STRATEGIC PLANNING: PROCESS
AND EVALUATION

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Doctoral Committee of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Gene C. Gehrking, B.S.B., B.S.E., M.A., M.B.A.
Denton, Texas
December, 1996
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Strategic planning practices and superintendents’ opinions regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning are different among small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts. This study sought to find areas of agreement and areas of disagreement among school district superintendents relating to the practice and effectiveness of strategic planning. Strategic planning practices examined include the development of a mission statement, operating plan, and budget; involvement of stakeholders, and strategic planning logistics.

A stratified random sample of 96 superintendents each from small, medium, and large school districts was selected from a population of 1,042 school districts. Data was also collected and reported from the 7 mega school districts. Questionnaires were sent to 295 superintendents and 246 (83.4%) were returned.

The questionnaire contained nine questions relating to 19 strategic planning practices and a five-part question relating to the effectiveness of strategic planning. The data was analyzed using Crosstabs, Chi-square, and one-way
ANOVA statistics. The level of significance was established a priori at .05.

School district size was an independent variable for six strategic planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts. Significant differences were found regarding (a) whether outside consultants were employed to assist with the district's strategic planning, (b) whether central office administrators participated in the district's planning process, (c) whether a sequence of steps was followed with a time frame for each step in the district's planning process, (d) whether someone other than the superintendent was responsible for the district's planning, (e) whether school district support staff participated in the district's planning process, and (f) whether students participated in the district's planning process. Also, a significant difference was found between large school district superintendents' and small school district superintendents' ratings of the effectiveness of strategic planning for improving management effectiveness. Finally, a correlation was observed between superintendents' ratings of strategic planning effectiveness and professional skill sets.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is a formalized planning process for shaping an organization's future (Moldof, 1993). Bartol and Martin (1991) describe strategic planning as the development of detailed action steps by top management to reach strategic goals. Bradley and Vrettas (1990) define strategic planning as a process used by leaders of an organization to envision the future and develop the necessary procedures and plans to achieve their vision. D'Amico (1988) believes that, rather than a set of prescribed processes, procedures, structures, or techniques, strategic planning is more of a thought process or intellectual exercise.

Strategic planning definitions are inconsistent among authors and school administrators (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). Cook (1988) points out that there is an overabundance of divergent ideas about strategic planning among school administrators. There is no established agreement on "What is strategic planning?" (D'Amico, 1988).

General criticism of public education, the discussion surrounding reform and restructuring, and the desire to examine the mission and values of their educational systems caused many school districts to carry out some form of
strategic planning (House, 1989). School district administrators who practice strategic planning (Cook, 1988) are unable to agree on the basic elements in the strategic planning process (D’Amico, 1988). Many school districts are practicing some form of strategic planning (House, 1989) in an environment that lacks a clear agreement on the principles, beliefs, elements, and activities that form the foundation for the strategic planning process (D’Amico, 1988). To establish a foundation on which to build the future development of strategic planning in public schools, this study will answer specific research questions using a questionnaire (Appendix A) drawn from a review of the relevant literature. Strategic planning practices examined in this study include the development of a mission statement, operating plan, and budget; involvement of stakeholders; and strategic planning logistics (Stewart & Bailey, 1991; Nebgen, 1990; Herman, 1989f; LeBaron & Markuson, 1991; Moldof, 1993). The information gathered will provide areas of agreement and areas of disagreement among Texas independent school district superintendents relating to the practice and effectiveness of strategic planning. Recognizing that school district enrollments ranging from 8 students to 198,013 students may have caused the practice of strategic planning to evolve at different rates, the superintendents’ answers will be compared among small, medium, and large districts. School district size,
based on student population, is defined in the definition of terms.

For this study, school district size is further defined according to the management process. In small school districts, superintendents can supervise personnel individually from the central office to the classroom level. While one or more levels of management may exist, it is not necessary to use a middle manager to accomplish routine management activities. Medium school districts are managed through one level of management, and large school districts are managed through two or more levels of management.

Statement of the Problem

The problem for this study was to determine if (a) the strategic planning practices of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts were the same and if (b) the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning were the same.

Purposes of the Study

There were two purposes for this study:

1. To learn if the strategic planning practices—such as the development of a mission statement, operating plan, and budget; involvement of stakeholders; and strategic
planning logistics--of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts were the same.

2. To learn if the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning were the same.

Hypotheses

The survey questions were developed based on a review of the relevant strategic planning literature. The null hypotheses for the 19 planning practices identified in questions 1 through 8 and question 10 of the survey questionnaire were:

1. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether outside consultants are employed to assist with the district's planning process.

2. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether teachers participate in the district's planning process.

3. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether principals participate in the district's planning process.
4. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether central office administrators participate in the district's planning process.

5. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether school district support staff participate in the district's planning process.

6. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether students participate in the district's planning process.

7. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether parents participate in the district's planning process.

8. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether school board members participate in the district's planning process.

9. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether senior citizens participate in the district's planning process.

10. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether business leaders participate in the district's planning process.

11. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether training is provided for the district's planning participants.

12. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether there is a sequence of steps with a time frame for each step in the district's planning process.

13. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether someone other than the superintendent is responsible for the district's planning.

14. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether the district's plan is updated each year.

15. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether part of the district's planning is conducted off site or away from the district.

16. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether a budget is included in the district's plan.
17. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether an operating plan is included in the district's plan.

18. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether a mission statement is included in the district's plan.

19. There is no significant difference among small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether superintendents describe their district's planning practices as strategic planning.

The null hypotheses for the five parts of question 9 on the survey questionnaire were:

1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving financial control.

2. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving management effectiveness.

3. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving education for children.
4. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving the superintendent's credibility.

5. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving public relations.

Definition of Terms

**Small districts**--Texas public school districts with student enrollments of 1,599 or less. There are 692 school districts in this category.

**Medium districts**--Texas public school districts with student enrollments of 1,600 or more and 5,999 or less. There are 247 school districts in this category.

**Large districts**--Texas public school districts with student enrollments of 6,000 or more and 49,999 or less. There are 96 school districts in this category.

**Mega districts**--Texas public school districts with student enrollments of 50,000 or more. There are 7 school districts in this category.

**Superintendent**--The chief executive officer of a Texas public school district.
**Budgeting**—The process of stating in quantitative terms, usually dollars, planned organizational activities for a given period (Bartol and Martin, 1991).

**Mission Statement**—A broad declaration of the basic, unique purpose and scope of operations that distinguishes the organization from others of its type (Bartol and Martin, 1991).

**Operating Plan**—The means devised to support achievement of tactical plans and operational goals; such plans are usually developed by lower and middle management (Bartol and Martin, 1991).

**Stakeholders**—Persons who are linked to an organization because the organization will have an impact on their lives.

**Strategic Planning**—A formalized planning process for shaping an organization’s future (Moldof, 1993) and the development of detailed action steps to reach strategic goals (Bartol and Martin, 1991).

**Technical Language**

Strategic planning is a discipline with its own technical vocabulary. The comprehension level of this paper and of strategic planning will be significantly increased if the reader has a working knowledge of the terms associated with strategic planning. A familiarity with strategic planning and its associated vocabulary will help the reader with further research into related areas of interest.
Appendix B, a glossary of terms (Bartol & Martin, 1991) related to strategic planning, has been included to provide the reader with a ready access to the vocabulary commonly used in strategic planning dialogue and literature.

Limitation of the Study

This study was limited to selected superintendents in the Texas public educational system. The study focused on superintendents because, as the chief executive officer, the superintendent has primary operating responsibility for strategic planning. Thus, staff members and outside consultants who had strategic planning duties delegated to them by the superintendent were excluded.

Significance of the Study

Strategic planning is an important, effective administrative management tool (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). It is the vehicle that will help administrators enhance the journey into the future (Herman, 1989f). With increased emphasis on accountability in education, school district administrators have been challenged to develop and carry out efficient and effective educational systems (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). Local, state, and federal authorities are requiring more justification and documentation of program results. Many constituencies and stakeholders are demanding increased participation in school programs.
Educational administrators have been forced to design and carry out more effective methods of administrative management.

Strategic planning is a formalized process for shaping an organization's future (Moldof, 1993). It is a guide for achieving the goals that leaders have learned are important to the success of their organization and that will distinguish their organization from other organizations. It establishes the shared vision of what an organization should be doing and how it plans to carry out its mission (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). Budget cuts, controversies surrounding teaching methods, aggressive union organization, gang-related issues, and drug problems are forcing school districts to take a proactive role in defining their future (Moldof, 1993). Strategic planning provides an effective management tool that can be used to (1) rank objectives, (2) proactively pursue objectives (3) allocate scarce resources, (4) establish points of differentiation and pride, and (5) link people's jobs to the higher purpose of the organization. Strategic planning surpasses traditional planning practices in its capability to upset conventional wisdom, identify new alternatives, and ask new questions (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). Schools are only preparing students to cope with, rather than create, the 21st century. Effective educators need to plan, and strategic planning is the best approach to use (Moldof, 1993). A free and
economically vital nation is only possible through the development and achievement of effective educational policy (Bell, 1989). Strategic planning can help educational planners view social outcomes in a practical way when targeting the community and society as the primary clients (Kaufman & Herman, 1991). Using strategic planning, educators can define the social payoffs and make the best decisions regarding curriculum, content, and methodology for reaching relevant goals, objectives, and missions.

Strategic planning is coping with and managing change (Stewart & Bailey, 1991). It is accessing, analyzing, and applying information to manage change and shape the future by predicting it. Strategic planning is a process for plotting organizational activities that provide direction and guidance for action. The value of strategic planning is its comprehensive, flexible, and systematic approach to deciding direction.

The nature and purpose of public education are being questioned (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). Cook (1988) suggested that the Presidential Commission's Report, the Carnegie Commission's Report, and the National Governor's Commission Report, combined with the negative impact of teacher accountability, low achievement of students, declining tax bases, curtailment of federal funding to schools, bureaucratic state departments of education, and some inept school administrators, have created an
accelerating condition of confusion and doubt, even among the best school administrators. Business leaders and parents often complain that school officials do not even share a common language with the rest of society (Dlugosh, 1993a). It is very possible that waning public support for public education is the direct result of school administrators' failure to plan adequately for the future (Cook, 1988).
Strategic planning is a process used by an organization's leaders to envision the future and then develop the plans and procedures to achieve the vision (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). Moldof (1993) described strategic planning as a formalized process for shaping an organization's future. Bartol and Martin (1991) present strategic planning as the development of detailed action steps by top management to reach strategic goals. Verstegen and Wagoner (1989) believe that strategic planning encompasses the art of using assumptions, judgments, and uncertainties to make projections about the future. D'Amico (1988) asserts strategic planning is more of a thought process or intellectual exercise than a set of prescribed processes, procedures, structures, or techniques.

Strategic planning has not been consistently or universally defined (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). School administrators may be referring to one of many different definitions when addressing the subject (Cook, 1989). There are enough similarities among the various definitions to allow some rudimentary classifications (Basham and Lunenburg, 1989b). Basham and Lunenburg evaluated the following representative definitions of strategic planning:
1. Strategic planning is "a process consisting of . . . an examination of the current environmental circumstances . . ., the establishment of a statement of purpose or mission with related time-frame goals, supporting operational objectives and specific plans to carry out these objectives, and resource analysis" (Spikes, 1985, pp. 3-4).

2. Strategic planning is "a process for organizational renewal and transformation . . . (which) provides a framework for improvement and restructuring of programs, management, collaborations, and evaluation of the organization's progress" (McCune, 1986, p 34).

3. Strategic planning is a "process designed to move an educational organization through the steps of understanding changes in the external environment, assessing organizational strengths and weaknesses, developing a vision of a desired future and ways to achieve the mission, developing and implementing specific plans, and motivating that implementation so necessary changes can be made" (Brown & Marshall, 1987, p.1).

4. Strategic planning is " . . . a plan characterized by originality, vision, and realism . . . aimed at total concentration of the organization's resources on mutually predetermined measurable outcomes" (Cook, 1988, p.83).

From these definitions, Basham and Lunenburg (1989b) distilled the essential elements of strategic planning. They believe strategic planning characterizes an orientation
toward the future, a mission or vision, and widespread faculty and community participation in the planning process.

Others have described themes they believe underlie strategic planning (D'Amico, 1988). Themes representing central principles and beliefs have built strategic planning as the dominant planning tool. These principles and beliefs are (a) strategic planners can influence the future, (b) today’s trends can help forecast the future, and (c) decisions can be made today that will help realize the best future scenario.

Strategic planning or strategy formulation is the responsibility of the senior administrator or senior management team in an organization (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). Its objective is to exploit opportunities offered by the future. Bradley & Vrettas (1990) concluded that strategic planning is a (a) management philosophy (b) process for organizational change and transformation, (c) problem solving method, (d) educational and developmental activity, and (e) community education and involvement process.

Background

History

Strategic planning began in the military (D'Amico, 1988). Generals have drafted battle orders using strategic planning for thousands of years. An early example of
strategic and tactical doctrine is *The Art of War* written 2,500 years ago by Sun Tzu, a Chinese philosopher, as a manual for victory on the battlefield (Clavell, 1983). Leading American business schools require their students to read *The Art of War* as a philosophy of successful leadership. Another example is a manuscript titled *Ideals of the Samurai: Writings of Japanese Warriors* which recorded the thinking of the Japanese warrior class between 1198 A.D. and 1623 A.D. and revealed the origins of Japanese thought (Lee, 1982). The international value of strategic planning as a geopolitical decision making tool was recognized at the beginning of the 20th century (D’Amico, 1988). Corporate managers adopted strategic planning as a planning instrument toward the middle of the 20th century. Later, the not-for-profit sector followed. Educators began using strategic planning as an educational management tool in the early 1970s. Strategic planning had become the major management planning model in North America by the 1990s.

Three major phases characterized the movement from traditional planning to strategic planning (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). First, the Mass Production Phase from 1900-1930 was known for having a stable external environment and minimum government intervention. Planning was directed toward controlling costs and developing methods to increase the efficiency of the production process. Second, the Mass Marketing Phase covered the period from the mid-1930s to the
mid-1950s. Planning shifted from an internal to an external focus as market driven companies attempted to incorporate consumer desires and tastes into the planning process. Third, the Information Age covered the period from the mid-1950s to the present. This phase adapted more flexible approaches to an environment that had grown increasingly unstable, accelerative, and revolutionary. Forecasting became a major factor in the planning process during the 1960s. Logical, extrapolitive, straight-line forecasting models were popularized and disposed of as organizations became more susceptible to outside forces and pressures. Forecasting models, which evolved in routine and predictable environments, failed to meet the challenges of planning in a complex, changing world.

