on school improvement. Evidence of these characteristics of quality school organizations in the successful implementation of school improvement measures reiterates the Curriculum Management Audit’s foundation in effective school’s research.

The importance of a district having effective planning processes in place, or being in the development process for long-range planning, was perceived as the leading factor in successful implementation of recommendations. The Curriculum Management Audit’s focus on planning, Standard One, and productivity, Standard Five, is supported by district personnel’s statements regarding the criticality of well defined planning processes as "blue prints" for improvement.

While adequate time to implement recommendations was listed as a facilitator, inadequate time was named 27 times as an impediment to implementation. Pressure from board members to see immediate results from the audit report was named numerous times by administrators interviewed. The length of time required to develop policies and curriculum documents was believed to slow progress toward organizational improvement. Time for extensive staff development needed to provide administrators and teachers training in effective instructional practices, curriculum design and delivery, and data analysis was seen as a stumbling block to progress. In addition to requiring several years to fully implement an effective staff development program, such a program also requires a
sizable budgetary commitment. Funding for implementation of many recommendations was described as an inhibiting factor.

Listed as a facilitator of implementations, organizational structure and leadership were often believed to be inhibitors as well. Without strong instructional leadership in key positions, movement toward organizational improvement can be stymied. Standard One of the Curriculum Management Audit, which focuses on organizational structure and leadership, provided the basis for a majority of the recommendations made for districts. This finding substantiates the lack of organizational structure currently existing in the districts audited. Through recommendations which contain a detailed plan for implementation, districts have the opportunity to reorganize/restructure their staffs to maximize efficiency.

Conclusions

The policies provided to Texas districts by the Texas Association of School Boards do not appear to cover the same areas addressed by the policy criteria in Standard One, the control standard, of the Curriculum Management Audit. School districts in Texas look to the TASB for their policies. Until there is greater alignment between the TASB policies and the CMA policy criteria in Standard One, most school districts in Texas can expect to fail to meet this Standard.
The curriculum planning in the school districts in this study is not characteristic of that described in Curriculum Management Audit Standard One as comprehensive for learning organizations. With state-mandated site-based decision-making calling for both a District Improvement Plan and a Campus Improvement Plan for all school systems in Texas, central office administrators and campus staff have committed extensive time to the development of these plans. While the intent is for the plans to be long-range, Texas school law requires a plan for improvement be developed annually. As a result, evidence of long-range planning found in Standard One was lacking for school districts in this study. Recommendations to develop planning processes were made for districts not meeting this audit criteria. Districts meeting the criteria were provided recommendations to continue and/or expand current planning processes as their rankings were the minimum necessary to be considered adequate by audit criteria.

The Curriculum Management Audit expects that positions which are responsible for some aspect of curriculum design and delivery have clear job expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities in these areas, and that these expectations are written into the job descriptions. Job descriptions for seven of the audited districts did not meet the criteria in Standard One. Districts must focus attention on aligning job descriptions with current personnel positions. Care must be given to delineating responsibilities with regard to curricular issues, including monitoring the delivery of the curriculum.
None of the 11 districts studied received a quality rating on their curriculum documents. Only three of the districts met the criteria for adequacy in coverage of the curriculum areas for which guides had been produced. To the extent that the 11 school districts are typical of districts throughout the state of Texas, much work is needed to ensure that quality curriculum documents are produced for all areas of the curriculum.

School districts do not appear to link budget processes to curriculum and instructional decisions. These centrally important decision areas cannot assume the importance they deserve until there are deliberate and conscious attempts to tie budget decisions to them.

Standard Five criteria for productivity was not adequately met by any of the 11 school districts. For districts to improve to the expected curriculum management audit standard, they must use results from measures such as the Academic Excellence Indicator System of Texas, financial audits and community surveys to show a relationship among goals, objectives, priorities and costs. District dialogue must focus on needs and link interventions to programs and identified problems. Districts must develop effective financial systems to achieve instructional and operational productivity.

That 85% of the recommendations made in the 11 audit reports reviewed in this study had received action toward implementation to some degree suggests that the school districts valued the recommendations. Except for one district which
reacted negatively to the report, it can be generally concluded that the Curriculum Management Audit had a positive impact on the involved school districts.

Significant factors facilitating the implementation of recommendations were reported to be time, organizational structure/personnel and planning. Two of these factors, time and organizational structure/personnel, were also perceived as impeding the implementation process. Having a well-defined organizational structure and adequate personnel to manage the work of the district is crucial to a district's ability to function as a progressive organization. Districts must provide an adequate staff which collaborates with all stakeholders to ensure that goals and objectives focus on stated needs and actions are targeted toward goal achievement.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study sought to identify recommendations presented to districts which experienced a Curriculum Management Audit and to determine the degree to which those recommendations had been implemented. One hundred twenty-six recommendations were identified. At the time of this study, 12% of the recommendations had been implemented by audited districts, 63% were in the process of implementation, approximately 10% were in the planning stages of implementation, and 15% of the recommendations had been modified or were not being implemented.