Strategic planning has continued to mature and evolve as a tool for organizational change (Gardner, Rachlin, & Sweeney, 1986). During the 1970s an ivory tower approach to strategic planning, with its accompanying analytical models and matrices, was embraced with almost evangelical fervor. Three key strategic planning concepts were the experience curve, strategic business unit, and portfolio planning. When these methods failed to deliver the anticipated results, disillusionment set in and strategic planning groups found themselves scrambling for alternate means of employment. Methodologies held in high esteem during the 1960s and 1970s were attacked and ridiculed during the
1980s. Presently the foundations and basic philosophies of strategic planning are being reexamined. The emerging philosophy is to create the future, rather than just anticipate or respond to it. A genuine desire exists to develop quality decision making insights and effective methods to execute organizational plans.

**Criticisms**

Strategic planning has been criticized for introducing rigidity into the planning process and hampering creativity (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). Critics believe that creativity and dissent will be stifled by an irrational devotion to methodology. Some have said that a formal planning process based on environmental scanning is too expensive. Others feel uneasy with a process that makes projections based on other people's judgments, even the judgments of reasonable people. Still others criticize academe for withholding support until near certainty has been determined and rigorous methodologies have been developed.

School officials complain that strategic planning is not appropriate for highly regulated, state funded institutions (Moldof, 1993). Some maintain that there are too many controls and rules for strategic planning to work. Others believe that with standardized curriculum and tests, budgets with very little flexibility, strong teachers'
unions, and no way to raise significant funds, everything is predetermined and strategic planning is only an illusion.

Critics claim that strategic planning is better suited for publicly held corporations than for not-for-profit organizations (Moldof, 1993). This logic follows the line that strategic planning is ultimately a financial tool and its only purpose is to find ways to achieve financial goals. Since strategic planning is perceived as a financial tool, its critics claim strategic planning cannot be used as effectively by not-for-profit organizations as it can by for-profit organizations.

Critics state that the operational definition of strategic planning assumes that a rational process can be used to identify the critical issues (Bell, 1989). They argue that the operational definition of strategic planning fails to acknowledge that agenda setting, policy development, and policy implementation in the public sector are not only rational but also political processes. They believe that the failure of the strategic planning process to explicitly acknowledge the role of politics can confound the application of this rational process, concluding that the rational process of strategic planning is inappropriate for addressing nonrational issues related to the community's basic value structure.
Benefits

According to Moldof (1993) negative attitudes about strategic planning are based on false premises. Formal and sophisticated methods provide benefits to the planning process (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). Organizations with a plethora of problems and issues may only be able to effect ongoing, purposeful change through a formal planning process (Moldof, 1993). The strategic plan's use of assigned tasks and priorities facilitates the achievement of long- and short-term goals. Not-for-profits have successfully used strategic planning to achieve goals such as developing "model" teachers, improving community relations, upgrading the physical plant, and integrating high-tech equipment into the school administration and curriculum.

The test of whether strategic planning is a worthwhile exercise in organizational management is the benefits school districts receive (Moldof, 1993). As a management tool, strategic planning allows school districts to do the following:

1. Set priorities. School districts have a "to do" list that would fill pages. Strategic planning allows a school district to avoid the "squeaky wheel" method of prioritizing and focus on a few critical issues (Bell, 1989). School personnel are forced to set realistic goals and evaluate the order in which issues should be dealt with.
Trends external to the community are examined and evaluated as priorities are set (Bell, 1989).

2. Practice proactive management (Moldof, 1993). Strategic plans identify target areas in need of improvement. School officials need not be embarrassed by newspaper articles pointing out problems with the schools or by complaints from parents. Strategic planning forces the school districts out of the reactive mode into a proactive stance allowing them to achieve action driven results (Bell, 1989). The process is controlled before a problem escalates into a crisis (Moldof, 1993).

3. Allocate scarce resources (Moldof, 1993). Schools are bureaucratic structures and often waste precious dollars due to organizational structure, red tape, and unnecessary change (Gould, 1991). Strategic planning cannot solve these problems, but it can help. Money can be saved through evaluation of operating systems, reassignment of overlapping roles, and cutting back on outmoded or underutilized programs (Moldof, 1993). Risk of change will be reduced because the school-based mission provides a rationale for acceptance (Gould, 1991).

4. Establish a point of differentiation and pride (Moldof, 1993). School districts want to be noted for accomplishments such as percent of students who go to college, athletic excellence, or experimental program development. All students have special talents which should
be recognized. Failure to recognize and use these special talents is unacceptable. Schools should not assume that points of differentiation are obvious or remain the same. Change is an inevitable part of our existence.

5. Link people's jobs to a common higher purpose (Moldof, 1993). Strategic plans should clarify the role of counselors, teachers, janitors, superintendents, principals, and support staff so everyone involved in the education process can work toward the school district's ultimate goal. Decisions will stem from a common understanding among the participants (Gould, 1991). Staff members will gain a greater sense of ownership as they contribute to and control projects.

Planning makes a difference (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). Developing and carrying out an effective planning process should improve the decision making ability of planning unit administrators, enhance the planning unit administrators' ability to function, and affect all major key result areas of the school district positively.

Strategic planning can be remarkably effective (Bell, 1989). Effective planning will improve student achievement through increased learning and growth (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). Strategic planning cannot be considered complete unless a direct attempt is made to improve student learning. Schools are charged with the responsibility to bring about major changes in the student. Besides cognitive learning,
schools define a wide range of social, emotional, physical, and moral behavior goals; however, student achievement is an important, if not the most important, reason for planned change.

Preplanning Considerations

Key Factors Affecting Planning

A leader will only be successful if there are followers who support the leader's vision and its accompanying goals (Herman, 1989f). A true leader has identified a destination and will use strategic planning to achieve leadership success. Herman beliefs the following characteristics are the keys to successful strategic planning: (a) involving stakeholders, (b) scanning for relevant data, (c) identifying critical success factors, (d) developing vision and mission statements, (e) analyzing supports and constraints, (f) identifying strategic goals and objectives, (g) developing action plans and allocating resources, and (h) developing monitoring structures. Herman has emphasized activities that can be directly controlled or influenced by the planner.

Wallace (1991) has taken a different perspective on strategic planning and identified key factors that influence the form the planning process will take in schools (Wallace, 1991). He profiles characteristics that are more environmental in nature and outside the control or influence
of the planner. According to Wallace, factors that impact the success of the planning process are (a) competing goals, (b) work routines and interruptions, (c) governmental policy shifts, (d) external educational innovations, (e) different academic and financial planning cycles, (f) planning for program maintenance, (g) resource allocation (h) time management, and (i) program evaluation.

The environment for developmental planning is neither completely chaotic nor entirely stable (Wallace, 1991). A complex mix of routine work and change are present. Relative certainty and predictability exist in some areas and ambiguity and unpredictability in others.

Preliminary Analysis

The purpose of the preliminary analysis is to establish whether there is a need for beginning the strategic planning process (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). It is an analysis of the present organizational setup. The preliminary analysis is important because whatever the outcome, it must have legitimacy and relevancy. Senior administrators examine the components of the system, such as present academic programs, staff, school board members, and community power blocs. Then they consider how each contributes to and controls the process of educating students. Pertinent questions, relative to planning for a school district’s future, fall under the headings of organizational analysis and individual questions. Moldof’s (1993) driving force elements are also
a useful tool to move a school district toward its future vision.

Organizational Analysis

There are several questions that should be asked as part of the organizational analysis (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). These are:

1. How does the school district prepare students for the future?
2. What image does the community project?
3. What are our accomplishments?
4. What are our strengths, weaknesses, and future problems?
5. How is the strength or survival of the school district threatened?

Individual Questions

Decision makers need to ask themselves several key questions (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). These are:

1. What consequences will changes in society have on my professional and personal life?
2. If the status quo is maintained, what are my consequences?
3. How can I contribute to valued activities?
4. How is my future affected? Can I meet the new pressures and challenges?
5. What shortcuts or new possibilities exist for accomplishing the important activities?
Driving Force Elements

Driving forces are major capabilities or activities that help a school accomplish its mission and distinguish it from other schools (Moldof, 1993). Examples of driving forces are: (a) highly individualized teaching methods, (b) computerized teaching capabilities, (c) heavy emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic, (c) state-of-the-art math and science facilities, and (d) politically correct teaching approach.

After a driving force has been identified, the driving force model can be used to expand the activities necessary to keep the driving force moving (Moldof, 1993). If, for example, the driving force is professional development of teachers, the following activities may be determined as crucial to the driving force: (a) teacher recruitment, (b) team teaching, (c) attendance at seminars, (d) in-house workshops, (e) individual performance evaluations, (f) ongoing formal education, (g) participation on curriculum committees, and (h) participation on textbook committees.

Using this process forces administrators to carefully consider which activities are crucial to achieving the school's mission and which ones are not (Moldof, 1993). It also promotes accountability. Critical tasks are carefully outlined to avoid questions later regarding what the critical tasks are. School environments can be hectic and crisis driven causing administrators and teachers to lose
sight of long-term objectives and allow short-term objectives to become overwhelming. The driving force model helps school personnel focus on the future while dealing with the present.

Planning Process

Planning is a conscious process of deciding what to do and how to do it (Lewellen, 1990). This definition is sufficiently broad to include planning by individuals or government agencies, including public education. Planning is a process that includes (a) setting goals and objectives, (b) assessing and evaluating external environmental influences such as economic factors, public attitudes, governmental actions, and mass communications, (c) designing and assessing courses of action to accomplish the goals and objectives, (d) selecting the most effective and efficient action plans, and (e) conducting formative and summative evaluations.

Strategic planning has unique aspects and requires that a process be followed to achieve success (Stewart & Bailey, 1991). J. M. Bryson (1988) offers the following steps to achieve a suitable, workable, and user friendly process: (a) initiate and agree on the planning process, (b) identify the organization's mandates, (c) clarify the organization's mission and goals, (d) assess opportunities and threats in the external environment (e) assess strengths and weaknesses
in the internal environment, (f) formulate strategies, and (g) establish a vision for the future.

Verstegen and Wagoner (1989) summarize strategic planning in the following steps:

1. Establish mission and goal statements to provide targets for strategy formulation.
2. Conduct an environmental scan through specification of current and existing factors and conditions.
3. Construct an internal profile and resource audit to catalogue and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
4. Formulate, evaluate, and select strategies based on the organization's objectives, goals, environmental scan, and internal profile.
5. Implement and control the strategic plan.

Some authors contend that strategic planning is part of a larger planning scheme. LeBaron and Markuson (1991) contend that two kinds of planning are needed for effective program development and are linked in the planning process. One is strategic planning which establishes a fundamental organizational tone, painting the organization's business in broad strokes and informing staff how they contribute to the accomplishment of organizational goals. Another is organizational planning which is a detailed accounting of specific organizational goals. This theory has support from Basham & Lunenburg (1989b) who declare that strategic
planning does not eliminate the need for other types of planning.

At the same time, Basham & Lunenburg (1989b) point out that the strategic plan's mission statement and goals provide a framework for operational planning, budgeting, decision making, and management. Operational plans are usually updated yearly and outline key activities, staffing patterns, and the outputs that will exist to carry out the strategic plan (LeBaron and Markuson, 1991). All planning eventually flows to a budget.

Strategic planning has a set of characteristics that are central to the strategic planning process (Basham & Lunenburg, 1989b). Strategic planning is:

1. Built on the assumption there is an organization with an open system that is constantly changing to meet society's needs.

2. Focused on planning, building a vision, internal and external scanning, and faculty and community development.

3. Accomplished by a small group of planners with extensive stakeholder involvement.

4. Used with current and projected trends to make current decisions.

5. Developed with an emphasis on changes external to the organization, organizational values, and proactive involvement.
6. Projected future outcomes based on current decisions.

7. Dependent on intuitive and creative decision making to guide the organization. Organizations are dynamic and change with time. Strategic planning is a process that helps organizations anticipate the future, makes decisions, and behave according to an agreed upon vision.

The key players in the strategic planning process are responsible for developing a vision of how the school system is going to fit into the world of the future (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). As this vision is being developed, the planners should address the following questions:

1. What are our goals for the future?
2. What do we value most about our schools?
3. What is the school district’s core purpose or mission?
4. What should the school district’s role be for the next 5 years?
5. What should the school district’s role be after 5 years?

Strategic planners have several options open to them once an emerging issue has been identified (Versteegen & Wagoner, 1989). One option is to do nothing which is appropriate for low probability/low impact issues. Another is to assign a delegate to either follow the issue and report as needed or follow the issue and involve key
personnel to gain an understanding of the issue probability and institutional posture toward the issue. Still another is to solicit additional research.

Strategic planning can result in creative, visionary planning for school district improvement that has the support of the staff and community (Nebgen, 1990). It is an effective technique for developing and utilizing organizational adaptability by involving staff and members of the community in a dynamic and self-renewing process.

**Planning Participants**

If strategic planning is going to be successful, key members of the community should be involved in the planning process (Dlugosh, 1993). This strategic planning group is an advisory body of 18 to 24 people representing parents, board members, students, professional and nonprofessional staff members, and various community constituencies including senior citizens. A community member who serves in local government can be included (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). The group should be large enough so that a wide range of representation is obtained, and yet small enough to achieve effective and meaningful discussions. The facilitation of this process is hard work (Nebgen, 1990). Strategic planning requires a unique combination of knowledge, skills, vigor, and courage. Community involvement used in the most productive way possible is the key to success (Dlugosh, 1993).
During the 1970s, as disillusionment with the "ivory tower" approach involving highly analytical models and matrices set in, the idea of participants from all levels became popularized (Gardner, Rachlin, & Sweeney, 1986). The objective of managing strategically, rather than planning strategically, was introduced and characterized by an integration of planning activities between levels and functions. For school districts, this meant bringing teachers into the strategic planning arena.

Involving teachers in the strategic planning process presents a dilemma because few teachers are trained in decision making outside the classroom (Alvarez, 1992). Involving teachers in the decision making process does not insure a more effective result. To be successful, there must be a commitment to the process, staff development to understand how shared decision making works, and organizational structure that allows development and training.

Alvarez (1992) identified critical elements for involving teachers as participants in the decision making process:

1. Establish settings and structures to focus on inquiry and interdependent problem solving. Teachers should perceive the school as an organization with norms and shared expectations and become informed decision makers.
2. Establish norms of collegiality and trust. Design structures to break down barriers between teachers and administrators and between teachers and teachers.

3. Provide teachers with time for assessment and planning. Treat teachers as professionals.

An increased level of communication should be encouraged horizontally and vertically (Lewellen, 1990). The increased communication flow should have a positive effect on the decision-making process, change process, staff efficiency and effectiveness, attitudes, and total power in the system. To achieve maximum involvement, consider identifying key communicators and leaders from the stakeholder groups, deriving consensus techniques that will encourage agreement related to the school’s vision and mission, and initiating a communication structure that fosters clear communication and consensus agreement among all school district stakeholders (Dlugosh, 1993).

Participation does not mean that every person’s private vision becomes part of the organization’s total vision (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). It means that key people are provided with an opportunity to influence the final shape of the vision. Participants provide ideas, and the ideas contribute to formulating the mission statement and goals. The strategic planning group serves as a team to help identify the issues that will be addressed in the planning
The following steps can be used to help the group get started on a productive dialogue:

1. Discuss the need for change in public education on local and national levels.

2. Identify changes that could make the school district more effective.

3. Question the advisory group regarding their educational beliefs, the purpose of schools, and desired school values.

4. After the mission statement is defined, ask the advisory group to recommend objectives and establish priorities.

5. Measure each strategy against the probability of achieving the mission.

6. Treat the strategic planning group as a long-term entity.

Using this process to create an extended dialogue between the school and the community will result in an improved school system at both the district and building levels (Dlugosh, 1993). Involving diverse segments of the community will enable educators to learn more about what the community expects from the schools, how it regards attempts to improve the schools, and, most important, what the community can contribute to the endeavor.

There are several guidelines or watchwords that people involved in educational change should keep in mind (Dlugosh,
First, honor the past. People who have worked years to improve the school want their contributions remembered and appreciated. Second, confront the present. Focus on solutions to current issues rather than wasting time and energy looking for someone or something to blame for current conditions. Third, embrace the future. The planning group should consider all possibilities and then focus on strategies that will improve the probabilities of success for all students. Fourth, avoid recipes. Examining solutions that other school districts have found for similar problems is a good idea; however, avoid adopting someone else's plan without making certain that it fits the conditions in your school district. Stakeholders must believe in the vision and the mission to achieve a focused planning effort (Herman, 1989f).

Plan of Action and Time Line

The second preliminary step is the development of a plan of action and time line (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). This provides for sequencing of steps and a time frame for each step in the process. The sequence of steps and time line should not be a rigid structure, but an approximation of the process as envisioned by the senior members of the planning segment. This part of the planning should consider the unique characteristics of your school district's approach to problem solving and the individuals involved.
Strategic Planning Models

The strategic planning model expresses a clear vision of the future for the school system (Kaufman & Herman, 1991). It helps school employees, students, and the community rally around a vision and sets the goals to achieve it. At its best, strategic planning identifies "ideal" results that can be achieved on an individual, organizational, or societal level (Kaufman & Herman, 1991). If we do not first define an "ideal vision" to be achieved, the planning process will be diverted into an exercise of defining courses, content, and resources in the hope that a useful outcome is inevitable. If this happens, plans will become short-term, stop-gap objectives. A true strategic plan will never be developed.

Herman and Kaufman Model

A good plan is one that holds people accountable and judges progress based on results (Herman & Kaufman, 1991). The following 12-step plan was developed to help school districts gain the benefits of strategic planning:

1. Choose the primary client. The first step involves determining the scope of the plan and who is the primary client or beneficiary. The resulting plan is shaped by the planners' choices.

2. Identify the vision. A vision describes the school district's ideal condition. Set the vision before restricting yourself with "real-world" data. Visions should
be related to contributions rather than procedures, resources rather than methods, and to ends rather than means.

3. Identify beliefs and values. Because planners' philosophies influence their strategies, the people to whom planning is entrusted should formally communicate their beliefs and values to the public.

4. Identify the school district's mission. Evaluate and express the school district's educational mission in terms of performance and results. Determine the operational plans and identify any conflicts with the school district's mission.

5. Identify needs. Identify the needs of the school district, community, and larger society, using available data and surveys on performance and perceptions.

6. Identify matches and mismatches. Compare the vision and beliefs with actual performance data and perceptions of the planning team members.

7. Reconcile differences. When assessments of the school system and the future to which it aspires do not reconcile, find common ground. Collect additional data to improve the planning group's information pool.

8. Reaffirm the goal. When beliefs and values, visions, needs, and existing missions have been reconciled, reaffirm your desired future. The output from this step should be a written mission statement based on vision,
beliefs, and needs of the school district. The mission statement should define the school district's direction and measurable objectives.

9. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Use internal and external surveys to collect information on these attributes.

10. Create "decision rules". Decision rules or policies based on expected results are derived from strategic objectives and their accompanying performance requirements.

11. Develop action plans. Action plans set small goals that will mark progress toward larger goals. These plans should also consider alternate tactics and approaches for achieving defined goals.

12. Implement the strategic plan. Compare results with the goals and objectives to determine if modifications to the plan are justified.

Strategic planning is a continuous process (Herman & Kaufman, 1991). It is a thought process and a method of driving a formal plan. Problems arising from participants who perceive the plan as implied criticism or nervous community members who attack board members, administrators, and consultants involved in the plan can be kept to a minimum by dealing with them early, openly, and honestly. This planning methodology will ensure that the school
district's missions, goals, and values will serve the needs of the community--and improve the chances of achieving them.

The PIMS Program

The Profit Impact of Market Strategy (PIMS) program has developed a set of principles for business strategy to help managers understand and predict how strategic choices and market conditions will affect performance (Buzzell & Gale, 1987). These principles were developed beginning in 1972 by working with a data base of 450 companies and 3,000 business units. The PIMS data base may be the most extensive strategic information data base in the world (Peters & Austin, 1985). The PIMS methodology and applications operate under the presumption that there is a general relationship between strategy and performance that can produce greater effectiveness for individual organizations and the economy as a whole (Buzzell & Gale, 1987). The PIMS model uses information relating to market conditions, competitive position, and financial and operating performance to develop a data base that forms a solid foundation for situation-specific analysis that can be used to formulate good decisions. The PIMS approach rejects the notion that there are "rules of thumb" or "formulas" for decision making and that easy wins can be achieved by applying general rules to specific problems. This model applies experiences to problem solving situations.
PIMS examines the dimensions of strategy and the market environment to determine their impact on organizational performance. PIMS supporters claim there are principles that can help managers understand and predict how strategic choices and market conditions affect performance. These principles are:

1. The most important long-run factor affecting performance is the quality of products and services compared to competitor's products and services.

2. Market share and profits are closely related.

3. Investment is a drag on profitability.

4. General rules that apply to growing or declining markets are often wrong.

5. Vertical integration does not improve performance for all businesses.

6. Strategic factors that boost return on investment (ROI) contribute to long term value.

Supporters of PIMS believe that this approach is a superior alternative to "portfolio" or "formalized" strategic planning. Since no two businesses are alike, it is doubtful that formulas can be used to achieve a competitive advantage. PIMS shares one important aspect with other approaches to strategic planning. Most reasonable approaches hold that the objectives and some general characteristics of the strategy that should be
adopted depend on the organization's strategic position and the characteristics of the marketplace.

**Porter Model**

Michael E. Porter developed a model based on five competitive forces to analyze the nature and intensity of competition in industry (Bartol & Martin, 1991). He outlined his approach in a book named *Competitive Strategy* (Porter, 1980). Porter maintains that there are five major forces that affect the profit potential or long-term return on investment available to businesses in a particular industry (Bartol & Martin, 1991). These forces are rivalry, bargaining power of customers, bargaining power of suppliers, threat of new entrants, and threat of substitute products or services.

Rivalry and its accompanying competitive tactics among rivals lower prices and raise the cost of doing business (Bartol & Martin, 1991). The bargaining power of customers can force price reductions or result in demands for increased product quality and service at the same price. Increased supplier bargaining power will generally bring price increases and possibly a reduction in the quality of goods and services. The threat of new entrants can bid prices down or cause increased costs as the participants struggle to maintain market position. Finally, the threat or availability of substitute products or services limits
the prices that can be charged. Each of these forces lowers the profit potential in a given industry.

Porter (1980) believes the five competitive forces provide the foundation for analyzing the structure of an industry and its competitors. This framework is then used to develop competitive strategies in different environments. These environments determine the context in which an organization competes, the alternatives available, and common strategic errors. Each strategic decision draws on general analytical tools, economic theory, and administrative considerations to manage and motivate an organization.

Information Gathering

Environmental Scanning

Strategic planning, also called organizational auditing and values auditing (D'Amico, 1988) is differentiated from long-range planning because it exploits the new and different opportunities of tomorrow, rather than simply optimize the trends of today (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). The major difference between long-range planning and strategic planning is strategic planning pays greater attention to issues and trends outside the school district (D'Amico, 1988). Environmental scanning is the process element that searches the outside environment for events and elements to develop knowledge to assist top management in
charting the organization's course (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). The ability to identify, scan, and project from important data is a crucial key to the success of strategic planning (Herman, 1989f). It is a process for systematic review of the external environment (House, 1989). Scanning usually takes place during the development of a vision and mission statement, but it is a continuous process (Herman, 1989f). Bradley and Vrettas (1990) suggest that information obtained through environment scanning is not just limited to the external environment and should be distilled in the categories of external environmental scanning, internal organizational scanning, and interactive scanning.

External Scanning

External environmental scanning is described as trend analysis, pattern analysis, and scenario decision points (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). There are five general areas--economic, demographic, social, political, and educational--that will affect most school systems in the future. Environmental scanning should be used to develop a concise picture of how these factors will affect the school system during the next 5 years. External scanning should answer the following questions: (a) Where is the community?, (b) What are the national, state, regional, and local trends?, (c) What implications are they likely to have for schools in our community?, (d) What opportunities (needs) are there in the community?, (e) What threatens the future
well-being of schools in our community?, and (f) What activities might be developed in the future (McCune, 1986, p. 48)?

Internal Scanning

Internal organizational scanning is a review of the academic programs offered, staff use, physical facilities, support services, and stakeholder perceptions and expectations (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). It is an objective look at the organizational strengths and weaknesses of the school system. Internal scanning asks the questions, "What are the critical issues and how can the challenges presented by these issues be met?" Strategic planners should consider the following questions: (a) Where is our organization?, (b) What are our organizational strengths? (staff, curriculum, food service, business management, staff development, etc.), (c) What are the critical issues facing our organization?, (d) What internal steps (improvement) must be taken to strengthen our organization?, and (e) Where are the possible "matches" between community opportunities (needs) and the resources and strengths of our organization (McCune, 1986, p.48)?

Interactive Scanning

Interactive scanning involves an in-depth study to determine how effective programs have been in preparing students who have left the school system to become members of the community and the greater society (Bradley & Vrettas,
1990). This process looks for links between community opportunities and the resources and strengths of the school system. Elements that can be considered are the community's history, traditions, culture, geography, and economy; graduates' success in employment and post secondary education; and the relationship between the schools and other community service agencies, such as the community library, health and welfare agencies, governmental agencies, and recreational activities. This element asks the question, "Is the school district fulfilling its role?"

Without environment scanning, planning occurs in a vacuum and is unable to identify constituent needs, program deficiencies, or potential sources of support (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). It should be a collective and collaborative effort. The environmental scanning process encompasses three main activities (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989): (a) identifying the external factors relevant to the organization, (b) linking factors in a forecast to indicate how they are likely to change in the future, and (c) projecting the impact of those changes on the organization. At the same time, the environmental scanning process is responsive to four broad questions: (a) What is the current environment?, (b) What environmental changes can be anticipated?, (c) What goals do the organization wish to achieve?, and (d) What actions are necessary to improve the possibility of achieving the desired goals?
Environmental scanning systems are structured to identify trends, events, and emerging issues (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). The majors factors considered when developing these issues are economic development, technological change, social values, political climate, and political values.

Tools Used for Environmental Scanning

**Information Resources.** During the 1980s many educators failed to respond to the changing world around them (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). The public's unwillingness to accept their lack of performance caught many educators off guard. As we move forward, databases that others have already established can be used. Sources of established databases for external environmental scanning are Chambers of Commerce and/or United Way agencies, state and local planning agencies, large corporations with facilities in your district, and universities.

**Exit Polls.** Outcomes of school elections have a strong influence on subsequent strategic planning by school officials (House, 1989). The results of an election are tangible, precise, and compelling messages from the public. Election returns are some of the most important data in a school district's external environment. They are an important barometer of public sentiment on issues from superintendent approval to the level of satisfaction concerning the schools. The message conveyed by an election
can be vague; a means to determine the precise meaning of the election results may be needed. The exit poll information gathering technique is used to improve the quality and reliability of information that is available concerning the school district's external environment. Speculation regarding election returns is weak and suspect because the interpretation is limited to the data available. The spectrum of variable that can be analyzed which influenced the voter's decision, knowledge, and attitudes concerning the election proposal, relationship with the school, past schooling experiences, etc. is reduced to the number of votes cast. Valuable information is lost when the opinions of an electorate are collapsed into for and against columns on a ballot. Exit polls are also believed to be more reliable than surveys conducted before an election because surveys generally show more support for school tax issues than later election results produce, suggesting that survey respondents provide a socially desirable response.

Forecasting Techniques

Forecasting is an inescapable part of the decision making process and should be used to its fullest advantage (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). There are several forecasting techniques and methodologies used to aid environmental forecasting. They include (a) qualitative methods, (b) time series analysis and projections, (c) casual methods, and (d) combinations as exemplified in scenario building.
Qualitative Methods. The best known qualitative method is the Delphi method (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). It involves using a panel of experts reaching a formal consensus. The Delphi method is reasonably reliable and has been used with corporate planning. Participants are anonymous, thus allowing all ideas to be examined without fear of repercussion or contamination due to social factors. Critics claim, however, that the Delphi method is too rigid and time consuming. They also caution that without careful selection of the panel of "experts" forecasts will result in no more than "accumulated ignorance".

Another qualitative method used for environmental scanning is the nominal group process approach (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). Experts gather and respond to trigger questions formulated to generate responses in selected environmental areas. Inputs are recorded, ranked, tabulated, and compiled. The result is a formulation of priorities. This process is faster than the Delphi Method, but is subject to interaction effects and social factors that can influence the outcome. Other qualitative techniques are market research, panel consensus, visionary forecast, and historical analogy.

Time Series Analysis and Projection. This method uses empirical and theoretical equations to develop projections from available data (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). A trend line is fitted to a mathematical equation. The equation
projects the trend line into the future. Critics point out that it is costly and time consuming to keep the data timely and accurate. Confidence in this method has diminished since future events have been more discontinuous and random than trend lines projected.

**Causal Methods.** Long-range forecasts and turning points are predicted using regression models, econometric models, and input-output models (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). Relationships are expressed between independent factors and factors to be projected. The forecaster develops a causal model to illustrate these relationships based on an analysis of the output.

**Combined Techniques Scenario Building.** This technique is gaining momentum and has been used in higher education (Verstegen & Wagoner, 1989). It reflects a belief that policy decisions are primarily judgmental, but use empirical data to identify the issues. Scenario’s are built by using the following steps: (a) identification of key strategic issues or decisions, (b) identification and analysis of key variables affecting these issues (can lead to a variety of scenarios surrounding the primary driving forces that are critical to the forecast), and (c) development of the implications of key scenarios, i.e., the threats and opportunities implied by each. When these results are combined with the results from self-assessment (strengths and weaknesses) the leverage points can be identified.
Leverage points are those areas where the organization can be expected to be most effective in defining and accomplishing its desired goals and objectives.