In addition, this study attempted to determine factors which either facilitated or impeded recommendation implementation as perceived by stakeholders in each
audited district. Nine factors were found to be common in the 11 districts studied: funding, time, organizational structure and personnel, leadership, staff development, school board support, enrollment growth, community support, and planning processes.

From the data gathered in the audited districts, the following recommendations are made:

1. Districts which have experienced curriculum management audits should request a follow-up study five to eight years from the date the original audit was conducted. The study should focus on measures of organizational improvement as indicated through the Curriculum Management Audit criteria for policies, curriculum, budgeting and planning. In addition, student achievement measures could be compared for indications of improvement as a result of recommendation implementations.

2. There is evidence of standard audit recommendations common to all audited districts. The audit process stresses the uniqueness to the particular district of each audit report. The National Curriculum Audit Center and/or the Texas Curriculum Audit Center should review audit recommendations to eliminate "boilerplate" tendencies in recommendation writing.

3. The literature remains limited on the use of the Curriculum Management Audit as a tool for organizational improvement. A study of the processes employed by districts to implement change would serve as additional
documentation of the curriculum management audit’s role in organizational change and improvement.

4. An external review of the change in student achievement in audited districts over the next three to five years is critical. This is the ultimate test.
APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

INTERVIEW REQUEST LETTER
October 21, 1996

John C. Brooks
Superintendent
Northwest ISD
18501 State Hwy. 144
Justin, TX 76247

Dear John:

The Texas Association of School Administrators initiated a contract with the American Association of School Administrators to design and implement the Texas Curriculum Management Audit Center to assist school districts in the State of Texas in curriculum management and improving student performance. We have just completed the third year in that effort and need some feedback from districts like yours.

We are participating in an evaluation of Texas audits to determine audit successes and problem areas, and how to direct the process toward stronger support for Texas schools. Even though your school district may not have contracted with TASA and the Texas Curriculum Audit Center directly for your audit, the audits from the national level also have an impact on the processes and we can learn from their strengths and weaknesses as well.

Sunnye Murdock, a doctoral student at the University of North Texas is conducting a research study for her dissertation on the Curriculum Management Audits for Texas schools. She is specifically identifying the recommendations in the audits and the degree to which each has been implemented. This will give us an index as to the level the team has been of assistance, and if there are other steps we need to consider.

Sunnye will be contacting you and requesting an appointment with you and another staff member actively involved in implementing the audit recommendations. We need feedback from you and encourage you to take the time to talk with her about the process, the implementation of the recommendations, and how we can improve the audit process to support school improvement.

Thank you for your feedback through this process. If we can be of assistance or if you need to contact one of us, do not hesitate to do so.

Sincerely,

John L. Veselka
Executive Director, TASA

Margaret Montgomery
Texas Curriculum Audit Center
(903) 882-0012
(903) 882-0013 FAX

Enclosure
Request for Interview

Date

Superintendent
School District
School District Address

Dear Superintendent:

As a doctoral student at the University of North Texas, I am conducting a study involving curriculum auditing. My interest in the audit process stems not only from my studies in curriculum and instruction but from my experiences as a certified auditor with the National Curriculum Audit Center. The focus of the study will be on recommendations presented in a district’s audit report and the degree to which the district has implemented such recommendations.

Your district has participated in an audit under the direction of the Texas Curriculum Audit Center, the National Curriculum Audit Center, or under a lead NCAC auditor. Dr. Margaret Montgomery, of the Texas Curriculum Audit Center, has contacted you regarding my work with the audit center and this request. Information you and your administrative staff could provide would be of great value to this study and future audits. Please be assured that anonymity of replies will be maintained.

To facilitate the data gathering process I am requesting an appointment with you during the week of December 9, 1996. The interview should require no more than 45 minutes of your valuable time. In addition, I would also like to interview a member of your administrative staff who has a good working knowledge of the findings and recommendations of the audit report.

Please contact me to indicate a date and times most convenient for you and your staff member. I may be reached during the day at the Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District, 817-251-5515, or evenings at 817-283-8414.

Thank you for considering this request for an interview. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sunnuye Murdock
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW DOCUMENTS
Interview Question Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District __________________________</th>
<th>Date __________________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: ______________________</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

1. What has the district done overall with the audit?
2. What was the impetus for the audit?
3. Who is responsible for implementation of recommendations?
4. What are the Board’s expectations for use of audit information?
5. What is the Board’s attitude toward the audit?
6. What is the superintendent’s expectation from the audit?
7. What time frame has been established to accomplish all recommendations?
8. What concerns do you have with implementing the audit recommendations?
9. What factors do stakeholders perceive to be instrumental in the real and potential impact of the audit?
## Recommendation Analysis Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Degree to which recommendations have been implemented:**

| Implemented | In progress |
| Plan to implement | Recommendation modified |
| No implementation |

**What factors have facilitated/impeded recommendation implementation?**

(Five by eight note card, each with a recommendation)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Downey, C. (1996). Lead auditor, National Curriculum Audit Center; Professor at San Diego State University. Interview by author, September- November, 1996, Grand Prairie, TX.


Montgomery, M. Director of the Texas Curriculum Audit Center. (1996). Interview by author, October 15, Tyler, TX.