**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

Some schools are very good at knowing and capitalizing on their strengths; however, they fall short when trying to identify their weaknesses (Moldof, 1993). At the same time, schools may have attributes perceived as strengths by some and weaknesses by others. A strong college preparatory plan gained at the expense of a fine arts program may be viewed as a weakness by those who support the arts. To address weaknesses, it is important to avoid the temptation of trying to pinpoint one specific cause; instead examine all possible contributing categories such as environment, teachers, curriculum, information, materials, and equipment. To remedy a weakness, all causes should be addressed.

**Opportunities**

One question that should be asked in every strategic planning session is, "What event, if it occurs, could enhance the effectiveness of the plan (Moldof, 1993)?" Before an opportunity can be exploited, it must be identified.

**Threats**

A second question that should be asked when examining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
surrounding a strategic plan is, "What event can harm the plan (Moldof, 1993)?" Identifying threats to the plan provides an opportunity to moderate their impact. "What if" scenarios can be constructed and hypothetically resolved to generate alternatives in advance.

Strategic Planning Process

Mission Statement

Preparation

After establishing the stakeholder planning group and before writing the mission statement, there are several tasks to complete (Herman, 1989e). These are:

1. Develop a statement of beliefs (Herman, 1989e). A consensus of beliefs provides the foundation for the school district's culture (Herman, 1990).

2. Conduct external scanning (Herman, 1989e). Data, such as demographic, political, economic and attitudinal, is obtained from sources outside the school district (Herman, 1990).

3. Conduct internal scanning (Herman, 1989e). Data, such as student test scores and school climate measures, is used to detect trends during an extended time period (Herman, 1990).

4. Identify the critical success factors (Herman, 1989e). Critical success factors are crucial to developing and maintaining an excellent and productive school district.
5. Develop a preferred vision (Herman, 1989e). Study the trends and decide what to continue or change.

Writing the Mission Statement

A mission statement is an essential part of the strategic plan (Moldof, 1993). It defines the unique qualities a school district wants to be noted for, such as percent of students who go to college, athletic excellence, or experimental program development. Mission statements distinguish one school or school district from another and define the needs of each entity. The mission statement is an assertion of why the school exists and what it should be doing (Nebgen, 1990). It is a fundamental justification for the organization’s existence (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). Empty cliches and glittering generalities should be avoided when writing the mission statement (Moldof, 1993). As a result, the mission statement will allow the development of strategic goals and objectives and the subsequent action plans designed to meet those goals and objectives (Herman, 1989e). A mission statement dictates priorities and is the strategic plan’s driving force (Moldof, 1993). When writing the mission statement, the following four requirements should be met (Moldof, 1993): (a) state the higher purpose of the school, (b) describe the desired achievements, (c) distinguish the school from other schools, and (d) project a picture of the school’s future.
When the mission statement is written as part of a formal exercise, it enables school officials to articulate, codify, discuss, and debate the higher purpose (Moldof, 1993). The higher purpose of the school is no longer locked in people's heads as a seldom discussed, vague generality. A mission statement should lead to quantification of the plan's detailed sections that call for results in terms that are responsive to the program's total mission (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). As a result, the mission statement becomes a highly visible declaration that cannot be ignored (Moldof, 1993). It facilitates a consensus among diverse constituencies with different agendas that exist in many school districts. A consensus is not guaranteed, but the different factions are pushed in that direction. The mission statement can be used as a referee when debates flare up over touchy issues. The mission statement can provide some guidelines for resolving conflict.

An attendant part of the mission statement is the supporting policy statements (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). When the mission statement and supporting policy statements are developed, the board should meet to discuss them. Policy statements should be formally adopted by board resolution.

The development of strategic goals is an important continuation of the mission statement and focuses on the school district's direction (Stewart & Bailey, 1991). When
setting goals, strategic planners should weigh the following factors: (a) How might we achieve our preferred future?, (b) What general or large tasks do we need to accomplish if we are to achieve our preferred future?, (c) Over what time period should these tasks be accomplished?, and (d) What will we have accomplished in 5 years (McCune, 1986, p. 49)?

Clear, measurable, and widely accepted goals are an indicator of successful organizations (Halligner & McCary, 1991). A consensus on goals and the means to achieve them provides the basis for directing, motivating, justifying, and evaluating behavior. The content of organizational goals and the extent to which they are understood and shared influence the effectiveness of educational leadership.

Most schools have multiple goals they wish to achieve (Moldof, 1993). Each goal should be supported by several strategies. Good plans have quantitative, measurable criteria (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). The plans reflect visionary and concrete commitments to organizational productivity. Achievement of productivity goals becomes the responsibility of the managers in charge. Therefore, it is important that each goal is scrutinized for clarity of purpose, attainability, measurability, and appropriateness (Farrel & Gring, 1993). The formal process of setting goals and creating strategies provides school officials with fresh and innovative approaches (Moldof, 1993).
Strategic goals are based on the vision the strategic planners have developed for the school system (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). This part of the planning process can take up to 3 months and may require modifications. Do not take too much time with this step in the process. It is better to move ahead, making changes after the plan has been implemented, than drag out the process and lose the momentum.

Operational Plan

Operational planning is a cornerstone of program development (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). Operational plans carry out the strategic plans and generate program output statements. They are developed and implemented over a defined time period and moved forward from the measured results of the last operational plan. Implementation is a continuing process. The operational plan must be reviewed each time the strategic plan is developed. Good operational plans have quantitative and measurable outputs. The operational plan outlines activity for a specified time period (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). Operational plans should include goals, objectives, timeliness, responsibilities, specific activities and planned results (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). They are prepared by senior management with assistance from appropriate staff members. Operational plans should contain short-term goals and be sequential in nature. The formal discipline of the strategic plan
provides an opportunity to examine alternate ideas that have not been previously employed (Moldof, 1993). Shared values shape the targets and help generate individual staff commitments toward meeting those targets (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991).

Operational plans are designed to arrive at the desired outcomes stated in the mission and vision statements (Herman, 1989a). Operational plans describe a series of inputs and outputs (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). Program outputs describe desired future conditions and are very specific. Program inputs describe the things that need to be done to get there. Inputs are the key activities that are necessary in order for the output to be realized. Action plans are outlined to achieve specific outputs (Moldof, 1993).

The operational plan is the specific tasks that will enable the district to carry out the strategies (Moldof, 1993). Operational plans should be as detailed and precise as possible. Be specific when assigning tasks to individuals. This part is the nuts and bolts of the strategic plan, and it helps divide tasks into a series of connected steps that detail who is responsible, what is to be accomplished, and how to measure whether the desired outcomes were accomplished (Herman, 1989a).

The focus is to incorporate the operating plan into the daily activities of the school district (Bradley & Vrettas,
1990). Staff inservice is a critical element at this stage because it builds understanding and shapes the school district's culture. It is recommended that regular progress reports be sent to the school board, staff, and community members.

**Budget**

The budget comes at the end of the planning process (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). A good strategic plan is a powerful tool for gaining budget approval. When the budget is completed, planners may need to adjust the strategic plan. Some goals may be dropped or scaled back, while others need to be added. Planning and budgeting are dynamically connected; however, it is important to remember that planning comes first.

**Evaluation**

Constituents want results (Millett, 1991). In that context, strategic planning can be described as a vision with measurable outcomes and a reliable evaluation process. The operational plan describes activity for a specified time period. The continuing implementation process is subject to review, reassessment, and evaluation (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). A good operational plan contains its own summative and formative evaluation processes. Although schools outline multiple goals, academic achievement is the only goal measured with some degree of uniformity and accuracy
(Bashum & Lunenburg, 1989b). This is accomplished through standardized achievement tests.

**Summative Evaluation**

The summative evaluation is a final assessment of the relative success in achieving the goals of the plan (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). This evaluation is keyed to specific criteria defined in the plan's stated outputs and reported to the program's stakeholders at the end of a specified period. Summative results are shared by program staff, besides being reported to superiors and constituents.

**Formative Evaluation**

Formative evaluation is an assessment of progress and is designed to facilitate midcourse corrections (LeBaron & Markuson, 1991). It is a management tool that serves as an evaluative milepost between the beginning and end of operational planning periods. Formative evaluation is a less formal process that produces output progress reports and recommends remedial action when midterm targets are not being met. Formative evaluations are usually used by and discussed with program staff.

Strategic and operational plans should be reviewed on an annual basis (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). The evaluation should be based on the following questions: (a) Are our estimates of the future still relevant?, (b) Do the mission statement and goals still reflect our priorities?, and (c) Do the operational plans still meet the objectives?
Based on the answers to these questions, adjustments can be made for the following year (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). The evaluation should be communicated to the stakeholders to demonstrate the school district's commitment.

Conclusion

Effective planning is not accomplished in a vacuum (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). Shifting educational needs and social change have forced planners to acknowledge that school systems are related to other institutions and are influenced by general social conditions. There is no one definitive solution or program for all situations.

Involving the user in the planning process is a new development (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). While the merits of user participation have been established, they are sometimes ignored because it seems more efficient to leave the planning and evaluating to the professionals. Schools exist to serve the community, and community members should have a voice in school-related issues.

Input from a diverse base of planners is appropriate and valuable to school system planning (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). Ownership of the strategic plan is widened and the chances of success are improved.

Strategic planning goes beyond other planning models. Inherent in its strength is its capability to change old
views, identify new possibilities, and raise new questions (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). The elements of evaluation and renewal of the strategic plan provide the dynamic nature of the process. It requires us to continually scan environments, be aware of changes and opportunities, develop a sense of direction and purpose, and organize our energy to plan tasks and activities to reach our goals.

Strategic planning is not a panacea. The degree of effectiveness varies by school district. School district’s receive benefits from planning at different rates and in different proportions (Moldof, 1993). Trial and error are the stepping stones to successful and effective strategic planning. However, if the tools of information, participation, and anticipation are used to our best advantage, school systems will reap benefits that will serve our society well into the future (Bradley & Vrettas, 1990). Educators will make a significant contribution to the future of education because of their continued involvement in the strategic planning process (Stewart & Bailey, 1991).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to determine if (a) the strategic planning practices of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts were the same and (b) if the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning were the same. A questionnaire (Appendix A) was used to survey a stratified random sample of Texas independent school district superintendents. The stratified random sample was based on student populations.

Population

The total population of Texas public school district superintendents is made up of the 1,058 superintendents from the 1,052 independent and consolidated independent school districts, 5 common school districts, and 1 municipal school district. Superintendents from the 10 independent school districts that are institutions managed by the state, the 5 common school districts, and the 1 municipal school district were excluded to achieve a more homogeneous population. The sample was selected from the remaining 1,042 independent and consolidated independent school districts. The population
was identified from the **Texas School Directory** (Texas Education Agency, 1993-94).

**Sampling Technique**

The sample was selected from the identified population of Texas independent and consolidated independent school district superintendents using stratified random sampling. The first and second groups, each consisting of 96 superintendents, were randomly selected from small and medium school districts using a random number generator. The third group consisted of the 96 superintendents from large school districts and the fourth group consisted of the 7 superintendents from mega school districts. The 96 superintendents in the first group were randomly selected from the stratum of school districts with enrollments of less than 1,600 students. The second group of 96 superintendents was randomly selected from the stratum of school districts with enrollments of 1,600 students or more and less than 6,000 students. The third group was made up of the 96 superintendents from school districts with student enrollments of 6,000 students or more and less than 50,000 students. The fourth group consisted of 7 superintendents from school districts with student enrollments of 50,000 or more.
Instrumentation

The instrument was a 10-question survey questionnaire (Appendix A) designed by the author. Questions 1 through 8 and question 10 were agreement-disagreement items used to collect nominal data relating to 19 strategic planning practices. Question 1, questions 3 through 7, and question 10 required the subject to select either yes or no to answer the question. Question 3 and questions 5 through 7 asked for further information if a yes answer was given. Questions 2 and 8 were checklists permitting more than one selection from three or more possible choices. Question 9 was designed to collect ordinal data. It was a five-part question using a Likert scale to assess school district superintendents’ opinions regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning. Questions 2, 8, and 9 gave the superintendents an opportunity to add to the choices stated on the questionnaire. A comments section was provided at the end of the questionnaire to allow the respondents to express their closing thoughts.

Data Collection

A numbering scheme was devised to keep track of the respondents and nonrespondents. Cover letters and each page of the surveys had a unique three-digit reference number identifying the superintendents who were mailed or faxed a letter and questionnaire. References to superintendents
include staff members whom the superintendent may have asked to respond to the questionnaire. The first digit of the small school district reference number was 1, medium was 2, large was 3, and mega was 4. Identities of the respondents and nonrespondents were kept separate from the responses. The only record of respondents and nonrespondents was who answered the questionnaire and who did not. Data identifying respondents and nonrespondents was not part of the study, but was used to determine the nonrespondents who would receive the first follow-up cover letter, questionnaire, and self-addressed, stamped envelope and to learn which superintendents did not respond to the first and second mailing.

Before distributing the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted using school district administrators who were graduate students at the University of North Texas. The pilot study was conducted after the dissertation proposal was approved. Questionnaires were distributed to a total of 34 graduate students during classes. The students were asked to indicate on the questionnaire any questions that should be eliminated or reworded for clarity. The students were encouraged to write suggested changes on the questionnaire.

Responses were evaluated to decide if the questionnaire should be changed. If 40% of the responses suggested that a question should be modified, the question would have been
reworded. If 50% of the responses suggested that a question should be eliminated, it would have been removed from the survey. None of the responses reached the 40% or 50% levels; however, minor changes were made based on participants' comments.

The purpose of the pilot study was to test the clarity and appropriateness of the survey for the target population. The pilot study was used to gauge the impact of the survey on the target audience and to improve the accuracy of the instrument.

School district superintendents who were selected for the study received a cover letter (Appendix C), questionnaire, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The first mailing was sent on April 17, 1996, the day after the pilot study was completed. Of the 295 superintendents who were sent questionnaires, 162 (55%) superintendents responded within the first 2 weeks. After the first 2-week period, on May 1, 1996, the first follow-up cover letter (Appendix D), another copy of the questionnaire, and another self-addressed, stamped envelope were sent to the 133 nonrespondents. An additional 59 (20%) questionnaires were returned during the second 2-week period resulting in a cumulative total of 221 (75%) questionnaires received during the first 4 weeks. The plan called for telephoning the 74 superintendents who had not responded after 4 weeks. This process took 2½ days starting May 15, 1996, and ending
May 17, 1996. One questionnaire was received from a superintendent before he was called. Telephone calls were placed to the remaining 73 superintendents. The telephone calls followed one of the following four scenarios:

1. The superintendent was in the office and agreed to answer the survey over the telephone. This happened seven times.

2. The superintendent or his delegate had the survey in front of him and agreed to fill out the questionnaire and return it by mail. There were three instances of this happening.

3. The superintendent or his delegate did not have the survey in front of him. The second follow-up cover letter (Appendix E) and questionnaire were faxed to the superintendent or his delegate. Faxes were sent to two persons in this circumstance. They agreed to complete the questionnaire and return it by mail or fax. A mailing address and fax number were provided in the cover letter.

4. The superintendent was not available. Permission was given by the superintendent’s secretary to fax the second follow-up cover letter and questionnaire. Each secretary agreed to follow up with the superintendent. A return mailing address and fax number were provided in the cover letter. Faxes were sent to 61 school districts.

After May 17, an additional 25 (8%) responses were received for a cumulative total of 246 (83%). Small school
districts returned 79 (82%), medium districts returned 82 (85%), large districts returned 78 (81%), and mega districts returned 7 (100%) questionnaires.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis was accomplished using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 6.1, a computer-based statistical package. The Crosstabs and Chi-square tests were used to analyze the nominal data obtained from questions 1 through 8 and question 10, and the one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the data obtained from question 9.

The level of significance (α) was established a priori at .05. Using a 4:1 ratio of β to α, the corresponding β is .20 and the power (1-β) is .80. The standardized effect size (d) was set at .75 standard deviations. The sample size required for each of the small, medium, and large groups to detect a difference of .75 standard deviations (d = 0.75) for α = .05 and power = .80 was 35 school districts.

The group of large school districts had the smallest population, which was 96 districts. To increase the probability of achieving a larger sample and improving the reliability of the statistics, 96 survey questionnaires were sent to each of the small, medium, and large groups of school districts. To achieve a minimum sample size of 35
from each of the small, medium, and large school districts, a return rate of 37% was needed from each group.

Mega school districts were not statistically evaluated with the small, medium, and large districts. The sample size required for each of the four (small, medium, large, and mega) school districts to detect a difference of .75 standard deviations ($d = 0.75$) for $\alpha = 0.05$ and power $= 0.80$ was 40 school districts. Mega school districts have a population of 7; therefore, a sample size of 40 would not have been achievable. The mega school districts carry a substantial voice in Texas education. Results from the mega school districts were reported separately. Survey questionnaires were sent to all 7 superintendents in the mega school district category.

Survey forms returned from the target population were coded and entered into SPSS. Data input and output were reviewed by the Educational Research Laboratory, University of North Texas. Individual parts of questions 1 through 8 and question 10 were coded with a 1 for yes, 0 for no, or 9 for no response. Each part of question 9 was coded 1 through 6 to match the responses or 9 for no response.

The 19 parts of questions 1 through 8 and question 10 of the survey questionnaire were evaluated individually using Crosstabs and Chi-square analysis. Crosstabs analysis included row, column, and total counts along with row, column, and total percents. The Chi-square test revealed
whether a difference existed among small, medium, and large school districts for the planning practice being analyzed. A level of significance (\( \alpha \)) less than .05 showed that the practices listed in questions 1 through 8 and question 10 were related to school district size. A level of significance (\( \alpha \)) of .05 or greater showed that school size was independent. Chi-square analysis was run once using the small, medium, and large school districts and again using the small, medium, large, and mega school districts. The mega school districts were excluded in the first analysis because of the large difference in sample sizes between the mega districts and the small, medium, and large districts. The test results are exhibited in tables in chapter 4 to answer the research questions.

Question 9 of the survey questionnaire was evaluated using one-way ANOVA. The five parts of question 9 were evaluated individually. A level of significance (\( \alpha \)) of less than .05 showed that at least one group was significantly different. When there was a significant difference among the groups, the Tukey-B post hoc test with a significance level of .05 was run to determine which groups differed significantly. The mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages were determined for each group. The questionnaire data is exhibited in tables in chapter 4 to answer the research questions.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Statistical analyses of research questions 1 through 10 are presented in this chapter. Questions 1 through 8 and question 10 were agreement-disagreement questions used to collect nominal data relating to 19 strategic planning practices. Question 9 was a five-part question designed to collect ordinal data. It used a Likert scale to assess the Texas independent school district superintendents' opinions regarding the effectiveness of planning.

Summary of Statistical Procedures

Statistical analyses were performed using the computer based Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 6.1 for Windows. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to the data. The findings were analyzed using Crosstabs, Chi-square, and one-way ANOVA.

Statistical Responses to the Research Questions

Planning Practices

Crosstabs and Chi-square tests were used to analyze the nominal data obtained from questions 1 through 8 and question 10. The survey questions and applicable hypotheses precede the results.
Question 1
Are outside consultants employed to assist with your
district’s planning process? Yes □  No □
The null hypothesis for the planning practice identified in
question 1 was:

There is no significant difference in the planning
practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether outside consultants are employed to assist
with the district’s planning process.

Question 2
Check the groups that participate in the district’s planning
process: □ teachers, □ principals, □ central office
administrators, □ school district support staff,
□ students, □ parents, □ school board members, □ senior
citizens, □ business leaders
The null hypotheses for the nine planning practices
identified in question 2 were:

1. There is no significant difference in the planning
practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether teachers participate in the district’s
planning process.

2. There is no significant difference in the planning
practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether principals participate in the district’s
planning process.
3. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether central office administrators participate in the district's planning process.

4. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether school district support staff participate in the district's planning process.

5. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether students participate in the district's planning process.

6. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether parents participate in the district's planning process.

7. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether school board members participate in the district's planning process.

8. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether senior citizens participate in the district's planning process.

9. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether business leaders participate in the
district’s planning process.

Question 3
Is training provided for the district’s planning
participants? Yes □ No □

The null hypothesis for the planning practice identified in
question 3 was:

There is no significant difference in the planning
practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether training is provided for the district’s
planning participants.

Question 4
Do you follow a sequence of steps with a time frame for each
step in the planning process? Yes □ No □

The null hypothesis for the planning practice identified in
question 4 was:

There is no significant difference in the planning
practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether there is a sequence of steps with a time
frame for each step in the district’s planning process.

Question 5
Is someone other than the superintendent responsible for the
district’s planning? Yes □ No □

The null hypothesis for the planning practice identified in
question 5 was:
There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether someone other than the superintendent is responsible for the district's planning.

**Question 6**

Do you update your district's planning each year?

Yes □  No □

The null hypothesis for the planning practice identified in question 6 was:

There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether the district's plan is updated each year.

**Question 7**

Is part of the district's planning conducted off site or away from the district? Yes □  No □

The null hypothesis for the planning practice identified in question 7 was:

There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether part of the district's planning is conducted off site or away from the district.

**Question 8**

Check the element(s) that is/are included in your district's planning:

□ Budget - Planned activities stated in dollars

□ Operating plan - Steps for implementing district goals
The null hypotheses for the three planning practices identified in question 8 were:

1. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether a budget is included in the district's plan.

2. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether an operating plan is included in the district's plan.

3. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether a mission statement is included in the district's plan.

Question 10
Strategic planning is the development of detailed action steps by top management to reach strategic goals. Do you describe your district's planning practices as strategic planning? Yes ☐ No ☐

The null hypothesis for the planning practice identified in question 10 was:

There is no significant difference among small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether superintendents describe their district's planning practices as strategic planning.
The data for the superintendents' responses relating to the planning practices of small, medium, large, and mega school districts is presented in Table 1. The results displayed in Table 1 are the Crosstabs column percents of superintendents' yes answers to questions relating to school district planning practices. Complete Crosstabs analyses for school district planning practices are presented in Appendix F. The results are presented in descending order by the average percent of superintendents from all school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Planning Practices by School Districts</th>
<th>Percent Answering Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals participate</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Participate</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office administrators participate</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement included in planning</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members participate</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan updated yearly</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business leaders participate</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district support staff participate</td>
<td>79.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget included in planning</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating plan included in planning</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence of steps</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training provided</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe as strategic planning</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone other than superintendent responsible</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior citizens participate</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside consultants are employed</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of planning conducted off site</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
districts excluding mega districts who answered yes to questions relating to planning practices (Table 2). Mega

Table 2

Average Percent of Superintendents From All School Districts, Except Mega Districts, Who Answered Yes to Questions Relating to District Planning Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Average Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals participate</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers participate</td>
<td>97.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office administrators participate</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate</td>
<td>94.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mission statement included in planning</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members participate</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan updated yearly</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business leaders participate</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district support staff participate</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget included in planning</td>
<td>78.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating plan included in planning</td>
<td>78.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequence of steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training provided</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe as strategic planning</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone other than superintendent responsible</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior citizens participate</td>
<td>47.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside consultants are employed</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of planning conducted off site</td>
<td>20.9</td>
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</table>

school districts were not included in the ordering process because the study focused primarily on small, medium, and large districts. The order shows greatest to least participation in the planning activity by small, medium, and large school districts.

The Chi-square analyses for small, medium, and large school districts presented in Table 3 indicate there were significant differences at the $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ levels regarding the planning practices of small, medium, and large districts. Mega school districts were not included in these analyses. Significant differences existed at the $p < .01$
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals participate</td>
<td>1.946</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.37786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers participate</td>
<td>2.789</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.24802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office administrators participate</td>
<td>16.661</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.00024**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate</td>
<td>1.290</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.52467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement included in planning</td>
<td>1.685</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.43072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members participate</td>
<td>4.580</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.10126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan updated yearly</td>
<td>1.402</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.49604</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business leaders participate</td>
<td>1.840</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.39857</td>
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<td>School district support staff participate</td>
<td>7.913</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01913*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget included in planning</td>
<td>.990</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.60943</td>
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<td>Operating plan included in planning</td>
<td>.222</td>
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<td>.89497</td>
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<td>Sequence of steps</td>
<td>16.541</td>
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<td>.00026**</td>
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<td>Training provided</td>
<td>3.478</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.17566</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe as strategic planning</td>
<td>5.386</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.06766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate</td>
<td>8.223</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01638*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone other than superintendent responsible</td>
<td>28.370</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.00000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior citizens participate</td>
<td>5.383</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.06777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside consultants are employed</td>
<td>10.050</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.00657**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of planning conducted off site</td>
<td>3.492</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.17450</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  **p < .01

level regarding whether outside consultants were employed to assist with the school district's planning process, whether central office administrators participated in the district's planning process, whether a sequence of steps was followed with a time frame for each step in the planning process, and whether someone other than the superintendent was responsible for the district's planning. Significant differences were detected at the p < .05 level for whether school district support staff participated in the district's
planning process and whether students participated in the
district's planning process.

The planning practices that were significant for small,
medium, and large school districts were the following:

1. Central office administrators' participation in the
school district's planning process was significant at the
$p < .01$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from
small to large school districts, was 89.9%, 100%, and 100%.
The percent participation was less in small school districts
than in medium and large districts.

2. School district support staffs' participation in
the district's planning process was significant at the $p <
.05$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to
large school districts, was 79.7%, 79.0%, and 96.6%. The
percent of participation was approximately the same in small
and medium school districts, with a sizable increase in
large districts.

3. Following a sequence of steps with a time frame for
each step in the planning process was significant at the
$p < .01$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from
small to large school districts, was 62.0%, 68.4%, and
89.6%. The number of school districts that followed a
sequence of steps with a time frame for each step in the
planning process increased with district size.

4. Students' participation in the school district's
planning process was significant at the $p < .05$ level. The
percent answering yes, ordered from small to large school districts, was 58.2%, 48.1%, and 70.5%. The percent of student participation was less in medium school districts and considerably more in large districts, with the smaller districts falling in the middle.

5. Someone other than the superintendent being responsible for the school district’s planning process was significant at the $p < .01$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to large school districts, was 36.7%, 45.0%, and 76.9%. The number of school districts in which someone other that the superintendent was responsible for the district’s planning process increased with district size.

6. Employing outside consultants to assist with the school district’s planning process was significant at the $p < .01$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to large school districts, was 28.2%, 42.5%, and 53.3%. The number of school districts that employed outside consultants to assist with the district’s planning process increased in direct relation to district size.

Chi-square analyses were also run for the small, medium, large, and mega school districts (Table 4). Including the mega school districts in the statistical analyses produced almost the same results as the statistical analyses for small, medium, and large districts. Two exceptions were noted. The practice of describing the
Table 4
Chi-Square Analyses of Planning Practices by Small, Medium, Large, and Mega School Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals participate</td>
<td>2.033</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.56559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers participate</td>
<td>3.019</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.38872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office administrators participate</td>
<td>17.378</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00059**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate</td>
<td>1.665</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.64478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement included in planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members participate</td>
<td>4.906</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.17885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan updated yearly</td>
<td>3.627</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.30464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business leaders participate</td>
<td>3.007</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.39057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district support staff participate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget included in planning</td>
<td>9.425</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.02415*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating plan included in planning</td>
<td>5.980</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.11259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence of steps</td>
<td>2.512</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.47307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training provided</td>
<td>17.233</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00063**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe as strategic planning</td>
<td>4.337</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.22726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate</td>
<td>5.437</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.01249*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone other than superintendent responsible</td>
<td>10.728</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.01329*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior citizens participate</td>
<td>31.412</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside consultants are employed</td>
<td>5.657</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.12954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of planning conducted off site</td>
<td>10.054</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.01811*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.354</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.14766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  **p < .01

The planning practices that were significant for small, medium, large, and mega school districts were the following:
1. Central office administrators' participation in the school district's planning process was significant at the \( p < .01 \) level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 89.9%, 100%, 100%, and 100%. The percent of participation was less in small school districts than in medium, large, and mega districts.

2. School district support staffs' participation in the district's planning process was significant at the \( p < .05 \) level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 79.7%, 79.0%, 96.6% and 100%. The percent of participation was approximately the same in small and medium school districts, with a sizable increase in large and mega districts.

3. Following a sequence of steps with a time frame for each step in the planning process was significant at the \( p < .01 \) level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 62.0%, 68.4%, 89.6%, and 85.7%. The number of school districts that followed a sequence of steps with a time frame for each step in the planning process increased from small to medium to large districts and dropped back somewhat with mega districts.

4. Describing the school district's planning practices as strategic planning was significant at the \( p < .05 \) level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 62.8%, 62.8%, 77.9%, and 71.4%. The number of school districts that described their planning practices
as strategic planning was the same for small and medium districts, increased with large districts, and dropped back somewhat with mega districts.

5. Students' participation in the school district's planning process was significant at the $p < .05$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 58.2%, 48.1%, 70.5% and 28.6%. The percent of student participation decreased from small to medium school districts, increased considerably in the large districts, and decreased sharply in the mega districts.

6. Someone other than the superintendent being responsible for the school district's planning process was significant at the $p < .01$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 36.7%, 45.0%, 76.9% and 85.7%. The number of school districts in which someone other that the superintendent was responsible for the district's planning process increased with district size.

7. Employing outside consultants to assist with the school district's planning process was significant at the $p < .05$ level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 28.2%, 42.5%, 53.3%, and 42.0%. The number of school districts that employed outside consultants to assist with the district's planning process increased with district size from small to large districts. The percentage rate dropped in the mega school districts.
Planning Evaluation

The one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the data obtained from question 9. The five parts of question 9 were evaluated individually. When a level of significance (α) less than .05 indicated that at least one group was significantly different, the Tukey-B test with a significance level of .05 was run to detect which of the groups differed significantly. The data was tested for homogeneity of variance and it met the assumption.

Question 9

On a scale of 1-6, rate the effectiveness of planning for improving the following (circle your response):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial control
Management effectiveness
Education for children
Superintendent's credibility
Public relations

The null hypotheses for the five parts of question 9 were:

1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving financial control.

2. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school
districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving management effectiveness.

3. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving education for children.

4. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving the superintendent's credibility.

5. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving public relations.

The mean and standard deviation were calculated for the small, medium, and large groups of school district superintendents. Standard deviations are reported to show the variations in the superintendents' responses. The mean responses and standard deviations are reported in Table 5 in descending order of rank. Except for the categories that are ranked equally, superintendents from small, medium, and large school districts ranked the various effectiveness of planning categories in the same order. Education for children was ranked as most important, with mean ratings ranging from 5.2 to 5.3. Public relations ranked second, with mean ratings ranging from 4.7 to 4.9. Superintendent's
Table 5

Superintendents' Ratings of the Effectiveness of Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Large</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education for children</td>
<td>5.2/0.8</td>
<td>5.3/0.7</td>
<td>5.3/0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>4.7/0.8</td>
<td>4.8/0.9</td>
<td>4.9/0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent's credibility</td>
<td>4.5/1.1</td>
<td>4.6/1.0</td>
<td>4.8/0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management effectiveness</td>
<td>4.4/1.0</td>
<td>4.6/0.8</td>
<td>4.8/0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial control</td>
<td>4.2/1.4</td>
<td>4.1/1.3</td>
<td>4.3/1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

credibility, with mean ratings ranging from 4.5 to 4.8, ranked third. Management effectiveness ranked fourth, with mean ratings ranging from 4.4 to 4.8. Least important was financial control, with mean ratings ranging from 4.1 to 4.3.

The one-way ANOVA test indicated there was a significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in the opinions of superintendents from small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving management effectiveness (Table 6).

Table 6

One-Way ANOVA Analyses of Superintendents' Ratings of the Effectiveness of Planning by Small, Medium, and Large School Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>Significance of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education for children</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>1.373</td>
<td>.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent's credibility</td>
<td>1.884</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management effectiveness</td>
<td>4.213</td>
<td>.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial control</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
The mean responses of the superintendents' opinions regarding the strength of planning for improving management effectiveness, ordered from small to large school districts, were 4.4, 4.6, and 4.8. The Tukey-B test indicated the mean response of superintendents of large school districts was significantly different at the p < .05 level than the mean response of superintendents of small districts. The one-way ANOVA test indicated there was no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving education for children, public relations, superintendent's credibility, or financial control.

Standard deviations in the group opinions of superintendents from small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning ranged from 0.7 to 1.4. Generally the higher the mean rating, the smaller the variation in standard deviations. Standard deviations for improving education for children, the highest ranked category, ranged from 0.7 to 0.8 while the standard deviation for financial control, the lowest ranked category, ranged from 1.2 to 1.4. This would indicate less variation and greater certainty in the superintendents' responses for the higher ranked categories. The exception was the superintendent's credibility category in which the standard deviations ranged from 0.9 to 1.1. The lower ranked management effectiveness category had standard deviations
Data was collected from the 7 mega school districts. The mega school districts were not included in the one-way ANOVA statistics because the small sample size would have produced an unreliable result. The mean responses of the mega school district superintendents' are displayed in Table 7 alongside the mean responses of the small, medium, and large school district superintendents.

### Table 7

**Superintendents' Ratings of the Effectiveness of Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for children</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent's credibility</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management effectiveness</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial control</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Except for the public relations category, mega school district superintendents ranked effectiveness of planning characteristics in the same priority order as the small, medium, and large school district superintendents. Mega school district superintendents ranked public relations lowest, with a 3.8 mean rating which was the same as the mean rating for financial control. Small, medium, and large school district superintendents ranked public relations second highest with mean ratings that ranged from 4.7 to 4.9.
Mega school district superintendents' mean ratings were lower in all categories than small, medium, and large school district superintendents' mean ratings. Small, medium, and large school district superintendents' mean ratings for education for children ranged from 5.2 to 5.3; the mega school district superintendents' mean rating was 4.9. Small, medium, and large school district superintendents' mean ratings for public relations ranged from 4.7 to 4.9; the mega school district superintendents' mean rating was 3.8. Small, medium, and large school district superintendents' mean ratings for superintendent's credibility ranged from 4.5 to 4.8; the mega school district superintendents' mean rating was 4.3. Small, medium, and large school district superintendents' mean ratings for management effectiveness ranged from 4.4 to 4.8; the mega school district superintendents' mean rating was 4.1. Small, medium, and large school district superintendents' mean ratings for financial control ranged from 4.2 to 4.3; the mega school district superintendents' mean rating was 3.8.

Fill-in-the-Blank Responses

Responses to the fill-in-the-blank questions from the returned questionnaires were tallied. Some responses have been summarized or reworded for clarity. The number in parentheses following the response shows the number of times
the response was given. All of the questions are listed to provide an understanding of the relationship between the responses and the questionnaire.

School District Planning Questionnaire

1. Are outside consultants employed to assist with your district's planning process? Yes □ No □

2. Check the groups that participate in the district's planning process: □ teachers, □ principals, □ central office administrators, □ school district support staff, □ students, □ parents, □ school board members, □ senior citizens, □ business leaders □ other _______________________________________

Responses to "other":

Community members (19)
Clergy (3)
Consultants (3)
District-wide committee (3)
Regional service center (3)
Business representatives (2)
Local government officials (2)
Site-based committee (2)

3. Is training provided for the district's planning participants? Yes □ No □ If yes, describe. _____
Responses to "If yes, describe."

Staff development training (53)
Regional Service Center training (26)
Site-based decision making team training (21)
Planning workshops (10)
Team building seminars (9)
Training by consultants (7)
School board member training (2)
Texas Education Association manuals (1)

4. Do you follow a sequence of steps with a time frame for each step in the planning process? Yes □  No □

5. Is someone other than the superintendent responsible for the district's planning? Yes □  No □  If yes, state his/her position or title.  ________________

Responses to "If yes, state his/her position or title."

Assistant Superintendent (57)
Director (24)
Principal (22)
Site-based decision making team (10)
Curriculum coordinator (7)
District planning committee chairman (7)
School board members (3)

6. Do you update your district's planning each year?
Yes □  No □  If no, how often?   ____  Why?  ________

Responses to "If no, how often?"

2 years (7)
3 years (8)
5 years (1)

Responses to "Why?":
Lack of leadership (1)
Lack of time (1)
Provide time for implementation (1)
Small district (1)

7. Is part of the district’s planning conducted off site or away from the district? Yes □ No □ If yes, how many days a year? __________

Responses to "If yes, how many days a year?":
1 day (6)
2 days (20)
3 days (9)
4 days (5)
5 days (4)
More than 5 days (2)

8. Check the element(s) that is/are included in your district’s planning:
□ Budget - Planned activities stated in dollars
□ Operating plan - Steps for implementing district goals
□ Mission statement - Vision and goals for the future
□ Other ________________________________
□ Other ________________________________
Responses to "Other":

- Strategies and objectives (25)
- Performance evaluation (14)
- Staffing patterns and development (13)
- Planning calendar (12)
- Facilities plan (11)
- Curriculum plan (7)
- Discipline management (7)
- Growth and enrollment trends (6)
- Statement of beliefs and values (6)
- Grade level goals (5)
- Technology plan (5)
- Programs (4)
- Community involvement (3)
- Planning processes and procedures (3)
- Needs assessment (2)
- Legal requirements (1)
- State of Texas plan (1)

9. On a scale of 1-6, rate the effectiveness of planning for improving the following (circle your response):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management effectiveness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent's credibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses to "Other":

Focus on district direction (7)
Community involvement (5)
Facilities development (1)
Interpersonal skills (1)
Intrapersonal skills (1)
Teacher morale (1)
Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test scores (1)

10. Strategic planning is the development of detailed action steps by top management to reach strategic goals. Do you describe your district’s planning practices as strategic planning? Yes □ No □

Responses to "COMMENTS."

Use strategic planning, but call it something else (9)
All staff participates in the planning process (8)
Use planning, but not strategic planning (3)
Planning is systemic planning (2)
According to this definition, all planning is strategic planning (1)
Due to changing leadership, full plan implementation does not occur (1)
Have not started strategic planning due to a lack of trained administrators (1)
District could benefit from strategic planning (1)
Just began site-based decision making (1)
Planning includes information gathering (1)
Report on progress against plan on a monthly basis (1)
Strategic planning is mandatory in today's arena (1)
CHAPTER 5  

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Superintendents from the 1,042 small, medium, large, and mega Texas independent school districts were surveyed to determine if (a) the strategic planning practices of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts were the same and (b) if the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning were the same. A stratified random sample, based on student populations, of 96 superintendents from each of the small, medium, and large school districts was selected. Data was also collected from the 7 mega school districts and reported. The superintendents were surveyed with a questionnaire (Appendix A). Questionnaires were sent to 295 superintendents, and 246 (83.4%) were returned.

Superintendents who responded to the survey questionnaire answered nine questions relating to 19 strategic planning practices and one five-part question relating to the effectiveness of strategic planning. Respondents were given the opportunity to expand on questions 2, 8, and 9 with comments. Respondents were also
given an opportunity to express a closing thought at the end of the survey questionnaire.

The data was analyzed using Crosstabs, Chi-square, and one-way ANOVA statistical analyses. The level of significance (α) was established a priori at .05. Results were reported at .01 and .05 levels of significance.

The Chi-square test was used to establish the level of significance for the 19 planning practices identified in questions 1 through 8 and question 10 of the survey questionnaire. The null hypotheses for these planning practices were:

1. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether outside consultants are employed to assist with the district's planning process.

2. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether teachers participate in the district's planning process.

3. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether principals participate in the district's planning process.

4. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether central office administrators participate in the district’s planning process.

5. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether school district support staff participate in the district’s planning process.

6. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether students participate in the district’s planning process.

7. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether parents participate in the district’s planning process.

8. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether school board members participate in the district’s planning process.

9. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether senior citizens participate in the district’s planning process.

10. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether business leaders participate in the district’s planning process.
11. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether training is provided for the district's planning participants.

12. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether there is a sequence of steps with a time frame for each step in the district's planning process.

13. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether someone other than the superintendent is responsible for the district's planning.

14. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether the district's plan is updated each year.

15. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether part of the district's planning is conducted off site or away from the district.

16. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether a budget is included in the district's plan.

17. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts
regarding whether an operating plan is included in the district’s plan.

18. There is no significant difference in the planning practices of small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether a mission statement is included in the district’s plan.

19. There is no significant difference among small, medium, and large school districts regarding whether superintendents describe their district’s planning practices as strategic planning.

One-way ANOVA was used to establish the level of significance for the five planning characteristics evaluated in question 9 of the survey questionnaire. The null hypotheses for the superintendents’ opinions of the effectiveness of planning were:

1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving financial control.

2. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving management effectiveness.

3. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school
districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving education for children.

4. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving the superintendent's credibility.

5. There is no significant difference in the opinions of superintendents of small, medium, and large school districts regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving public relations.

A review of the relevant literature found that the definition of strategic planning varied among educational administrators and authors. Many school administrators practiced some form of strategic planning in an environment where clear agreement on the principles, beliefs, elements, and activities that form the foundation of this activity did not exist. To establish a foundation on which to build the future of strategic planning, this study sought answers to questions that were developed after a review of the literature. Areas of the strategic planning process that were targeted include the development of a mission statement, operating plan, and budget; involvement of stakeholders; and strategic planning logistics. The study sought to determine areas of agreement and areas of disagreement among Texas independent school district superintendents relating to the practice and effectiveness
of strategic planning. Answers from small, medium, and large school district superintendents were compared. Data was also collected from the 7 mega school district superintendents and reported because these schools influence the development of public education in Texas.

Findings

Chi-square analysis was used to analyze each of the 19 strategic planning practices explored in questions 1 through 8 and question 10. School district size was an independent variable for six strategic planning practices of small, medium, and large Texas independent school districts. Significant differences were found at the $p < .01$ level regarding whether outside consultants were employed to assist with the school district’s planning process, whether central office administrators participated in the district’s planning process, whether a sequence of steps was followed with a time frame for each step in the district’s planning process, and whether someone other than the superintendent was responsible for the district’s planning. Significant differences were found at the $p < .05$ level for whether school district support staff participated in the district’s planning process and whether students participated in the district’s planning process.

Two exceptions were noted when mega school districts were included in the Chi-square statistical analysis.
Describing the school district’s planning as strategic planning changed from no significant difference to being significant at the \( p < .05 \) level. Employing outside consultants to assist with the school district’s planning process changed from being significant at the \( p < .01 \) to being significant at the \( p < .05 \) level.

Besides analyzing whether planning practices were the same among small, medium, and large school districts, differences were found in the average percent of participation by all school districts in individual strategic planning practices. The average percent of participation by all school districts in any single planning practice ranged from 99.9% for the practice of including principals in the strategic planning process to 20.9% for the practice of conducting part of the planning off site or away from the district. There was a large variation in the use of individual strategic planning practices, regardless of school district size.

One-way ANOVA was used to analyze each of the five parts of question 9. A significant difference was found among small, medium, and large school district superintendents’ ratings of the effectiveness of planning for improving management effectiveness. The Tukey-B test found a significant difference between the large school district superintendents’ mean rating of 4.8 regarding the effectiveness of planning for improving management.
effectiveness and the small school district superintendents’ mean rating of 4.4. Mega school districts were not included in the one-way ANOVA statistics because the small sample size would have produced a questionable result.

Mean scores of the mega school districts were compared to the mean scores of small, medium, and large school districts. Mega school district superintendents’ ratings were below the range of the other school district superintendents’ ratings in all five strategic planning effectiveness categories.

Standard deviations for the five parts of question 9 were calculated. Generally, the higher the mean rating, the lower the standard deviation, and conversely, the lower the mean rating, the higher the standard deviation. This suggests that as a group, if the superintendents gave a category a high rating, they were more certain of the answer. If the superintendents gave a category a low rating, they were less certain of the answer. The exception was the superintendent’s credibility category where a higher rating appears to have less certainty. The mean rating and standard deviation for the superintendent’s credibility category were both higher than the mean rating and standard deviation for the management effectiveness category. This suggests that the superintendents were less certain of their higher rating for the superintendent’s credibility category.
than their lower rating for the management effectiveness category.

A correlation was also observed between the superintendents' ratings and professional skill sets. When the superintendents were polled in a category relating to teaching skills, such as education for children, the mean ratings and levels of certainty were higher. When the superintendents were polled in categories relating to administrative skills, such as public relations and superintendent's credibility, the mean ratings and levels of certainty were midrange. When the superintendents were polled in areas requiring business skills, such as management effectiveness and financial control, the mean ratings and levels of certainty were lower.

Conclusions

Most Texas independent school districts use strategic planning practices to develop the plans and procedures they need to reach their goals. Differences were found regarding the use of strategic planning practices among small, medium, and large school districts and the extent that strategic planning practices were used in all districts. Differences of opinion regarding the effectiveness of strategic planning were found among small, medium, and large school district superintendents. The superintendents' comments showed universal support for planning and specifically strategic
planning. Some frustration was directed toward the current level of strategic planning development.

Significant differences were found among small, medium, and large school districts regarding strategic planning practices used in the planning process. Differences existed regarding whether outside consultants were employed to assist with the school district's planning process, whether central office administrators participated in the district's planning process, whether a sequence of steps was followed with a time frame for each step in the planning process, whether someone other than the superintendent was responsible for the district's planning, whether school district support staff participated in the district's planning process, and whether students participated in the district's planning process. This may be the result of strategic planning practices developing at different rates among small, medium, and large school districts. An alternate possibility is that one or more strategic planning practices are being used less today than in the past. When mega school districts were included in the statistical comparison, differences were found with the same planning practices, and a difference was found regarding whether the district's planning practices were described as strategic planning.

Central office administrators' participation in the school district's planning process was significant at the
p < .01 level. The percent answering yes in small school districts was 89.9%, while participation in medium and large school districts was 100%. Mega school districts also had 100% participation. In some of the smaller districts, the superintendent may be the only professional staff member. As a result, there are no other central office administrators to include in the planning process.

Employing outside consultants to assist with the school district's planning process was significant at the p < .05 level. The percent answering yes, ordered from small to mega school districts, was 28.2%, 42.5%, 53.3% 42.0%. The number of school districts that employed outside consultants to assist with the district's planning process increased with district size from small to large districts and decreased at the mega district level. Percentage rate drop or leveling off in the mega school districts may be due to their ability or desire to hire full-time experts in specific areas such as strategic planning.

A significant difference was found between large and small school district superintendents' mean ratings of the influence strategic planning has on improving management effectiveness. This suggests a difference between large and small school district superintendents' opinions of the effectiveness of strategic planning. Another possibility is a difference between large and small school district
superintendents' understanding of how strategic planning influences management effectiveness.

A correlation was observed between the superintendents' ratings of the strategic planning effectiveness categories and professional skill sets. When the superintendents were polled in a category relating to teaching skills, the mean ratings and levels of certainty were higher. When the superintendents were polled in categories relating to administration, the mean ratings and levels of certainty were midrange. When the superintendents were polled in areas requiring business skills, the mean ratings and levels of certainty were lower. This correlation suggests that superintendents are better trained to deal with educational issues than administration and business concerns.

Comments made by the respondents reflect a wide range of attitudes toward planning and strategic planning. Two groups emerged. One group appeared to be more pragmatic and worked within the existing educational system without expressing any dissatisfaction. Another group expressed dissatisfaction with the level of strategic planning development and stated that strategic planning is not being used to its fullest advantage as a management tool. Some frustration was directed toward the quality of training for stakeholders and the competency of consultants employed by the school districts. School district superintendents expressed support for strategic planning, demonstrated an
understanding that strategic planning has become part of educational development, and revealed a desire to be effective strategic planners.

Recommendations

Recommendations for school district superintendents and boards of education have resulted from the findings and conclusions presented in this study. First, to continue to develop and use strategic planning as a tool to envision the future, effect change, and manage the operations of their school districts. Second, to evaluate the benefits strategic planning can provide for their individual school districts. Present the benefits to the stakeholders to develop consistent, focused support for strategic planning. Third, to evaluate the level of strategic planning practices used in school district to determine how planning can be used to provide the greatest impact on the educational delivery systems. Fourth, to develop and implement relevant training programs to evolve the stakeholders as productive strategic planning participants. Finally, to evaluate administrative skill sets to determine the balance of skills that will provide the greatest leadership potential for their school district. Subsequent education, training, hiring, attrition, and succession planning will aid in the development and placement of administrators with superior leadership skills.
Recommendations for Additional Research

The results of this study revealed several areas that could be examined further. Strategic planning and the education and development of our educational administrators needs additional research to answer questions posed by the results of this study. First, the area of strategic planning will be examined, followed by the education and development of educational leaders.

Further study is needed in the area of strategic planning to determine the following:

1. Efficient and effective strategic planning processes.
2. The optimum use of strategic planning.
3. Which strategic planning practices should be eliminated, replaced, or introduced.
4. Efficient and effective inservice programs on strategic planning.
5. Efficient and effective strategic planning consulting services.
6. Strategic planning support that should be offered through educational service centers.
7. On-the-job programs to develop strategic planners.
8. Legislation to advance strategic planning development.
9. Strategic planning development funding.
Further study is suggested in the area of educating and developing educational administrators. Research is needed to determine the balance of skills, such as education, administration, and business, required to develop superior leaders.

Educational administration is advancing through an era of dynamic change and progress. Strategic planning is the catalyst that will motivate education and educational administration. It is the instrument that will enable us to envision and fulfill our greatest expectations. Texas independent school district superintendents have recognized the need for strategic planning and support its continued development. Leaders who take the initiative to aggressively pursue strategic planning will find a challenging and rewarding role in shaping the future of education.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are outside consultants employed to assist with your district’s planning process? Yes □ No □

2. Check the groups that participate in the district’s planning process:
   □ teachers, □ principals, □ central office administrators, □ school district support staff, □ students, □ parents, □ school board members, □ senior citizens, □ business leaders
   □ other ____________________________________________________________________________

3. Is training provided for the district’s planning participants?
   Yes □ No □ If yes, describe. ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

4. Do you follow a sequence of steps with a time frame for each step in the planning process? Yes □ No □

5. Is someone other than the superintendent responsible for the district’s planning? Yes □ No □ If yes, state his/her position or title.
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

6. Do you update your district’s planning each year? Yes □ No □
   If no, how often? _____ Why? ___________________________________________________________________

7. Is part of the district’s planning conducted off site or away from the district? Yes □ No □ If yes, how many days a year? ________
8. Check the element(s) that is/are included in your district’s planning:

- Budget - Planned activities stated in dollars
- Operating plan - Steps for implementing district goals
- Mission statement - Vision and goals for the future
- Other ____________________________
- Other ____________________________

9. On a scale of 1-6, rate the effectiveness of planning for improving the following (circle your response):

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<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Management effectiveness</td>
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<td>2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education for children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent’s credibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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10. Strategic planning is the development of detailed action steps by top management to reach strategic goals. Do you describe your district’s planning practices as strategic planning? Yes ☐ No ☐

COMMENTS: ____________________________
GLOSSARY

acquisition  The purchase of all or part of one organization by another, and a means of implementing growth strategies.

action research  A method used in the diagnosis phase of organizational development that places heavy emphasis on data gathering and collaborative diagnosis before action is taken.

activity  A work component to be accomplished, represented by an arrow on a PERT network diagram.

adaptive mode  An approach to strategy formulation that emphasizes taking small incremental steps, reacting to problems rather than seeking opportunities, and attempting to satisfy a number of organizational power groups.

anchoring and adjustment  A decision-making bias that involves the tendency to be influenced by an initial figure, even when the information is largely irrelevant.

availability  A decision-making bias that involves the tendency to judge the likelihood of an occurrence on the basis of the extent to which other like instances or occurrences can easily be recalled.

bankruptcy A defensive strategy in which an organization that is unable to pay its debts can seek court protection from creditors and from certain contract obligations while it attempts to regain financial stability.

BCG growth-share matrix A portfolio approach involving a four-cell matrix (developed by the Boston Consulting Group) that compares various businesses in an organization's portfolio on the basis of relative market share and market growth rate.

bounded rationality A concept that suggests that the ability of managers to be perfectly rational in making decisions is limited by such factors as cognitive capacity and time constraints.

brainstorming A technique for enhancing group creativity that encourages group members to generate as many novel ideas as possible on a given topic without evaluating them.

break-even analysis A quantitative technique based on a graphic model that helps decision makers understand the relationships among sales volume, costs, and revenues in an organization.

budgeting The process of stating in quantitative terms, usually dollars, planned organizational activities for a given period of time.

business-level strategy A type of strategy that concentrates on the best means of competing within a
particular business while also supporting the corporate-level strategy.

causal, or explanatory, models  Methods of quantitative forecasting that attempt to identify the major variables that are related to or have caused particular past conditions and then use current measures of those variables (predictors) to predict future conditions.

change  Any alteration of the status quo.

change agent  An individual with a fresh perspective and a knowledge of the behavioral sciences who acts as a catalyst in helping the organization approach old problems in new or innovative ways and thus plays a key role in organizational development interventions.

competitive advantage  A significant edge over the competition in dealing with competitive forces.

complacency  A condition preventing effective decision making in which individuals either do not see the signs of danger or opportunity or ignore them.

concentration  A growth strategy that focuses on effecting the growth of a single product or service or a small number of closely related products or services.

constraints  Conditions that must be met in the course of solving a linear programming problem.

contingency planning  The development of alternative plans for use in the event that environmental conditions evolve
differently than anticipated, rendering original plans unwise or unfeasible.

**convergent thinking** A way of thinking related to creativity in which an individual attempts to solve problems by beginning with a problem and attempting to move logically to a solution.

**corporate-level strategy** A type of strategy that addresses what businesses the organization will operate, how the strategies of those businesses will be coordinated to strengthen the organization's competitive position, and how resources will be allocated among the businesses.

**cost leadership strategy** A generic business-level strategy outlined by Michael E. Porter that involves emphasizing organizational efficiency so that the overall costs of providing products and services are lower that those of competitors.

**creativity** The cognitive process of developing an idea, concept, commodity, or discovery that is viewed as novel by its creator or a target audience.

**crisis problem** A type of problem in managerial decision making involving a serious difficulty that requires immediate action.

**critical path** The path in a PERT network that will take the longest time to complete.
deciding to decide  A response in which decision makers accept the challenge of deciding what to do about a problem and follow an effective decision-making process.

decision tree  A quantitative decision-making aid based on a graphic model that displays the structure of a sequence of alternative courses of action and usually shows the payoffs associated with various paths and the probabilities associated with potential future conditions.

decision matrix  Another term for payoff table.

decision making  The process through which managers identify organizational problems and attempt to resolve them.

decision support system (DSS)  A computer-based information system that supports the process of managerial decision making in situations that are not well structured.

defensive avoidance  A condition preventing effective decision making in which individuals either identify the importance of a danger or an opportunity or deny any responsibility for taking action.

defensive strategies  Grand strategies (sometimes called retrenchment strategies) that focus on the desire or need to reduce organizational operations usually through cost and/or asset reductions.

Delphi method  A method of technological or qualitative forecasting that uses a structured approach to gain the judgements of a number of experts on a specific issue relating to the future.
**descriptive decision-making models** Models that attempt to document how managers actually do make decisions.

**devil’s advocates** Individuals who are assigned the role of making sure that the negative aspects of any attractive decision alternatives are considered and whose involvement in a group helps avoid groupthink.

**dialectical inquiry** A technique used to help avoid groupthink that involves approaching a decision situation from two opposite points of view.

**differentiation strategy** A generic business-level strategy outlined by Michael E. Porter that involves attempting to develop products and services that are viewed as unique in the industry.

**distinctive competence** An organizational strength that is unique and not easily matched or imitated by competitors.

**distribution, or routing, models** Quantitative methods that can assist managers in planning the most effective and economical approaches to distribution problems.

**divergent thinking** A way of thinking related to creativity in which an individual attempts to solve problems by generating new ways of viewing the problem and seeking novel alternatives.

**diversification** A growth strategy that entails effecting growth through the development of new areas that are clearly distinct from the current businesses.
**divestiture**  A defensive strategy that involves an organization's selling or divesting of a business or part of a business.

**driving forces**  Forces studied in force-field analysis that involve factors that pressure for a particular change.

**econometric models**  Explanatory models based on systems of simultaneous multiple regression equations involving several predictor variables that are used to identify and measure relationships or interrelationships that exist in the economy.

**entrepreneurial mode**  An approach to strategic management in which strategy is formulated mainly by a strong visionary chief executive who actively searches for new opportunities, is heavily oriented toward growth, and is willing to make bold decisions or to shift strategies rapidly.

**escalation phenomenon**  The tendency to increase commitment to a previously selected course of action beyond the level that would be expected if the manager followed an effective decision-making process; also called nonrational escalation.

**escalation situations**  Situations that signal the strong possibility of escalating commitment and accelerating losses.

**event, or node**  An indication of the beginning and/or ending of activities in a PERT network.

**expected value**  The sum of the payoffs times the respective probabilities for a given alternative.
**expert system (ES)** A computer-based system that applies the substantial knowledge of an expert to help solve problems in a specific area.

**explanatory, or causal, models** Methods of quantitative forecasting that attempt to identify the major variables that are related to or have caused particular past conditions and then use current measures of those variables (predictors) to predict future conditions.

**five competitive forces model** A model developed by Michael E. Porter and used in the examination of an organization’s task environment that offers an approach to analyzing the nature and intensity of competition in a given industry in terms of five major forces.

**focus strategy** A generic, business-level strategy outlined by Michael E. Porter that entails specializing by establishing a position of overall cost leadership, differentiation, or both, but only within a particular portion or segment of an entire market.

**force-field analysis** A method that involves analyzing the two type of forces that influence any proposed change: driving forces and restraining forces.

**framing** A decision-making bias that involves the tendency to make different decisions depending on how a problem is presented.

**functional audit** A technique for evaluating internal strengths and weaknesses that involves an exhaustive
appraisal of an organization and/or its individual businesses conducted by assessing the important positive and negative attributes of each major functional area.

functional-level strategy A type of strategy that focuses on action plans for managing a particular functional area within a business in a way that supports the business-level strategy.

game theory A quantitative technique for facilitating decision making in situations of conflict among two or more decision makers seeking to maximize their own welfare.

Gantt chart A type of planning and control model developed by Henry L. Gantt that relies on a specialized bar chart showing the current progress on each major project activity relative to necessary completion dates.

garbage-can model A nonrational model of managerial decision making stating that managers behave in virtually a random pattern when making nonprogrammed decisions.

GE business screen A portfolio approach involving a nine-cell matrix (developed by General Electric with McKinsey & Company) that is based on long-term industry attractiveness and on business strength.

goal A major planning component that is a future target or end result that an organization wishes to achieve.

goal commitment A critical goal-setting element that involves one's attachment to, or determination to reach, a goal.
**grand strategy**  A master strategy that provides the basic strategic direction at the corporate level.

**groupthink**  A phenomenon of group decision making in which cohesive groups tend to seek agreement about an issue at the expense of realistically appraising the situation.

**growth strategies**  Grand strategies that involve organizational expansion along some major dimension.

**harvest**  A defensive strategy that entails minimizing investments while attempting to maximize short-run profits and cash flow, with the long-run intention of exiting the market.

**incremental model**  A nonrational model of managerial decision making stating that managers make the smallest response possible that will reduce the problem to at least a tolerable level.

**innovation**  A new idea applied to initiating or improving a process, product, or service.

**interventions**  Organizational development change strategies developed and initiated with the help of a change agent.

**inventory models**  Quantitative approaches to planning the appropriate level for the stock of materials needed by an organization.

**judgmental forecasting**  A type of forecasting that relies mainly on individual judgements or committee agreements regarding future conditions.
jury of executive opinion A method of judgmental forecasting in which organization executives hold a meeting and estimate, as a group, a forecast for a particular item.

La Prospective A method of technological or qualitative forecasting that addresses a variety of possible futures by evaluating major environmental variables, assessing the likely strategies of other significant factors, devising possible counter strategies, developing ranked hypotheses about the variables, and formulating alternative scenarios that do not greatly inhibit freedom of choice.

leading indicators Explanatory models based on variables that tend to be correlated with the phenomenon of major interest but also tend to occur in advance of that phenomenon.

life cycles Predictable stages of development.

linear programming (LP) A quantitative tool for planning how to allocate limited or scarce resources so that a single criterion or goal (often profits) is optimized.

liquidation A defensive strategy that entails selling or dissolving an entire organization.

management by objectives (MBO) A process through which specific goals are set collaboratively for the organization as a whole and every unit and individual within it; the goals are then used as a basis for planning, managing organizational activities, and assessing and rewarding contributions.
merger  The combining of two or more companies into one organization and thus a means of implementing growth strategies.

mission  The organization's purpose or fundamental reason for existence.

mission statement  A broad declaration of the basic, unique purpose and scope of operations that distinguishes the organization from others of its type.

monitoring methods  Methods of quantitative forecasting that provide early warning signals of significant change in established patterns and relationships so that managers can assess the likely impact and plan responses if necessary.

morphological analysis  A method of technological or qualitative forecasting that focuses on predicting potential technological breakthroughs by breaking the possibilities into component attributes and evaluating various attribute combinations.

network diagram  A diagram constructed as a step in setting up PERT that constitutes a graphic depiction of the interrelationships among the activities in a project.

node, or event  An indication of the beginning and/or ending of activities in a PERT network.

nominal group technique (NGT)  A technique for enhancing group creativity that integrates both individual work and group interaction with certain ground rules.
**noncrisis problem** A type of problem in managerial decision making involving an issue that requires resolution but does not simultaneously have the importance and immediacy characteristics of a crisis.

**nonprogrammed decisions** Managerial decisions for which predetermined decision rules are impractical because the situations are novel and/or ill-structured.

**nonrational models** Models of managerial decision making which suggest that information-gathering and -processing limitations make it difficult for managers to make optimal decisions.

**nonrational escalation** The tendency to increase commitment to a previously selected course of action beyond the level that would be expected if the manager followed an effective decision-making process; also called escalation phenomenon.

**normative decision-making models** Models of decision making that attempt to prescribe how managers should make decisions.

**objective function** A mathematical representation of the relationship to be optimized in a linear programming problem.

**operational plans** The means devised to support implementation of tactical plans and achievement of operational goals; such plans are usually developed by lower management in conjunction with middle management.
**operational goals**  Targets or future end results set by lower management that address specific measurable outcomes required from the lower levels.

**opportunity problem**  A type of problem in managerial decision making involving a situation that offers a strong potential for significant organizational gain if appropriate actions are taken.

**organizational culture change**  An intervention involving the development of a corporate culture that is in synchronization with organizational strategies and other factors, such as a structure.

**organizational development (OD)**  A change effort that is planned, focused on a entire organization or a large subsystem, managed from the top, aimed at enhancing organizational health and effectiveness, and based on planned interventions.

**organizational problems**  Discrepancies between a current state or condition and what is desired.

**organizational termination**  The process of ceasing to exist as an identifiable organization.

**overconfidence**  The tendency to be more certain of judgments regarding the likelihood of a future event than one's actual predictive accuracy warrants.

**panic**  A reaction preventing effective decision making in which individuals become so upset that they frantically seek a way to solve a problem.
payoff  The amount of decision-maker value associated with a particular decision alternative and future condition in a payoff table.

payoff table  A quantitative decision-making aid consisting of a two-dimensional matrix that allows a decision maker to compare how different future conditions are likely to affect the respective outcomes of two or more decision alternatives.

plan  A major planning component that is the means devised for attempting to reach a goal.

planned change  Change that involves actions based on a carefully thought-out process for change that anticipates future difficulties, threats, and opportunities.

planning mode  An approach to strategy formulation that involves systematic, comprehensive analysis, along with integration of various decisions and strategies.

planning staff  A small group of individuals who assist top-level managers in developing the various components of the planning process.

policy  A standing plan that provides a general guide specifying the broad parameters within which organization members are expected to operate in pursuit of organizational goals.

portfolio strategy approach  A corporate-level strategy approach that involves analyzing an organization’s mix of
businesses in terms of both individual and collective contributions to strategic goals.

**procedure** A standing plan that involves a prescribed series of related steps to be taken under certain recurring circumstances.

**process consultation** An intervention concerned with the interpersonal relations and dynamics operating in work groups.

**product/market evolution matrix** A portfolio approach involving a 15-cell matrix (developed by Charles W. Hofer) in which businesses are plotted according to the business unit’s business strength, or competitive position, and the industry’s stage in the evolutionary product/market life cycle.

**program** A comprehensive single-use plan that coordinates a complex set of activities related to a major nonrecurring goal.

**Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT)** A network planning method for managing large projects.

**programmed decisions** Managerial decisions made in routine, repetitive, well-structured situations through the use of predetermined decision rules.

**project** A single-use plan that coordinates a set of limited-scope activities that do not need to be divided into several major projects in order to reach a major nonrecurring goal.
prospect theory  A theory explaining certain decision-making biases which posits that decision makers find the prospect of an actual loss more painful than giving up the possibility of a gain.

quantitative forecasting  A type of forecasting that relies on numerical data and mathematical models to predict future conditions.

qualitative, or technological, forecasting  A type of forecasting aimed primarily at predicting long-term trends in technology and other important aspects of the environment.

queuing, or waiting-in-line, models  A quantitative planning technique based on mathematical models that describe the operating characteristics of queuing situations in which service is provided to persons or units waiting in line.

rational model  A model of managerial decision making which suggests that managers engage in completely rational decision processes, ultimately make optimal decisions, and possess and understand all information relevant to their decisions at the time they make them.

reactive change  Change that occurs when one takes action in response to perceived problems, threats, or opportunities.

regression models  Explanatory models based on equations that express the fluctuations in the variable being forecasted in terms of fluctuations among one or more other variables (predictors).
representativeness A decision making bias that involves the tendency to be overly influenced by stereotypes in making judgments about the likelihood of occurrences.

restraining forces Forces studied in force-field analysis that involve factors that pressure against a change.

revitalization The renewal of the innovative vigor of organizations sought in the elaboration-of-structure stage of the organizational life cycle.

risk The possibility, characteristic of decisions made under uncertainty, that a chosen action could lead to losses rather than the extended results.

routing, or distribution, models Quantitative methods that can assist managers in planning the most effective and economical approaches to distribution problems.

rule A standing plan that is a statement spelling out specific actions to be taken or not taken in a given situation.

sales-force composite A method of judgmental forecasting that is used mainly to predict future sales and typically involves obtaining the views of various sales people, sales managers, and/or distributors regarding the sales outlook.

satisficing model A nonrational model of managerial decision making stating that managers seek alternatives only until they find one that looks satisfactory, rather than seeking the optimal decision.
scenarios Outlines of possible future conditions, including possible paths that organizations could take that would likely lead to these conditions.

simulation A quantitative planning technique that uses mathematical models to imitate reality.

single-use plans Plans aimed at achieving a specific goal that, once reached, will most likely not recur in the future.

slack Latitude about when various activities can be started on the noncritical paths in a PERT network without endangering the completion date of the entire project.

stability strategy A grand strategy that involves maintaining the status quo, or growing in a methodical, but slow, manner.

standing plans Plans that provide ongoing guidance for performing recurring activities.

strategic business unit (SBU) A distinct business, with its own set of competitors, that can be managed reasonably independently of other businesses, within the organization.

strategic goals Broadly defined targets or future end results set by top management.

strategic management A process through which managers formulate and implement strategies geared to optimizing strategic goal achievement, given available environmental and internal conditions.
strategic plans  Detailed action steps mapped out to reach strategic goals; such plans are developed by top management in consultation with the board of directors and middle management.

strategies  Large-scale action plans for interacting with the environment in order to achieve long-term goals.

strategy formulation  The part of the strategic management process that involves identifying the mission and strategic goals, conducting competitive analysis, and developing specific strategies.

strategy implementation  The part of the strategic management process that focuses on carrying out strategic plans and maintaining control over how those plans are carried out.

sunk costs  Costs that, once incurred, are not recoverable and should not enter into considerations of future courses of action.

SWOT analysis  A method of analyzing an organization’s competitive situation that involves assessing organizational strengths (S) and weaknesses (W), as well as environmental opportunities (O) and threats (T).

synectics  A technique for enhancing creativity that relies on analogies to help group members look at problems from new perspectives.

tactical goals  Targets or future end results usually set by middle management for specific departments or units.
tactical plans  The means charted to support implementation of the strategic plan and achievement of tactical goals; such plans are developed by middle management potentially in consultation with lower management.

takeover  A form of acquisition involving the purchase of a controlling share of voting stock in a publicly traded company and thus a potential reason for organizational termination.

team building  An intervention aimed at helping work groups become effective at task accomplishment.

technological, or qualitative, forecasting  A type of forecasting aimed primarily at predicting long-term trends in technology and other important aspects of the environment.

technostructural activities  An intervention involving activities intended to improve work technology and/or organizational structure.

third-party intervention  A technique concerned with helping individuals, groups, or departments resolve serious conflicts that may relate to specific work issues or may be caused by suboptimal interpersonal relations.

time-series methods  Methods of quantitative forecasting that use historical data to develop forecasts of the future.

turnaround  A defensive strategy designed to reverse a negative trend and restore the organization to appropriate levels of profitability.
uncertainty  An aspect of nonprogrammed decisions that is a condition in which the decision maker must chose a course of action without complete knowledge of the consequences that will follow implementation.

vertical integration  A growth strategy that involves effecting growth through the production of inputs previously provided by suppliers or through the replacement of a customer role by disposing of one’s own outputs.

waiting-in-line, or queuing, models  A quantitative planning technique based on mathematical models that describe the operating characteristics of queuing situations in which service is provided to persons or units waiting in line.
The enclosed survey is part of a research project being conducted at the University of North Texas. You were chosen because your knowledge is a key element in the development of strategic planning for public education. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. This letter and the survey questionnaire are numbered for follow-up purposes only. All responses are confidential and will not be reported individually or by district. Your participation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gene C. Gehrking
Doctoral Candidate

Hoyt F. Watson, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

Enclosure

(Reference Number)
May 1, 1996

(Name, Title)
(School)
(Address)

This letter and your response to the first questionnaire may have crossed in the mail. If you returned the first questionnaire, please disregard this letter. Your knowledge of strategic planning in public education is very important to a research study being conducted at the University of North Texas. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. The survey questionnaire is numbered for follow-up purposes only. All responses are confidential and will not be reported individually or by district. We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Gene C. Gehrking
Doctoral Candidate

Hoyt F. Watson, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator

Enclosure

(Reference Number)
APPENDIX E

SECOND FOLLOW-UP COVER LETTER
MAY 15, 1996

TO: (NAME AND TITLE)
(SCHOOL)
.ADDRESS

FROM: GENE C. GEHRKING
2220 CHULA VISTA DRIVE
PLANO, TX 75023-1626

214/618-1594

YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IS VERY IMPORTANT TO A RESEARCH STUDY BEING CONDUCTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS. PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IT TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS OR FAX IT TO DR. HOYT WATSON AT 1 (817) 565-4952. THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE IS NUMBERED FOR FOLLOW-UP PURPOSES ONLY. ALL RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT BE REPORTED INDIVIDUALLY OR BY DISTRICT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

THREE (3) PAGES INCLUDING THE COVER PAGE.
APPENDIX F

CROSSTABS ANALYSES
Question 1

Table 8
Use of Consultants by School District Size

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Question 2

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Senior Citizens’ Participation by School District Size

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| 2.00  | 29.0 | 25.0  | 18.0   | 72.0  |
|       | 40.3 | 34.7  | 25.0   | 30.3  |
|       | 36.7 | 30.9  | 23.1   |       |
|       | 12.2 | 10.5  | 7.6    |       |

| Column Total | 79.0 | 81.0 | 78.0 | 238.0 |
| Column Total | 33.2 | 35.0 | 32.8 | 100.0 |

### Question 4

Table 19

**School Districts That Follow a Sequence of Planning Steps by School District Size**

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| 2.00  | 30.0 | 25.0  | 8.0    | 63.0  |
|       | 47.6 | 39.7  | 12.7   | 26.8  |
|       | 38.0 | 31.6  | 10.4   |       |
|       | 12.8 | 10.6  | 3.4    |       |

| Column Total | 79.0 | 79.0 | 77.0 | 235.0 |
| Column Total | 33.6 | 33.6 | 32.8 | 100.0 |
### Question 5

**Table 20**

Superintendents Who Perceive Strategic Planning as the Superintendent's Responsibility by School District Size

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### Question 6

**Table 21**

School Districts That Update Their Planning Each Year by School District Size

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### Question 7

#### Table 22

**School Districts That Conduct Part of the Planning Off Site by School District Size**

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### Question 8

#### Table 23

**School Districts That Include a Budget in Their Planning Process by School District Size**

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### Table 24

**School Districts That Include an Operating Plan in Their Planning Process by School District Size**

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|        | 3.0   | 3.0    | 2.0   | 8.0       |
| 2.00   | 37.5  | 37.5   | 25.0  | 3.3       |
|        | 3.8   | 3.7    | 2.6   |           |
|        | 1.3   | 1.3    | .8    |           |
| Column | 79.0  | 82.0   | 78.0  | 239.0     |
| Total  | 33.1  | 34.3   | 32.6  | 100.0     |

### Table 25

**School Districts That Include a Mission Statement in Their Planning Process by School District Size**

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|        | 7.0   | 5.0    | 3.0   | 15.0      |
| 2.00   | 46.7  | 33.3   | 20.0  | 6.3       |
|        | 8.9   | 6.1    | 3.8   |           |
|        | 2.9   | 2.1    | 1.3   |           |
| Column | 79.0  | 82.0   | 78.0  | 239.0     |
| Total  | 33.1  | 34.3   | 32.6  | 100.0     |
Question 10

Table 26

School Districts That Describe Their Planning Practices as Strategic Planning by School District Size

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


Ball, M. J. (1986). Voice mail at the University of Maryland at Baltimore. CAUSE/EFFECT, 9(6), 32-36.


Morrill, R. L. (1988). Centre College of Kentucky. New Directions for Higher Education; No. 64 (Successful Strategic Planning: Case Studies), 16(4), 33-43.


